

# Catfish and Chips

## *with Sumac Slaw*



RECIPE BY CLARK BARLOWE  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY THOMAS HARVEY

Summertime in North Carolina screams fried fish to me. It's perfect on the beach right from the pier or in your backyard with friends for a fish fry. From my time in Bermuda, I was able to trace the history of the fish and chips back to Europe and watch its evolution as it came across the Atlantic and landed here in North Carolina.

My take on this classic dish utilizes wild and heirloom ingredients to give it that truly Southern feel. There are so many dishes that remind me of the North Carolina coast but this one blends both the mountains and the coast in a way that few others can. Catfish are truly a unique fish and the experience of fishing for them mirrors that uniqueness. I hope this dish captures that experience.

For this recipe, I have used Carolina Catfish out of Ayden. Their catfish is always mild, sweet and perfect for a recipe like this, but wild fish would be an easy substitute. I hope this recipe finds you well and provides some inspiration for a great summer meal.

### INGREDIENTS

Yields: 4 servings

- 2-3 catfish fillets
- 2 cups cornmeal
- 1 cup flour
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon coriander
- 1 tablespoon granulated garlic
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 quart buttermilk
- 2 pounds fingerling potatoes
- 3 tablespoons salt
- 2 tablespoons black pepper
- 1/2 head cabbage
- 2 carrots
- 1 each shallot or small red onion
- 1 tablespoon sumac powder
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 quart canola oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

### PREPARATION

Soak catfish fillets in buttermilk for a minimum of 1 hour, up to overnight.

Cut fingerling potatoes in half long ways and toss in a medium mixing bowl with 2 tablespoons of canola oil and 1 tablespoon each of salt and black pepper. Spread evenly across a baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees until golden brown and tender (roughly 40 minutes).

Combine cornmeal, flour, paprika, cumin, coriander, granulated garlic and onion powder and 1 tablespoon each of salt and black pepper in a brown paper bag. Shake the bag to combine. Drain the catfish from the buttermilk and add to seasoning bag. Shake the bag thoroughly to bread the catfish.

Heat 3 cups of canola oil in a medium pot to 350 degrees. Add catfish and fry covered with a splatter guard until crispy and golden brown (roughly 4 to 5 minutes). Remove catfish from oil, season with salt and pepper, and allow to rest on paper towels while you prepare the slaw.

In a food processor, add garlic cloves and egg yolks. Blend until thoroughly combined, then slowly drizzle in remaining canola oil to form an aioli (garlic mayonnaise). Once the aioli is formed, add sumac powder. This can be harvested wild in the late summer and fall or purchased at most grocery stores or online. Blend aioli with sumac, lemon juice and a pinch of salt and pepper. Add roughly chopped cabbage, carrots and shallots to the food processor and chop to form slaw. Taste and season with salt, pepper or more sumac as needed.

To plate, warm potatoes and add to plate with catfish and a ramekin of slaw. Garnish with lemon wedges and chopped parsley as needed or just eat it all in the backyard off newspapers.

