
Fried Delicata Catfish

The Essential Southern Living Cookbook

Preparation Time: 35 minutes

Start to Finish Time: 40 minutes

Peanut oil

6 (four ounce) Delicata catfish fillets

1 cup whole milk or buttermilk

3/4 cup fine yellow cornmeal

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon black pepper

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 teaspoon paprika

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1/4 teaspoon celery seeds

2 teaspoons Kosher salt, divided

lemon wedges (for serving)

BLACK-EYED PEA RANCHERO SAUCE

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 can (15.5 ounce) black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed

1 cup chopped white onion

1/2 cup chopped, seeded jalapeno chilies (from three large chilies)

1 clove garlic, minced

1 can (15 ounce) whole peeled plum tomatoes

1 1/2 teaspoons Kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

1/2 teaspoon paprika

Make the Black-Eyed Pea Ranchero Sauce: Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the peas, onion and jalapeno. Cook, stirring constantly, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring constantly, until soft, about 1 minute. Carefully add the tomatoes, breaking up the tomatoes using the back of a wooden spoon. Stir in the salt, pepper, cumin and paprika. Reduce the heat to medium-low. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the tomato liquid is partially thickened, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and cool slightly, about 5 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees.

Pour the peanut oil into a large, heavy frying pan to 1/2-inch up the sides. (Cast-iron is best.) Heat over medium-high until the oil reaches 350 degrees. (A good test is to flick a little of the dry breading into the oil. If it sizzles at once, it's ready to cook.)

While the oil is heating, soak the catfish in milk for 5 minutes. Set a wire rack on a large rimmed baking sheet. Place in the preheated oven.

In a bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, garlic powder, black pepper, thyme, paprika, cayenne and one teaspoon of salt. Place in a shallow dish for dredging. (Or substitute your favorite seasoning.)

Once the oil is hot, remove the catfish fillets from the milk and dredge them in the flour mixture, shaking off any excess.

Working in two batches, carefully place the fillets in the hot oil. Fry until golden brown and cooked through, about 4 minutes per side. Sprinkle the remaining salt (about 1/2 teaspoon per batch) on the fish when it comes out of the pan.

Transfer the cooked catfish to the wire rack on the baking sheet in the preheated oven.

Serve the catfish with lemon wedges and the Black-Eyed Pea Ranchero Sauce.

Seafood

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 952 Calories; 17g Fat (16.0% calories from fat); 48g Protein; 157g Carbohydrate; 22g Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 6615mg Sodium. Exchanges: 10 1/2 Grain(Starch); 3 Lean Meat; 0 Vegetable; 3 Fat.