

Our Best Southern Fried Chicken

MAKES 4 SERVINGS Soaking the chicken before frying seals the meat to prevent it from absorbing too much oil; it also produces an irresistible crispy crust

NOTE: For best results, keep the oil temperature between 300° to 325° after adding chicken to skillet. If desired, substitute 2 cups buttermilk for the saltwater solution used to soak the chicken pieces.

4. **TURN** chicken; cover and cook 6 minutes. Uncover and cook 5 to 9 minutes, turning pieces during the last 7 minutes, for even browning, if necessary. Drain chicken on a paper towel-lined plate placed over a large bowl of hot water. Prep: 25 min. Chill: 8 hrs. Cook: 30 min.

Ingredients

- 3 quarts water
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 (2- to 2 1/2-pound) broiler-fryer, cut up
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup bacon drippings

Directions

1. **COMBINE** 3 quarts water and 1 tablespoon salt in a large bowl; add chicken. Cover and chill 8 hours. Drain chicken; rinse with cold water, and pat dry.
2. **COMBINE** 1 teaspoon each salt and pepper; sprinkle half of mixture evenly over chicken. Combine remaining salt-and-pepper mixture and flour in a large heavy-duty zip-top plastic bag. Place 2 pieces of chicken in bag; seal. Shake to coat completely. Remove chicken, and repeat procedure with remaining chicken, 2 pieces at a time.
3. **COMBINE** oil and drippings in a 12-inch cast-iron skillet or chicken fryer, and heat to 360°. Add chicken, a few pieces at a time, skin side down. Cover and cook 6 minutes; uncover and cook 9 minutes.