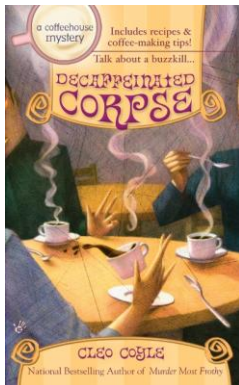


Cleo Coyle's Buttermilk Fried Chicken

Tender and sweet from its buttermilk bath, crispy and crunchy from its dip in hot oil—the perfect fall comfort food



Fall means comfort food, and my coffeehouse manager (and amateur sleuth) Clare Cosi agrees. In *Decaffeinated Corpse*, she warms up a chilly October day with a fresh batch of *Cappuccino Muffins* and a hearty pot of *Carne Con Café*—a beef stew based on a traditional Mayan dish and laced with the earthy flavor of coffee. Because those recipes are available in *Decaffeinated Corpse's* recipe section, I'm sharing one today that's more economical but just as comforting. Fried chicken seems a simple enough dish. What's the big deal, right? You flour chicken pieces and fry them. But it's not always so simple, and plenty can go wrong along the way (at least it has for me). This recipe never fails me. My first secret is using chicken wings exclusively. Cutting up the chicken wings and discarding the tips* produces 24 pieces of fried chicken out of just 12 wings—an

economical meat course for 4 to 6 people. Unlike bigger pieces of chicken—which often end up burning on the outside before cooking properly all the way through—chicken wing pieces fry perfectly in about 8 to 10 minutes. These smaller pieces require less oil, too. The buttermilk bath is the second key to success. The acid in the buttermilk is an excellent marinade for the meat, softening and sweetening the chicken before it even touches flour or oil. *My advice:* Buy a quart of buttermilk, reserve 1/2 cup for my *Buttermilk Apple Snack Cake* recipe and use the rest to make this delicious batch of fried chicken. You will find my *Buttermilk Apple Snack Cake* recipe at my online coffeehouse: www.CoffeehouseMystery.com.

Eat with joy!
~ Cleo Coyle, author of
The Coffeehouse Mysteries

**Note: The chicken wing tips don't have to be discarded. I boil them in water with celery, carrots, onions and spices and make a delicious chicken broth. Waste not!*

Cleo Coyle's Buttermilk Fried Chicken

Recipe (c) 2011 by Alice Alfonsi who writes The Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle with her husband Marc Cerasini

Serves: This recipe calls for 3 pounds of wings, which is about 12 wings or 24 pieces after wings are cut up.

Ingredients:

3 pounds fresh chicken wings
1 quart regular or light buttermilk
(Reserve 1/2 cup for my Buttermilk-Apple Snack Cake recipe!)
3 cups all purpose flour
2 tablespoons McCormick "Original Chicken Seasoning" blend
(Or your favorite chicken spice blend)
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon freshly-ground pepper, ground very fine
2 tablespoons sweet paprika
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (Optional)
Canola oil for frying

Step 1: Cut the wings into three pieces, discarding all wing tips (or you can boil the tips with carrots, celery, onion and spices to make chicken broth). Place cut up chicken in a plastic or glass container. Pour buttermilk over the chicken wing pieces and marinate in refrigerator for up to 3 hours (no more).

Step 2: Mix the flour, salt, pepper, paprika, chicken spice, and cayenne pepper thoroughly in a paper or plastic bag.

Step 3: Remove chicken pieces from buttermilk and discard excess liquid. Shake off loose buttermilk (do not rinse). Drop wing pieces into the bag 2 or 3 pieces at a time. Shake well until each piece is evenly coated.

Step 4: Heat oil in a pot deep enough to allow wings to be submerged in oil (at least 2 inches). Shake excess flour off your chicken pieces and slowly place, one at a time, into hot oil. (Note: You know the oil is hot enough for frying when a dough ball made from flour and a bit of buttermilk sizzles when dropped in pot).

Step 5: Fry each batch for 8-10 minutes, turning occasionally until chicken is golden brown & cooked evenly. (Watch oil temperature: This takes patience and practice. Keeping the oil hot enough is the key to good frying. Adding wings will reduce the oil's temp., but turning heat too high will burn them.) I put my finished fried pieces on a metal rack over an old cookie sheet pan to catch excess grease. Put rack in a 220° F. oven to keep wings warm until all pieces are fried, and...*Eat with joy!*

~ Cleo Coyle, author of
The Coffeehouse Mysteries

To get more of my recipes, win free coffee, or learn about the books in my bestselling culinary mystery series, visit my online coffeehouse:

www.CoffeehouseMystery.com

