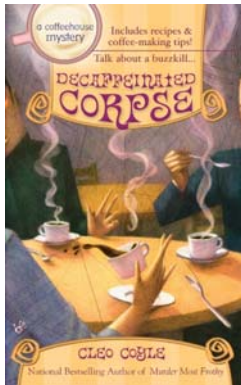


# Cleo Coyle's Buttermilk Fried Chicken

*Tender and sweet from its buttermilk bath, crispy and crunchy from its dip in hot oil—the perfect fall comfort food.*



Fall means comfort food, and in my Coffeehouse Mystery: *Decaffeinated Corpse*, which takes place in October, my comfort recipes include *Came Con Café*—a hearty beef stew based on a traditional Mayan dish and laced with the earthy flavor of coffee. Because that recipe is already available in the back of my book, I'm sharing one today that's more economical but just as comforting.

Fried chicken is a deceptively simple dish. What's the big deal, right? You flour chicken pieces and fry them. But if you've ever tried to make it successfully, then you know a lot can go wrong (at least it has for me!). This recipe never fails me. For one thing, I use chicken wings exclusively. By cutting up the chicken wings and discarding the tips\*, you can get 24 pieces of fried chicken out of just 12 wings—an economical and tasty meat course for 4 people that's both filling and satisfying. Unlike bigger pieces of chicken—which often end up burning on the outside before cooking properly all the way through—chicken wing pieces fry perfectly in about 8 to 10 minutes. These smaller pieces require less oil, too. The buttermilk bath is the second key to a successful batch of fried chicken. The acid in the buttermilk is an excellent marinade for the meat, softening and sweetening the chicken before it touches the oil.

*My advice:* Buy a quart of buttermilk, reserve 1/2 cup for my Buttermilk Apple Snack Cake recipe and use the rest to make this delicious batch of fried chicken. Look for my Snack Cake recipe at my Website: [www.CoffeehouseMystery.com](http://www.CoffeehouseMystery.com).

*Eat with joy!*  
~Cleo Coyle

*\*The chicken wing tips don't have to be discarded. I boil them in water with celery, carrots, onions and spices and make a delicious chicken broth. Waste not!*

# Cleo Coyle's Buttermilk Fried Chicken

Recipe (c) 2009 by Alice Alfonsi who writes *The Coffeehouse Mysteries* as Cleo Coyle with her husband Marc Cerasini

**Serves:** This recipe calls for 3 pounds of wings, which is about 12 wings or 24 pieces after the wings are cut up.

## Ingredients:

3 pounds fresh chicken wings  
1 quart regular or light buttermilk  
(Reserve 1/2 cup for my Buttermilk Apple Snack Cake recipe!)  
3 cups all purpose flour  
2 tablespoons McCormick Original Chicken Seasoning blend  
(Or your favorite chicken spice blend)  
1 tablespoon salt  
1 tablespoon freshly-ground pepper  
2 tablespoons sweet paprika  
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (Optional)  
Canola oil for frying

**Step 1:** Cut the wings into three pieces, discarding all wing tips. (Or you can boil the tips with carrots, celery, onion and spices to make chicken broth.) Place cut up chicken in a plastic or glass container. Pour buttermilk over the chicken wing pieces and marinate in refrigerator for up to 3 hours (no more).

**Step 2:** Mix together the flour, salt, pepper, paprika, chicken spice, and cayenne pepper (if using) in a plastic food storage bag. (I like the zip-lock kind.)

**Step 3:** Remove chicken pieces from buttermilk (do not rinse), simply shake off any loose liquid. Drop wing pieces into the bag 2 or 3 pieces at a time. Shake well until each piece is evenly coated.

**Step 4:** Heat canola oil in a pan or pot deep enough to allow wing pieces to be submerged in oil (at least 2 inches deep). Shake excess flour off your chicken wing pieces (important to get rid of excess flour before frying). One piece at a time, place your chicken into the hot oil. *Note:* You know the oil is hot enough for frying when a small dough ball made from a bit of buttermilk and flour sizzles when dropped into the pot. If using a hot oil thermometer, the ideal temperature for the oil is 335° F. Make sure your pan is not too crowded, otherwise, the oil's temperature will drop too fast, and you'll end up with greasy chicken.

**Step 5:** Fry each batch for 8-10 minutes, turning occasionally until chicken is golden brown & cooked evenly. Watch your oil temperature: This takes patience and practice. Keeping the oil hot enough is the key to good frying. Adding wings will reduce the oil's temp., but turning heat too high will burn them. I put my finished fried pieces on a metal rack over an old cookie sheet pan to catch excess grease. Put rack in a 220° F. oven to dry chicken out and keep warm until all pieces are fried, and. . . *Eat with joy!*

For more recipe ideas or to learn more about the books in my *Coffeehouse Mystery* series, visit my virtual home: [www.CoffeehouseMystery.com](http://www.CoffeehouseMystery.com)

