

Episode 3

Fried Chicken Recipe

Chef Hoag starts with a whole chicken, which he cuts into 10 pieces and sets for 12 hours in an herb-lemon brine. You can get away with brining for less time—8 hours will suffice in a pinch, but no less. But you certainly do not want to brine for much more than 12 hours, as over brining will affect the texture of the chicken, potentially giving it a cured texture. Once brined, dredge the chicken pieces in seasoned flour, dip them in buttermilk, dredge in flour again, and then fry until the crust becomes a crisp and golden brown. Chef Hoag recommends frying in peanut oil—an oil with neutral flavor, less saturated fat than lard or shortening, and a high smoke point—but if peanut allergies are an issue, another vegetable oil will do. Be safety-minded, as you are working with hot oil. And of course, enjoy the results of your cooking.

Preparation & cook timeline

Day 1

Make brine, Portion chicken, Brine 8-12 hours

Day 2

Bring chicken to temperature, Prep dredging bowls, Heat oil, Dredge chicken: flour mix, buttermilk, and flour Fry chicken Let rest, then serve

Fried Chicken Recipe

Serves 2 to 3

Method: prepare and brine the chicken: Mix all the brine ingredients into 1 gallon of water and bring to a boil. Once boiling, remove from heat and let cool; then pour into a container large enough to hold both the brine and the chicken pieces and cool in the refrigerator until

chilled. Using poultry shears, cut out the backbone. Pull out the breastplate and trim the excess fat. Make sure to reserve the bones and fat for use in a stock and schmaltz. Cut the first half into 5 pieces: separate the thigh from the breast and the drumstick, remove the wing, and cut the breast in half. Repeat with the other half of the chicken.

You should end up with 10 pieces: 2 wings, 2 legs, 2 thighs, and 2 breasts cut in half. Place the cut chicken in the cold brine and let it sit for 12 hours. (If you are short on time, you can brine for 8 hours; but do not brine for more than 12 hours or the chicken will become too salty.)

Ingredients

For the brine

1 2 1/2 to 3-pound chickens

5 lemons halved

6 bay leaves

½ bunch (115 grams) flat-leaf parsley

½ bunch (30 grams) thyme

85 grams clover honey

1 head garlic halved through the equator

14 grams black peppercorns

1 cup (10 ounces) kosher salt

3 ¾ liter

For the seasoned flour

360 grams all-purpose flour

20 grams garlic powder

15 grams onion powder

5 grams paprika

4 grams cayenne

6 grams kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste for the fried chicken

1-quart buttermilk

Peanut oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Ground fleur de sel or fine sea salt

Rosemary sprigs for garnish

Directions

Remove the chicken from the brine and discard the brine. Rinse under cold water, removing any herbs or spices sticking to the skin. Pat dry with paper towels or let air-dry. Let rest at room temperature until it comes to room temperature. Set up a breading station. Combine all the coating ingredients in a large bowl. Pour the buttermilk into a third bowl and season with salt and pepper. Spread a large piece of parchment paper on your countertop beside the coating bowl. Fill the cast-iron pan with 2 inches of oil and heat to 325°F. Try to maintain this temperature throughout to achieve a golden-brown color on the outside and a fully cooked piece of chicken on the inside. Dip each of the chicken pieces into the bowl of coating, turning to coat and patting off the excess. Then dip each of them into the buttermilk, allowing the excess to run back into the bowl. Finally, return them to the bowl of coating, turning to coat once again. Transfer each piece to the parchment paper. Begin frying the chicken, starting with the dark meat

or the thickest pieces. Carefully lower the drumsticks and thighs into the hot oil. Adjust the heat as necessary to return the oil to 325°F. Fry for 2 minutes, then carefully move the chicken pieces around in the oil and continue to fry, monitoring the oil temperature and turning the pieces as necessary for even cooking. About 4 minutes into the cooking time, add the white meat pieces to the pan. Adding the additional chicken pieces to the pan will cause the temperature of the oil to fall, so turn the heat up to help it recuperate and return to 325°F. After about 7 more minutes, when the chicken is golden brown and very crisp, check for doneness with a probe thermometer—it should register 160 to 165°F. Remove the chicken from the pan using tongs and transfer to a cooling rack, skin side up.

Equipment for the brine:

Stockpot Container (for brining) for the fried chicken:

Cutting board Knife Poultry shears

2 bowls,

wide enough for dredging Deep-fat frying thermometers

Cast-iron skillet

Tongs Sheet

pan with grate,

lined with paper towels

Mortar and pestle

Add sprigs of rosemary to the pan and fry until they stop sizzling.

Pulverize kosher salt using a mortar and pestle until ground to a fine powder. Sprinkle it over the chicken. Remove the rosemary from the oil

and transfer to cooling rack. Arrange the chicken on a serving platter and top with the fried rosemary leaves.