



Classic Southern-Fried Catfish Recipe

Cook: 12 mins

Yield: 6 Servings

(21)

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Because they thrive in a variety of conditions and climates, channel catfish are the most fished and most farmed species in the United States, and 94% of all farm-raised catfish come from the Southern states of Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. According to The Catfish Institute, the industry employs about 10,000 people and contributes more than 4 billion dollars to the economy of each state. A good thing for the South.

A Lean Fish

And a good thing for us is that catfish is lean and low in saturated fats. The fish is also a good source of polyunsaturated fats and omega-3 fatty acids. A mild and versatile fish, catfish can be used in most dishes calling for a mild, white flaky fish, and is perfect when fried with a cornmeal crust.

What You'll Need

- 6 catfish fillets (about 5 to 6 ounces each)
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup oil for frying
- 1 cup cornmeal (preferably yellow)
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons table salt
- 1 teaspoon ground paprika
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

How to Make It

1. Preheat the oven to 200 F (93 C). Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and place a rack in the pan.
 2. Arrange the catfish in a wide, shallow bowl or pie plate; pour the buttermilk over the fish.
 3. Pour about 1 inch of oil in a deep, heavy skillet or heavy Dutch oven and place the pan over medium-high heat. (If you will be frying hushpuppies in the same pan, use a Dutch oven and 1 1/2 inches of oil.)
 4. Meanwhile, combine the cornmeal, flour, salt, paprika, cayenne and garlic powder on a pie plate. Take the fish out of the buttermilk and dredge the fish fillets in the flour mixture to coat thoroughly. Shake off excess flour mixture.
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1. You are ready to fry when the oil reaches about 350 F (180 C); you can use a candy thermometer or drop a pinch of the flour mixture into the oil--if it bubbles and floats the oil is ready. Just be mindful of maintaining the oil temperature while cooking the fish in batches.
 2. Carefully arrange 2 to 3 fillets in the pan. Cook for about 5 to 6 minutes, or until golden brown. If the oil isn't deep enough to cover the fish, turn the fillets carefully after about 3 minutes.
 3. Remove the fish to the rack in the baking pan and place in the preheated oven while you cook another batch. Repeat until all of the fish are cooked.