

Fried Catfish

To Dress Fish

Observe always in the frying of any sort of fish; first, that you dry your fish very well in a clean cloth, then do your fish in this manner: beat up the yolks of two or three eggs, according to your quantity of fish; take a small pastry brush, and put the egg on, shake some crumbs of bread and flour mixt over the fish, and then fry it. Let the stew-pan you fry them in be very nice and clean, and put in as much beef dripping, or hog's lard, as will almost cover your fish; and be sure it boils before you put in your fish. Let it fry quick, and let it be of a fine light brown, but not too dark a colour. Have your fish-slice ready, and if there is occasion turn it; when it is enough, take it up and lay a coarse cloth on a dish, on which lay your fish, to drain all the grease from it... Some love fish in batter; then you must beat an egg fine, and dip your fish in just as you are going to put it in the pan; or as good a bater as any, is a little ale and... flour beat up, just as you are ready for it, and dip the fish, to fry it.

Glasse, Hannah, "The Art of Cookery", 1804.

Adaptation

2 or 3 catfish filets (if you are using frozen fish, make certain the filets are fully thawed before cooking.)

1 egg, beaten

¼-½ cup cornmeal

Red pepper flakes or cayenne pepper, to taste

Oil or lard for frying

1. Put your egg in a large, flat-bottomed dish. Mix the cornmeal and pepper in another dish. Set aside.
2. In a pan, heat oil or lard until shimmering.
3. Pat fish dry with a clean cloth or paper towel. One by one, coat the fish in the egg and then dredge in the cornmeal. Carefully place them in the pan. Don't overcrowd the pan, or it will bring the temperature down and cause the fish to be greasy.

4. Cook for two minutes and then flip and cook for another two or three minutes, to ensure even cooking. The batter should be golden brown and crisp. If your filets are thicker, you may need to cook each slice a bit longer.
5. After cooking, place fried fish onto a plate lined with paper towels to help drain away excess grease.
6. Serve hot and enjoy!

Helping to coat the fish is a great job for younger kids. Adults or older kids under supervision should handle the frying.