

Chicken Fried Steak



Serves 4

2 cups all-purpose flour
salt and fresh-ground black pepper, to taste
1 1/2 cups buttermilk
1 large egg
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon fresh-ground black pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon garlic powder
steak seasoning, to taste (optional)
vegetable shortening, for frying
1 1/2 to 2 pounds top round, tenderized by your butcher (or you, if you have the energy), cut into 4 equal portions about 1/4 inch thick

Place flour in a shallow dish and season with salt and pepper. In another dish, whisk together the buttermilk, the egg, and the remaining dry ingredients. If desired, sprinkle the steaks with a little bit of steak seasoning, then dredge them in the flour. Dip each steak into the buttermilk mixture, then once again into the flour, completely coating the steaks.

In a deep cast-iron skillet over medium heat, heat the shortening to about 340 degrees. There should be enough shortening (2 to 4 inches) to almost cover the steaks and allow them to float. Fry the steaks, gently turning every so often, until golden brown, about 6 to 7 minutes (don't crowd the skillet; you can fry in batches, just be sure to bring your shortening back up to temperature). Drain on a wire rack and keep warm in a low oven while you whip up some cream gravy. Serve immediately—they lose their luster rather quickly.