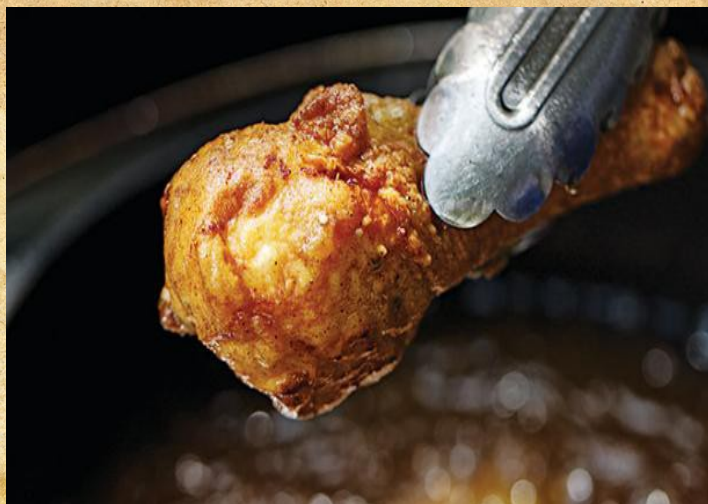


Fried Chicken



JALAPEÑO BRINE

- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 4 cloves garlic, smashed
- 4 jalapeños, halved lengthwise
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1/4 cup kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 8 cups cold water
- 1 3-to-4-pound chicken, cut into parts

In a large, nonreactive container, mix the first six ingredients, then stir in the water. Add the chicken and marinate in the refrigerator for 4 to 8 hours.

BREADING

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
- Lard, vegetable shortening, or vegetable oil, for frying

Stir together the dry ingredients, then taste and adjust the seasonings. Remove the chicken from the brine, dredge each piece in the flour until well coated, and place the pieces on a baking sheet. Allow to sit out for 1 hour.

Add lard to a large cast-iron skillet (enough to come to about 1/2 inch when melted) and heat over medium-high till it reaches 350 degrees. Working in batches, place a single layer of chicken in the oil, skin side down, turn the heat to medium, cover the skillet, and cook for 10 minutes.

Remove the cover, gently turn over the chicken, and continue to cook, uncovered, for 10 more minutes. Stick an instant-read thermometer in the largest piece and check that it reads 165 degrees. If so, place the fried chicken on brown paper bags or a rack to drain. If not, continue to cook for a couple more minutes. Repeat for the remaining pieces, using the same oil. Allow to cool, then serve.