

Shaunda Necole [00:00:00]:

Hello, beautiful souls. Today you're in for a treat on today's episode of The Soul Food Pod. I'm back home in VA, and I have with me my mom, known around town as the Queen Of Fried Chicken. So today's conversation is all about Mama's fried chicken.

Shaunda Necole [00:00:24]:

Welcome to The Soul Food Pod!

The first soul food podcast about Southern soul food.

I'm your host, Shaunda Necole, cookbook author and food and lifestyle blogger. Making life easier plus more soulful, one recipe at a time.

What makes me an expert on authentic soul food?

My heritage dates back to my great-grandmother Florence, a highly esteemed North Carolinian one-woman catering queen.

In honor of my Grandma Florence's legacy, I run the world's number-one soul food website today.

I'm a born and raised Southern girl living my best life in the fabulous entertainment and food capital of the world, Las Vegas.

I'm so proud to share my family's African American soul food recipes representing our beautiful people and a legacy of what we eat.

My mission here on The Soul Food Pod is to provide you with recipes for success.

So join me as I create conversations about how accessible and approachable classic Southern soul food recipes can be.

I'll teach you how these iconic recipes are now easy enough for anyone to make and everyone to love you.

Shaunda Necole [00:01:56]:

Okay, so we know her affectionately as Ma-Ma, but this is my mom, Mary, a born and raised North Carolinian. She grew up on down-home Southern soul food. You know, in your grandma's house, that always had a big pot of something good cooking on the stove, from collard greens to chicken and dumplings. My grandma, who taught my mom how to cook, is my first memory of sweet Southern soul food. I can still see her in the kitchen, hanging beads separating the kitchen from the dining room. Hovering over the bleach-clean dishwasher scent was the smell of delicious soul food seasonings and spices. Evidence of the soulful seasonings and spice bottles stood crowded next to the stove, taking over the kitchen counter. And who can forget the big wooden spoon and fork, plastic tablecloth and round rug and a bowl of plastic fruit in the center for decoration? Who didn't love playing with the plastic grapes as a kid? I know I did. There are so many of my favorite memories of family gatherings in that tiny kitchen that also housed an area for the washing machine behind the curtain. This is the place where I learned that food for the body is not enough. There must be food for the soul. So Mama, how old were you when Grandma taught you how to cook?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:03:19]:

Hi, everybody. I think I was about nine or ten when I learned how to cook certain things.

Shaunda Necole [00:03:26]:

Oh, wow, that's much younger than the I guess post millennials today. Younger than even when I learned. And what was the first food you remember making?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:03:36]:

Well, since I was not trusted to use oil on the stovetop. My first dish was pizza.

Shaunda Necole [00:03:46]:

Okay. Making pizza. And did Grandma, like, how often did she make fried chicken? Was it a Friday thing or a soul food Sunday thing? When she cooked, how did she make her fried chicken, and when did she make it?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:03:59]:

We probably had fried chicken two to three times a week.

Shaunda Necole [00:04:03]:

Oh, wow. Okay. And so since you weren't trusted to make it fried chicken at age ten, which I get, oil can be a lot. When did you begin making fried chicken on your own?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:04:17]:

When I got married and left home, I had to cook for myself and my husband, so I dove into making fried chicken.

Shaunda Necole [00:04:25]:

Wow.

Ma-Ma Mary [00:04:27]:

I learned all the steps from her. I knew how to do it, so it was fun.

Shaunda Necole [00:04:32]:

Wow. I would say you dove in and you never look back. So here we are today again, done, the queen of fried chicken around these parts. So you and I have had conversations about the evolution of fried chicken, how you began cooking it in a skillet, then in a pot. A decade or so ago, you were all about fried chicken in the deep fryer, and today, Mama's fried chicken is air fry. So tell us more about the evolution of fried chicken appliances.

Ma-Ma Mary [00:05:02]:

Well, the evolution is my mother used the frying pan, and it was a cast iron frying pan, and I started out the same way with the cast iron frying pan, and then I progressed to a pot because I didn't like the splatter of the frying pan, so the pot kind of alleviated that. And then the deep fryer was introduced, and that was even better because you put the food in, there was no turning of the chicken or anything.

Shaunda Necole [00:05:37]:
Wow.

Ma-Ma Mary [00:05:37]:
And you put the lid on and just waited for it to be done. And then the air fryer.

Shaunda Necole [00:05:45]:
The air fryer, right.

Ma-Ma Mary [00:05:46]:
Yes. So far, so good. The air fryer doesn't use any oil, so that's the beauty of that.

Shaunda Necole [00:05:54]:
Yeah, I actually made cast iron skillet fried chicken last night. And, yes, you got to watch it. You got to turn it. I don't know why I didn't use a deep fryer. I was just trying to get, like, ready for the get into our talk for today. And it was really fun doing it the old-fashioned way, but I'm with you deep fryer all the way. And today air fry, no oil less mess, no spill to clean up. And you still get that same Southern fried chicken taste as long as you're seasoning it right. And it's so quick and easy to make. So this is a question I'm often asked on the soul food pot, and because we're asked it so much, we had to create a soul food Southern fried chicken and seasoning guide to keep up with this frequently asked question. Now, before I ask Mama this next question and she reveals her answer. I want to let all you beautiful souls know that this is going to be the first time ever that we unveil to the public. Mama's Fried Chicken Recipe so this is exclusively found in this episode and linked for you to print and prepare@thesolfoodpod.com.

Shaunda Necole [00:07:05]:
**Do you want to make the most flavorful and delicious vegetables and meats?
Do you have the most flavorful seasonings in your pantry or on your spice rack?
No worries if you don't have the answers to these questions.
I've gotchu with my step-by-step digital printable guides to take your taste buds to new heights!
I put together a collection of the best African American seasonings and spices recipes passed along from my grandma to mom to me.
And now to you in my easy step-by-step cookbooks and guides of all that's flavorful with these ultimate lists for soul food seasonings and how to season Southern fried chicken.
Grab them from ShaundaNecoleShop.com
Also linked for your convenience in the episode description.**

Shaunda Necole [00:08:00]:

Okay, Mama, so what's your secret to making great fried chicken?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:08:06]:

Well, my secret to great fried chicken is, of course, salt and pepper, black pepper, garlic powder, paprika, cayenne pepper, and flour.

Shaunda Necole [00:08:25]:

Okay. All right. My recipe is similar, but that's, like, the fun part about Southern cooks is that while we might have, like, similarities, we all have flavor in our food. That's the start with that. Southern soul food cooks cook with flavor, but I love some of the differences. Like, whereas I use red pepper, you use a cayenne pepper. So when you're cooking your chicken, because people ask this all the time, how do you prepare chicken before cooking? People always want to know, do you season the chicken or the flour?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:08:57]:

I season both the flour and the chicken. I start by seasoning the chicken first, and I'll let it sit for, say, ten to 15 minutes after it's seasoned, and then I'll dip it in the flour mixture and get ready to fry it.

Shaunda Necole [00:09:17]:

Okay. I love that. Letting it sit and marinate. Yeah, I like that. Yeah, people always ask that. And if you've been reading thesolfoodpot.com, you'll know, soul food seasoning, rule number 101, always season both the chicken and the flour. What's the secret to keeping fried chicken crispy?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:09:39]:

My secret to crispy fried chicken is using self-rising flour.

Shaunda Necole [00:09:45]:

Okay, so since you just revealed that you use self-rising flour, what type of flour is best for fried chicken? Is it self-rising or is it all purpose like most of us use?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:09:57]:

I think it's a preference, but my preference in using self-rising flour is because the baking powder in the flour kind of gives the chicken a more lifted, crunchy taste.

Shaunda Necole [00:10:12]:

Well, I like that - old school cooks. That's why Mama is here on the show. Okay. I love that. So self-rising flour. We could use all-purpose flour, but it gives it that extra crunch. You're saying when we use a self-rising flour because of that baking powder.

Ma-Ma Mary [00:10:28]:

Yes.

Shaunda Necole [00:10:29]:

Love that. Hope you guys wrote that tip down and held onto it, but I got you. We'll make sure that it's in the episode notes. So why do some people put baking soda in fried chicken, and have you ever used it in your recipe?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:10:43]:

No, I've never used baking soda in my fried chicken, but I think it's probably the same idea as baking powder.

Shaunda Necole [00:10:55]:

That's what I was thinking. Yeah. It sounds like they're going for the crunch when they're putting the baking soda in there. So kind of like using cornstarch to increase the crispy skin crunch, right?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:11:07]:

Yes, cornstarch would do that.

Shaunda Necole [00:11:08]:

Yeah. Sometimes I'll put a little cornstarch in. Some of the recipes we have on the soul food pot include cornstarch. Sometimes I do it, sometimes I don't. So you could go either way. Now, let me ask you about this. Why does buttermilk make fried chicken better? Do you agree with that? I do.

Ma-Ma Mary [00:11:28]:

I've used buttermilk and buttermilk tenderizes the chicken.

Shaunda Necole [00:11:33]:

Right. Okay. All right. So beautiful souls, yes for buttermilk brine. On Thesoulfoodpot.com, you can find our classic buttermilk Southern fried chicken recipe where you first either overnight soak the chicken in buttermilk, or if you're an instant pot connoisseur like myself, you can quickly do that in 20 minutes instead. So yes to a buttermilk brine. And my favorite of all the Southern fried chicken questions is what is the difference between fried chicken and Southern fried chicken?

Ma-Ma Mary [00:12:08]:

Well, I think the difference in fried chicken - Anyone could fry chicken. You don't have to put anything on it. But Southern fried chicken. It's the seasoning and the amount of seasoning.

Shaunda Necole [00:12:25]:

Right. If you could see me grinning from ear to ear while she was answering that question, because it cracks me up. Anybody could fry chicken, but is it going to be good? Is it Southern fried chicken if it doesn't have any seasoning? So I always explain kind of compares to me with how people ask what's the difference between Southern food and soul food? And I always explain it with soul food and Southern food that they're often compared. So while not all Southern food is soul food, most soul food is, of course, Southern African American descent or of Southern African American descent. So Southern food can be described as down south home-cooked comfort food recipes where you can taste the hospitality. And while the essence

of soul food is the same as the taste of Southern hospitality, like I just described, but soul food's core distinguishing factor is Southern food seasoned to perfection.

Ma-Ma Mary [00:13:21]:
Absolutely.

Shaunda Necole [00:13:22]:
Just like a good Southern fried chicken recipe. So, y'all, I'm back here in Virginia, so this is how I'm going to ask you this question. Beautiful souls: Ya'll hungry yet? You ready to eat? So if you're ready to make Mama's fried chicken, head over to thesoulfoodpod.com for a recap of this episode. Mama's fried chicken. I've got you with step-by-step instructions for this very special fried chicken recipe that you heard exclusively here and also with all the answers to your fried chicken frequently asked questions from seasonings to batter and simply how to. You can access these recipes twenty-four seven at your convenience at thesoulfoodpot.com. And I want to thank my mom, Mama Mary, for joining us to talk about Southern Fried chicken and sharing her iconic Queen Of The South fried chicken recipe with us today.

Ma-Ma Mary [00:14:18]:
Thank you for having me. I enjoyed.

Shaunda Necole [00:14:21]:
You are so welcome. It was so fun. So until next time, you beautiful souls, Remember that cooking with love provides food for the soul!

Shaunda Necole [00:14:34]:
Thank you for joining me for this episode of the Soul Food Pod. Did you enjoy today's conversation and recipe?

If you want more easy to make soul food recipes and Southern food for the soul, then follow me for ideas that make your life easier plus more soulful.

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Would you make it?
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