

Sandpiper Motel

Welcomes Bikers

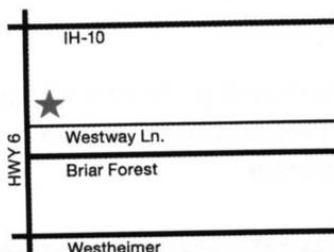
409.765.9431
201 Seawall Blvd.
Galveston Island, Texas



**PARTS • ACCESSORIES • REPAIRS • SALES
SERVICE • IMPORTS • DOMESTICS**

COMPLETE HARLEY SERVICE

**WE SPECIALIZE IN IMPORT CRUISERS, SPORTBIKES & ATVs
LOW PRICES ON TOP BRAND RIDING GEAR**



281-584-0878

**WEST OAKS MALL AREA!
1463 Highway 6 S. #500
Houston, TX 77077**



**Simple, and Simply Delicious
Chicken Fried Steak**
Carmen Juch

It should be about the same circumference as your head and have gravy so thick you can almost but not quite use a fork to "spoon" it up. Its edges should be jagged and its surface rough and brown and crisp. It's the Texan style meat and potato dish, that's for sure. It's Chicken Fried Steak and made correctly, it's delicious.

Although we call it "Chicken-Fried", it is beef; usually tenderized (read beaten to a pulp) round steak. I have seen recipes that call for "cubed" steak but since I have yet to locate what part of the cow has the "cube" I stick to round or if you must, sirloin. This tenderized piece of meat is coated first in seasoned flour then an egg wash, back into the seasoned flour mixture and then fried, similar to fried chicken.

Then to top it off, a most heavenly gravy made with the fond (commonly known as drippings) that are left in the bottom of the frying pan, is generously laded on top. There must be enough gravy so that each and every bite of the steak is covered sufficiently. This gravy along with a heaping helping of mashed potatoes and a fresh veggie, per-

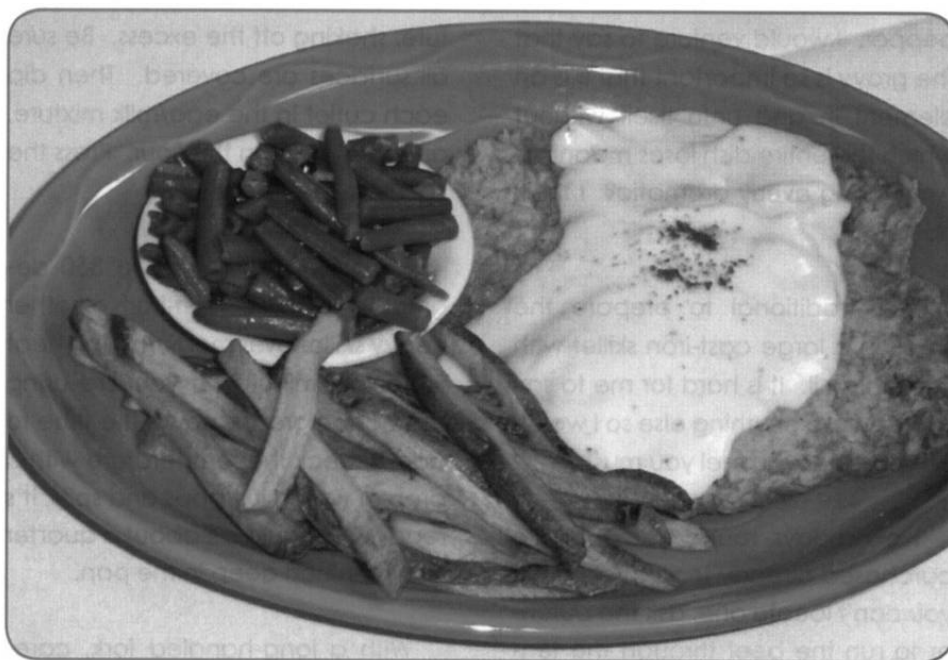
haps corn or green beans along with Texas Toast or cornbread, complete the perfect Chicken Fried Steak dinner, period. No other substitutions allowed.

Why the name? No, it isn't just to get men to drool over the idea of two of their favorite food group, steak and "anything fried", it's because of the technique used to prepare it –fried like southern fried chicken.

Unfortunately for us, today's many restaurants use a deep fryer to cook their fried chicken and therefore the steak also ends up prepared in the same manner so it isn't really what the original dish was intended to be, which is pan fried much like southern fried chicken. No, what you get when you order a Chicken Fried Steak these days is a piece of tasteless beef byproduct (resemblance to cardboard), covered in a gluey paste, flavored with pepper and little else, along with liquid-y mashed potatoes (if they aren't instant which is infinitely worse!) and a side of some kind of canned veggie! This explains why when we find an authentic recipe being made at a restaurant, we grab hold and won't let loose.

No I say! This insanity cannot be allowed to continue! It is a disgrace to the South and besides it gives me palpitations and twitches! So, never fear, I am here to help. Do you want to know how to make the original and only southern style Chicken Fried Steak? Stick with me and we shall succeed.

I think most people consider Chicken Fried Steak the state dish



in Texas but that hasn't been made official ... yet. According to a Texas Restaurant Association, it is estimated that 800,000 orders of the dish are served in the state every day. That's every DAY people and that doesn't include what is prepared at home!

The term "Chicken-Fried Steak" first appeared in print in 1952 but the dish probably originated in the 1800's from an adaptation to the popular dish brought by the German people who settled in Texas from 1844 to 1850, Wiener Schnitzel. Most ranchers sold the prime cuts of beef and kept the tougher cuts for themselves and their ranch hands. It stands to reason that this recipe evolved to enhance and tenderize these tough cheaper cuts.

A staple dish in the South for decades it has reached the pinnacle of worthiness in comfort foods. When people come to visit the south, this simple dish is often on the list of "to try foods" along with bar-b-que and Tex-Mex. (If you happen to be one

of those people, might I suggest before you head into the restaurant, count the pick-ups and motorcycles. Anything less than 6, head to another restaurant.)

"Country" Fried Steak is another name for the dish but uses a slightly different method and ingredients and not worthy to stand next to the original. There are also other techniques that call for simmering the fried steak in a simple gravy started with water or broth to further tenderize. It is often called smothered steak, and is similar to the Creole grillades and each most certainly has its place in our hearts and while quite good in its own right, should not be mistaken for, nor compared to, Chicken Fried Steak. We are here for the real thing, so I continue.

Chicken Fried Steak is not nor will it ever be acceptable served without the cream gravy. The pan drippings are a critical ingredient of this gravy along with a honking ton of black

pepper. I would venture to say that the gravy is so important that it is an element in and unto itself without which the entire dish loses meaning. Am I being overly dramatic? I think not.

It is traditional to prepare the steak in a large cast-iron skillet with very little oil. It is hard for me to say you can use anything else so I won't, but do what you feel you must.

Now a days, round steak can be purchased already tenderized but if you can't locate one, ask the butcher to run the beef through the tenderizer or you can tenderize it yourself with a mallet. Then follow these simple steps and enjoy the dish as it was meant to be eaten.

4 round steaks, fat removed, tenderized
2 eggs
2/3 cup milk or buttermilk
2 cups all-purpose flour
Cooking oil or melted lard
1 tablespoon bacon grease, optional, but extra good
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/4 each teaspoon onion powder, garlic, cayenne, paprika

Beat together the egg, milk and set aside.

Mix together the salt, pepper, paprika and sprinkle on both sides of beef.

Add onion powder, garlic and cayenne to flour and mix well. Dredge the cutlets in the flour mix-

ture, shaking off the excess. Be sure all surfaces are covered. Then dip each cutlet in the egg/milk mixture, and then back in the flour. Press the flour into the meat.

Heat the cooking oil to 350 degrees in a large cast-iron or other heavy skillet over medium-high heat for a few minutes. If you are using the bacon grease now's the time to add. Check the temperature with a drop of water; if it pops and spits, it's ready. Oil should be about a quarter to a half-inch deep in the pan.

With a long-handled fork, carefully slide steak into the hot oil. Cook on first side about 2 minutes then turn and cook on the other side one to 2 minutes until golden brown. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook 4 or 5 minutes until steak is cooked through. Drain on paper towels and keep warm while cooking the remaining steaks.

Creamy Gravy

"Fond" is the official and fancy term that describes the browned caramelized bits that remain in the pan after something has been cooked. (I am very fond of "fond".) Without this residue, cream gravy is just not cream gravy. So, need I say it again? For the real thing, you must have the drippings. This makes about 4 cups and it sounds like a lot – but if you have 4 steaks and potatoes too, what do you think? Use the following recipe for cream gravy fit for a Texan!

4 tablespoons All-Purpose Flour
4 tablespoons reserved oil from

pan

2 cup Chicken Stock
2 cup Milk or half and half
3 teaspoon Coarse Ground Black Pepper
1-2 teaspoon Salt

Using the same pan you fried your steaks in pour off all but about 4 tablespoons of the remaining oil. If for some reason you haven't enough oil add enough to make the 4 tablespoons. Be sure to keep all or as much as possible of the brown pits!!

Heat pan to medium-high. Add the flour (you can use the left over from when you coated the steaks if you wish) and cook, stirring to make a roux. Be sure there are no lumps in the flour. If lumps do pop up – smash 'em.

Add the milk (or half and half if you choose) and whisk to quickly incorporate the liquids and the flour mixture and keep out the lumps. And again, smash any lumps.

Bring up to a simmer. Lower heat; be sure to scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to get all the fond incorporated into the gravy. Add the water a little at a time, until the desired consistency is reached. Remember you want thick gravy but not a paste. Continue cooking and stirring a few minutes until gravy reaches desired thickness. Check seasonings and add more salt and pepper according to your taste.

Feel free to tuck that napkin under your chin. And when you finish you meal, *sigh* with satisfaction ... and loosen your belt.