

CORNMEAL FRIED OKRA & EGGPLANT

Joseph Lenn, formerly of Blackberry Farm and James Beard Foundation Best Chef Southeast 2013 winner, shared this recipe with Sean Brock that demonstrated a simple way that his family prepares okra. I have incorporated eggplant into the mix as the quick cooking method is perfect for creating a crispy exterior and soft & fluffy interior that complements the okra beautifully. This is not a low-calorie recipe however as the oil is soaked up into the cornmeal and eggplant during frying- balance the dish with grilled meat or fish and a light salad or steamed potatoes!

Ingredients

8 ounces medium- large Okra, sliced into ½ inch rounds

1 large Eggplant, peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes

1 Cup Hickory King Cornmeal

2 Eggs

Oil for shallow frying, about 2 Cups or more

Salt & Pepper to season

Directions

Set a medium cast-iron skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat and pour in oil to reach a ½ inch up the sides.

Beat eggs in a large mixing bowl and then pour in okra and eggplant pieces.

Use a spoon to coat all the pieces thoroughly and then pour in cornmeal, tossing to coat evenly.

Check that oil is hot by sprinkling a pinch of cornmeal into the oil and see that it rises instantly and disperses without becoming black- if it is too hot it will smoke, if it is too cold it will sink and stay at the bottom of the pan.

Add vegetables in batches and fry until golden and crisp, turning over to cook evenly, about 3 minutes.

Transfer onto a paper towel-lined tray to soak up excess oil and sprinkle with salt & pepper.

Repeat for remaining product and serve straight away.