

Crispy Southern Fried Okra

Learn to make crispy Southern fried okra with this easy recipe. Golden-brown perfection with a crunchy cornmeal coating and tender interior.

20 min

PREP

15 min

COOK

35 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Crispy Southern Fried Okra

Ingredients

- 1 lb okra
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 cup flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp paprika

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the okra**

Wash 1 lb of okra pods under cold running water and pat completely dry with paper towels. Trim off the stem ends and slice each pod into ½-inch thick rounds.
- 2 Soak in buttermilk**

Place the sliced okra in a large bowl and pour 1 cup of buttermilk over it. Stir to coat all pieces evenly and let sit for 15 minutes.
- 3 Make the coating mixture**

Combine 1 cup cornmeal, 1 cup all-purpose flour, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp black pepper, and 1 tsp paprika in a shallow dish. Whisk together until evenly mixed.
- 4 Heat the oil**

Pour vegetable oil to a depth of 2 inches in a heavy-bottomed pot or deep skillet. Heat over medium-high heat until the oil reaches 350°F to 375°F (175°C to 190°C) on a deep-fry thermometer.
- 5 Coat the okra**

Remove okra pieces from buttermilk, letting excess drip off. Working in batches, dredge each piece in the cornmeal mixture, pressing gently to help coating stick.
- 6 Fry in batches**

Carefully add one-third of the coated okra to the hot oil, avoiding overcrowding. Fry for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring occasionally with a slotted spoon, until golden brown and crispy.

- 7 Transfer fried okra to a paper towel-lined plate to drain. Repeat frying process with remaining okra in two more batches, allowing oil to return to temperature between batches.
- 8 Season immediately with a pinch of salt while still hot. Serve warm as a side dish or appetizer.

Tips

Select young, tender okra pods that are bright green and free from blemishes for the best texture and flavor.

Thoroughly dry the okra after washing to prevent oil splattering and ensure the coating adheres properly.

Let the buttermilk-soaked okra rest for 10-15 minutes before coating to help the breading stick better and create a crispier texture.

Maintain oil temperature between 350-375°F using a thermometer for consistent, golden results without burning or greasiness.

Avoid overcrowding the pan when frying, as this lowers oil temperature and results in soggy, unevenly cooked okra.

Drain fried okra on paper towels or a wire rack immediately after cooking to remove excess oil and maintain crispiness.

For extra flavor, add a pinch of cayenne pepper or garlic powder to the cornmeal mixture to customize the seasoning to your taste.

Serve immediately while hot for the best texture, as fried okra loses its crispiness quickly as it cools.