

Fried Chicken Tips

Fried chicken is a beloved dish common to home kitchens all around the globe with many cultures having their own individual take on this classic. It is a Barossa favourite and continually one of the most popular and talked about dishes at Harvest Kitchen and who doesn't love biting into a super crunchy coating to find a succulent piece of spiced chicken inside.

Here are some of our chef Jamie's top tips that we have learnt in the restaurant and that we hope will help you to produce fantastic fried chicken in your kitchen

1. **Brine your bird**

Brining is the secret to locking in flavour and moisture in your meat and is essential for succulent fried chicken. The best way to do this is to put your chicken in a brine solution in the fridge overnight before you intend to cook.

A basic brine for chicken is made at a ratio of 4 tablespoon of salt per litre of water. You can then add any variety of aromatics to this that you like but a good base set is lemon, thyme, bay leaf, peppercorn and then something sweet like brown sugar, honey or maple syrup.

2. **Use good clean oil in a thick base pot.**

The easiest way to cook fried chicken at home is to shallow fry wonderful result. The most important item to use when shallow frying is a good thick base and preferable thick-walled pot. Something like a Le Creuset is perfect and will help you retain an even heat to your oil while frying. Use an oil with a high smoke point like canola, grapeseed or peanut oils and remember not to overheat your oil as the coating of your chicken will darken before it is cooked through. A temperature of around 170deg is perfect and a digital probe thermometer is really handy for getting this right. Have about 2-3 cm of oil in you pot, enough to cover half the chicken pieces.

3. **Be rough and ruthless with your coating**

To get a crunchy coating on your chicken it is important to get a good amount of flour on the outside. Using a two-stage coating with spiced flour and buttermilk and adding a little rice flour or corn flour to your regular flour will help achieve this result. We mix onion and garlic powder along with sweet paprika, salt and a little cayenne pepper into our flour mix. Make up two bowls of the flour mix with a bowl of buttermilk between them. Dip the chicken into the first flour then drop it into the buttermilk and get a good wet coating on it. While still dripping with buttermilk drop it into the second flour bowl and roughly press the flour into the chicken. This helps to get all those wonderful crunchy nodules on the outside of the chicken. Leave the chicken to rest for 10 - 15 mins before frying to ensure the coating adheres to the chicken. This also allows the chicken to come up to room temperature before cooking and ensures the meat will cook through.

4. **Rest on a rack**

Make sure when your chicken comes out of the fryer you leave it to rest on a rack, something like a cake rack is perfect. Resting your chicken on paper towel or similar will cause your coating to go soggy. Resting the meat will ensure it is moist and juicy when you come to eat it and will give you the opportunity to do a couple of batches. Don't forget everyone will want seconds.

5. **Serve with something fresh and crunchy**

Fried chicken is best accompanied by a side with some acid and a little fresh crunch. A good slaw of some type is always good, and you can be super creative with this. One of our favourite tools for this is a Japanese grater that you can pick up from most Asian grocers. It is a really simple way to get a fine julienne of fresh vegetable and can be used with carrot, celeriac, cucumber, apple to add to some finely sliced red cabbage to make a great colourful slaw. Add in some fresh lemon juice, mayo and dill along with some salt and pepper and you are good to go.

