



AGRICULTURAL  
SOUTH

SERVES  
**4 to 6**

ACTIVE TIME  
**45 MINS**  
○  
TOTAL TIME  
**1 DAY**  
REFRIGERATE  
OVERNIGHT

# BUTTERMILK FRIED CHICKEN



THE HISTORY OF FRIED chicken is complex. Post-emancipation, it enabled African American women like the waiter carriers of Gordonsville, Virginia, to enjoy financial freedom (see page 76). Packed in shoeboxes, it traveled northward and westward with families in the Great Migration. Later, it became a popular offering in soul food restaurants.

#### CHEF'S NOTE

For the best flavor, use organic or all-natural free-range chicken. Peanut oil makes an excellent choice for frying and accents the flavor of the finished chicken. Corn or canola oil can be substituted. A cast iron skillet is traditional and conducts and transfers heat evenly, which makes for a crispier chicken.

**4 pounds bone-in chicken pieces (halved split breasts, thighs, and/or drumsticks)**  
**Poultry Brine (page 198)**  
**1 quart buttermilk, preferably full fat**  
**1 teaspoon kosher salt**  
**½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**

**½ teaspoon sweet Hungarian paprika**  
**4 to 6 dashes Tabasco sauce**  
**2 garlic cloves, crushed (not chopped)**  
**2 or 3 fresh thyme sprigs**  
**3 cups peanut oil, for frying**  
**Seasoned Flour (page 104)**

**Place the chicken pieces** in a storage container or a large stainless steel bowl.

**Pour the brine over the chicken pieces**, ensuring that they are fully covered by the brine. Transfer to the refrigerator and let the chicken rest for 6 to 8 hours.

**Remove the chicken** from the refrigerator and drain off the brine. Be sure to discard the liquid.

**To make the buttermilk “soak,”** combine the buttermilk, salt, pepper, paprika, Tabasco, garlic, and thyme in a large bowl. Add the drained chicken pieces and turn them to coat well. Refrigerate for 4 hours.

**When you are ready to cook** the chicken, heat a 10-inch cast iron skillet over medium heat. Add the oil and allow it to slowly heat to 350°F on a deep-frying thermometer.

**While the oil is heating,** drain the chicken in a colander. Put the Seasoned Flour in a medium shallow bowl. Dredge the chicken, one piece at a time, in the flour until coated on all sides. Transfer each piece to a wire rack set over a baking sheet, placing the pieces side by side but not touching. Confirm that the temperature of the frying oil is at 350°F and then add five or six pieces of the chicken, being careful not to crowd the pan. The oil should reach just to the top of the chicken and should always be at 350°F. Fry the chicken until deep golden brown all over and the internal temperature reaches 165°F on an instant-read thermometer, 20 to 25 minutes. Using a slotted spoon or tongs, transfer to a wire rack to drain. Repeat with the remaining chicken.

*continues*

