

Mock Chicken Fried Steak

Elizabeth Clark's

1 lb. ground beef
1 teaspoon onion salt
2 teaspoons parsley flakes
1 egg
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chili powder
2 cups cracker crumbs

- Mix ground beef, parsley flakes, onion salt, egg, salt, chili powder and half the cracker crumbs.
- Divide the mixture into balls; sprinkle the rest of the crackers on a board and roll the balls into the crumbs, shaping into steaks. Be sure each side is well coated with crumbs.
- Place on waxed paper and chill 30 minutes or more.
- Heat shortening 1 inch deep in skillet until hot.
- Add steaks and cook until brown on both sides.

Did you know...

The history of chicken fried steak (aka country fried steak) is a fabulous example of cultural diversity, regional pride and just plain confusion. Why? Because there are as many names/recipes for this dish as people who claim they know how it started. That's part of what makes the study of food history so interesting. As is true with many popular foods we know today, the recipe preceded the name.

Food historians generally agree the practice of dredging meat (all kinds) in flour/spices, frying/baking it up and serving it with a sauce/gravy dates back to ancient times. This cooking method tenderizes the meat and enhances its flavor. Think Wiener schnitzel. Europeans who settled in America knew all about making tough cuts of meat palatable. Many historic American cookbooks contain "chicken-fried" type recipes for beef, veal, chicken & lamb, though they go by different names. Veal is traditionally considered to be a tough cut of meat and was often cooked in such a way as to make it more tender, as in wiener schnitzel. Sensible American cooks would have treated tough cuts of beef in a similar fashion. The chicken connection? Some food historians suggest the coating and pan-fried cooking technique commonly used on fried chicken was easily adapted to tenderize steak.

In America, country fried steak is generally considered to be a regional dish. It is commonly found in the southern and central western states. The meat used for this American dish is always beef, the cuts vary. The "chicken-fried" moniker seems to be a mid-20th century invention. The earliest printed recipe we have for in chicken-fried steak was published in 1949.

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