



Pickle-Brined, Hot-Dipped Yard Bird

Ingredients

- 1 3½- to 4-pounds of chicken parts

For the Brine

- 2 cups white vinegar
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 4 cups water
- ¼ cup salt
- 2 tbs. mustard seeds
- 2 tbs. black pepper
- 2 tbs. red pepper flakes
- ¼ cup chopped fresh dill
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced

For the Hot Dip

- 1 cup white vinegar
- ¼ cup water
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 whole clove
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 scant tsp. black pepper
- ⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp. brown sugar
- ½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tbs. ketchup
- 1 tbs. Texas Pete or other vinegar-based hot sauce

For the Dredge and Fry

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. cayenne
- 2 tbs. salt
- 2 tbs. black pepper
- 2 cups buttermilk
- ¼ cup Texas Pete or other vinegar-based hot sauce
- Peanut oil, for frying

Living in North Carolina means you have access to a LOT of fried chicken. After 18+ years here, this is the best, most unique, most southern fried chicken we ever put in our faces. The ingredients look needlessly persnickety. It looks complicated and hard. It isn't either of those. Do it up right and see if we're not wrong.

1. Brine the Bird: Combine the vinegars with water, salt, mustard seeds, pepper, and red pepper flakes in a large stockpot and bring the mixture to a boil over high heat. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature, then add dill, shallots, garlic, and the chicken parts. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

2. Dip and Dredge : For the dip, combine the ingredients in a medium sauce-pan and simmer on medium-low heat for 10–15 minutes or until thickened. Cool to room temperature, remove clove, and either set it aside.

For the dredge, combine flour and the other dry ingredients in a large bowl or a shallow pan and mix well. Combine buttermilk and hot sauce in a second large bowl or shallow pan. Remove chicken from brine. Drain well and pat dry with paper towels.

3. Dredge and Fry: Dip chicken in the seasoned flour to coat, then in the buttermilk mixture, and then in the flour again. Shake off excess flour and place on a rack.

4. Fill a Dutch oven or a large, deep-sided cast-iron skillet with 2 inches of oil. Clip a frying thermometer to the side, place the pot over medium-high heat, and bring the oil to 350°F. (The temperature of the oil will drop when you add the chicken, so adjust the heat so it stays around 325°F for the duration of the fry.) Fry 3 or 4 pieces at a time for 8 minutes per side. When the chicken is golden brown and registers 165°F on an instant-read thermometer, remove with tongs to a rack set over a paper-towel-lined baking sheet.

5. Let the chicken cool for 15 minutes. Microwave the dip to reheat, then plate the chicken and pour warm dip over each piece. Serve immediately.

Recipe from chef Mike Moore of the former Old Etowah Smokehouse in Etowah, North Carolina