

Quick cooking: Buttermilk fried chicken and gravy

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Much maligned but still much loved, fried chicken doesn't have to be shunned by health-conscious cooks. That's the firm declaration Melanie Barnard and Brooke Dojny make in their cookbook, "A Flash in the Pan" (Chronicle, 2003, \$22.95 paperback).

That fried chicken doesn't have to be overlooked because of time constraints is a given in this book, where every one of the 100 personal favorite recipes included can be made in under 30 minutes, in a skillet.

Barnard and Dojny write the monthly column "Every-Night Cooking" for Bon Appetit magazine, so their practical skills are well honed.

This recipe is their

hands-down favorite way to make fried chicken, they say — "Boneless chicken breasts dipped in buttermilk, coated in cornmeal, and skillet-fried in a touch of oil take about 15 minutes from start to finish."

The secret is the buttermilk, they explain, "but then every cook who makes fried chicken already knows that."

They suggest mashed potatoes swirled with chopped green onions and plain steamed spinach as the ideal accompaniments.

Buttermilk Fried Chicken and Gravy
(Cooking and preparation time about 15 minutes)

1 cup buttermilk
1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 2-inch chunks
1/4 cup yellow cornmeal

1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tsp coarsely ground pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup corn or canola oil
1 cup chicken broth
1 tsp hot-pepper sauce

Pour 1/2 cup of the buttermilk into a shallow dish just large enough to hold the chicken. Use your hand to flatten the chicken to an even thickness of about 1/2 inch. Dip the chicken in the buttermilk, turning to coat completely.

In another shallow dish, combine the cornmeal, 1/4 cup of the flour, the pepper and salt. Dredge the chicken in the cornmeal, patting the mixture to coat the chicken all over.

In a large skillet, heat the oil. Panfry the chicken over medium-high heat, turning

once, until it is cooked through and the coating is dark golden brown, about 8 minutes total. Transfer the chicken to a plate.

Stir the remaining 2 tablespoons of flour into the pan drippings and cook, stirring constantly, until the flour paste takes on a golden color, about 2 minutes. Whisk in the broth and remaining 1/2 cup of buttermilk. Cook, stirring up the browned bits on the bottom of the pan, until the gravy is bubbly. Reduce the heat to medium-low and continue to cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Season with hot-pepper sauce, salt and pepper.

Serve the chicken with the gravy ladled over it.

Makes 4 servings.
(Recipe from "A Flash in the Pan" by Melanie

Barnard and Brooke Dojny, Chronicle, 2003, \$22.95 paperback).

Solo suppers can become gracious occasions

By Lauren Neergaard

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Eating alone at home can be lonely, lazy or indulgent — or so absent-minded that the meal is forgotten as soon as swallowed.

However, on a cold, dreary evening, spirits can get a lift from making supper an occasion, a delectably satisfying entertainment.

Joyce Goldstein, a San Francisco-based chef, food writer and cooking teacher, has loads of encouragement to offer in her book "Solo Suppers: Simple Delicious Meals to Cook for Yourself" (Chronicle, 2003, \$19.95 paperback).

She makes several points in her introduction. Singles are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population, she says. More people now live alone, but most cookbooks don't reflect this, and not all

recipes reduce easily or well from quantities serving four or six people.

Goldstein says she has been a single diner for 10 years, knows her way around a kitchen, and has put what she's learned into her book. "I believe that I deserve a great meal, a glass of excellent wine, and the time to relax and enjoy my own company," she writes.

Besides plenty of recipes, Goldstein includes advice on planning, shopping and reheating — many of her recipes are for substantial one-dish meals, she says, and for some people may stretch to two meals.

Here are two main-dish supper recipes for singles to try. The chicken with potatoes and artichokes is a one-dish meal, to make with a recipe created for The Associated Press. The cream of potato soup is adapted

from the book; round it out with a green salad.

Chicken With Potatoes and Artichokes

3 small red or white potatoes

2 boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 2 inch pieces, about 1/3 pound

1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil

1/2 red onion, chopped

4 frozen artichoke hearts, thawed

1 large clove garlic, minced

1/2 cup low-sodium chicken broth

4 pitted oil-cured black olives, each cut in half

Salt and pepper, to taste

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley

Parboil potatoes in salted water until tender; set aside.

When cool, cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces. (You may want to double the potatoes for use in another recipe.)

Sprinkle chicken pieces

with salt and pepper. Heat olive oil in a saute pan over high heat. Add chicken pieces and brown well on all sides. Remove chicken from pan and set aside.

To oil remaining in the pan add onion and saute over medium heat for 5 minutes. Return chicken to onions in pan, add artichoke hearts, garlic, and stock. Bring to a simmer, cover pan and cook over low heat until chicken and artichokes are tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Add potatoes and olives and heat through. Season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice to taste. Sprinkle with chopped parsley.

Makes 1 serving.

Nutrition information per serving: 645 cal., 34 g pro., 46 g carbo., 35 g total fat (6 g saturated fat), 4 g fiber, 878 mg sodium, 100 mg chol.

False reparations tax filing sentence

Continued from page 1B

his former employer, claiming he was passed over for promotion as an accountant because he was black. The case was settled for \$5,000, leaving Foster bitter.

"I was picked out to be harassed," he said. "I was always outspoken."

Foster, who admitted he called U.S. District Judge Richard L. Williams a "white devil" in court, said he doesn't hate anybody. "But I do hate the actions of some people."

The issue of slavery reparations has long simmered in the United States, but some say it may be gaining momentum.

Blacks last year filed lawsuits in several states against a number of large corporations, alleging they profited from slavery for two centuries and that blacks should be compensated.

More recently, Democratic presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich said that if elected president he would order a study of reparations for descendants of slaves.

IRS spokeswoman Michelle Lamishaw said the idea of filing reparations claims may have originated with a 1993 Essence magazine editorial urging blacks to seek refunds of \$43,206 per household as a delinquent tax rebate. The magazine said the figure was the modern-day equivalent of 40 acres and a mule, which Congress voted to give former slaves following the Civil War. The deal was vetoed by President Andrew Johnson.

Foster said he increased the total tenfold to account for inflation. According to the U.S. attorney's office, Foster prepared returns claiming more than \$3.6 million in reparations, most for about \$500,000 each.

In the refund that was mistakenly paid out, 25-year-old

Crystal Foster claimed she had overpaid taxes on long-term capital gains in 2000. She listed the fictitious "Black Capital Investments" fund of the U.S. Treasury as the source of the gains.

Foster received her refund check in October 2001. Prosecutors say only about half the money has been recovered.

Johnson, Robert Foster's attorney, declined to comment on the case. But Foster said from jail he did not

believe he broke the law.

"This was not an effort to defraud the U.S. government," he said. "This was purely a protest against the U.S. government."

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