

QUICK & EASY SUPER BOWL FEAST P.43

bon appétit

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P.85

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FEBRUARY 2012


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★ **AND** THE ONE KITCHEN TOOL YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT P.105 ★



CRUNCH TIME

● ●  **THE BA FRIED CHICKEN PRIMER**  ● ●



Let's put the debates to rest. Perfect fried chicken—golden brown, with a flaky-crisp crust and juicy meat—is easily accomplished at home. Here's how to achieve irresistible goodness every time, from the ultimate spice rub to a delicate dredge. (And yes, the pan you use matters, too.)

Our favorites to serve alongside the best chicken you've ever fried: Southern Mac and Cheese (page 79), Wilted Escarole (page 102), and Caraway Pickles (page 102).



“I dunk a small piece of bread in the oil. If it bubbles and starts to brown, then the oil is ready.”

—Elizabeth Karmel, executive chef, Hill Country Chicken, New York City

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The
FAT

SOLVE THE PEANUT RIDDLE

Vegetable oil and shortening work just fine, but **we love peanut oil, and we're not alone**. Dense, with a slightly earthy flavor and a high smoke point, peanut oil is "the lard of oils," says Scott Peacock. Frying in peanut oil produces a lovely, mahogany-brown crust.

Careful frying in shallow oil will render the fat from the skin, resulting in a coveted crust. But an excess of oil that remains while the chicken cools can translate to a greasy finish. The solution? Use tongs to lift each piece out of the oil and hold it at an angle for a good three seconds while the fat drips back into the pan. Transfer it to a rack set inside a rimmed baking sheet so air can circulate and keep it from getting soggy. Let cool for at least 10 minutes before digging in.

Finally, **if you don't have a deep-fry thermometer, don't worry.** The oil will shimmer slightly when it's hot enough, and a piece of bread should bubble on contact and brown quickly.

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The
Skillet

CAST A LITTLE BLACK MAGIC

A cast-iron skillet—inexpensive and basically indestructible—is the prized frying vessel for a reason. It retains heat better than most pans, which helps regulate the oil temperature and ensures even frying. If you don't own one already, this recipe should provide ample motivation (for more about cast-iron, see Prep School, page 105).