

Our State eats

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Okra Fritters

Yield: About a dozen.

- 4 slices (3 ounces) bacon,
cut crosswise into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2/3 cup finely chopped sweet onion
or scallions
- 2 1/2 cups very thinly sliced okra
(from about 8 ounces fresh
whole pods)
- 1 cup fine stone-ground cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt,
plus more for sprinkling
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne
pepper, or to taste
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup buttermilk, well-shaken
- Unflavored oil with a high smoke
point, such as peanut, canola,
safflower, or avocado, for
shallow pan-frying

Lay a wire rack lined with paper towels or a flattened brown paper bag in a rimmed baking sheet to hold and blot the cooked fritters.

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until rendered and browned, about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Transfer with a slotted spoon to drain on paper towels, leaving the drippings behind. Finely chop the bacon and set aside.

In the skillet over medium heat, cook

onion and okra, stirring until they begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in bacon.

In a medium bowl, whisk together cornmeal, baking powder, baking soda, salt, sugar, and cayenne.

In another bowl, whisk together egg and buttermilk until there are no ropy strands of white. Pour into cornmeal mixture and stir until blended. Fold in okra mixture.

Wipe the skillet clean. Add oil to skillet to reach 1/2-inch depth and heat over medium-high until a small pinch of cornmeal dropped into the oil immediately sizzles. If the cornmeal sinks, the oil is too cool. If it blackens or pops, the oil is too hot.

Working in batches of 3 or 4 fritters at a time, spoon about 2 tablespoons of batter per fritter into the hot oil, spacing them evenly. Cook the fritters until bottoms are firm and golden brown. Flip and continue to cook, about 2 minutes more. Transfer cooked fritters to rack and sprinkle with salt.

Between batches, adjust heat to keep the oil at a steady temperature, and use a slotted spoon to skim away any debris that's left behind; this will eventually burn and ruin the oil.

Continue with remaining batter. Serve fritters hot, although they're pretty good after they cool, too.



Pickled Okra Rémoulade

Yield: About 1 1/2 cups.

- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons Creole or whole
grain mustard
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice or
brine from pickled okra
- 1/4 cup drained and finely chopped
pickled okra
- 3 tablespoons chopped scallions
(white and tender green parts)
- Hot sauce, kosher salt,
and black pepper, to taste

In a glass jar or small bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, mustard, lemon zest, and lemon juice. Fold in okra and scallions. Season with hot sauce, salt, and pepper. Cover and refrigerate until chilled. Store in refrigerator for up to one week.

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