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Crispy Buttermilk Fried Chicken

- 1 Quart whole milk
- Kosher salt
- 1/2 Cup sugar
- 2 (4 lb) roasting chickens, each cut into 8 pieces
- 2 Cups buttermilk
- 2 Large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 Tsp sweet paprika
- 1 Tsp hot sauce
- 1/2 Tsp fresh ground pepper
- 2 Tsp baking powder
- 1 1/2 Tsp baking soda
- 5 Cups all-purpose flour
- Vegetable oil, for frying (about a quart)

- 1) In a small saucepan, combine 1 cup of the milk with 3/4 cup of kosher salt and the sugar and stir over moderate heat just until the sugar and salt dissolve, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a large, deep bowl and add the remaining 3 cups of milk. Add the chicken pieces and refrigerate for 4 hours. Drain the chicken, rinse and pat thoroughly dry. If you family or guests are salt sensitive be sure to wash the chicken thoroughly and pat very dry with paper towels.
- 2) In a bowl, mix buttermilk, eggs, 1 tablespoon of kosher salt (or less, up to you - I use a teaspoon), paprika, hot sauce and pepper. Whisk in baking powder and baking soda. Put half of the flour in a large bowl. Working with a few pieces at a time, dredge the chicken in the flour, tapping off any excess. Dip the chicken in the buttermilk, letting the excess drip off; return the chicken to the flour and turn to coat. Transfer to a rack. Repeat with the remaining chicken, adding more flour as needed. If the flour becomes too lumpy, sift it.
- 3) Heat the oil in 2 large, deep skillets until shimmering. Working in batches, add the chicken to the skillets in a single layer, without crowding, and fry over moderate heat. Cover for the first five minutes. Uncover and cook turning occasionally, until deep golden and cooked through, 18 to 20 minutes; an instant-read thermometer inserted near the bone should register 160°.
- 4) If it's frying too fast, reduce heat slightly. If it appears to retain grease, slightly increase heat.
- 5) Drain the chicken on wire racks lined with paper towels and fry the remaining pieces. Serve hot or warm.

NOTE: the key is to cover in the beginning to start the cooking process inside the chicken, but to uncover during the last part of the cooking time to get the outside nice and crispy and golden brown.

Makes 6-8 Servings

