

*O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU? (2000)*

## FRIED CHICKEN LEGS & DEVEILED EGGS

Homer's *Odyssey* influenced this bucolic Coen brothers tale about three convicts who, in the throes of one sweltering Mississippi summer, escape rock-breaking duties on the prison chain gang to head off in search of buried treasure. Along the way they pick up a guitar player who sold his soul to the devil, have a run-in with the Klan, aid and abet a baby-faced bank robber and, oh right, record a hit single as the Soggy Bottom Boys. Our fried chicken legs and deviled eggs (courtesy of one of our favorite chefs April Bloomfield; they are on the menu at The Spotted Pig) are perfect Southern-inspired picnic fare.

**Serves:** 4

### FRIED CHICKEN

- 3 cups buttermilk
- 5 tsp cayenne pepper, divided
- 4 tsp salt, divided
- 1½ tsp black pepper, divided
- 1 tsp ground mustard
- few dashes hot sauce
- 8 drumsticks
- 2 cups flour
- about 2 qts vegetable oil
- flaky sea salt for sprinkling

### APRIL BLOOMFIELD'S DEVEILED EGGS

**Makes:** 12 deviled eggs

- 6 large eggs
- 3 Tbsp mayonnaise (see recipe, right) slightly chilled
- 1 Tbsp champagne vinegar
- 1 Tbsp crème fraîche
- 1 tsp Dijon
- Maldon or other flaky sea salt
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped chives
- 1 Tbsp finely chopped chervil
- cayenne or paprika
- extra virgin olive oil (optional)

Stir together buttermilk, 3 tsp cayenne, 2 tsp salt, 1 tsp black pepper, ground mustard, and hot sauce. Marinate drumsticks, covered and refrigerated, at least two hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 250°F and set a baking sheet fitted with a wire rack alongside stove. In a large, heavy bottomed saucepan, add enough oil to come up 2-inches and heat to 360°F using a deep fat thermometer.

Meanwhile, mix flour, remaining 2 tsp cayenne, 2 tsp salt, and ½ tsp black pepper in a shallow bowl. Remove half the chicken from the marinade letting any excess drain off. Thoroughly coat in seasoned flour and tap to shake off loose flour. Using metal tongs, carefully lay chicken in oil. Fry, turning once or twice and maintaining oil temperature, until golden brown and cooked through, about 15 minutes total. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet and place in the oven to keep warm. Repeat with remaining chicken. Sprinkle with salt to serve.

**DEVEILED EGGS:** Fill a medium pot halfway with water and bring to a boil. Gently add eggs to water and cook 10 minutes. Drain and chill in ice water until cold. Peel and halve lengthwise. Press the yolks through a sieve into a small food processor. Add the mayonnaise, vinegar, crème fraîche and mustard and process until smooth. Season with salt. Transfer to a piping bag or resealable plastic bag (snip a corner before piping) and chill 30 minutes. Chill whites too. Pat whites dry and pipe filling into each. Top with a sprinkling of herbs, a dusting of spice, a pinch of salt and a drizzle of oil.

*April's Mayonnaise:* Combine 4 large egg yolks, 2 tsp Dijon mustard, 2 Tbsp champagne vinegar, and ½ tsp Maldon or other flaky sea salt in a bowl and whisk vigorously until yolks go pale and mixture is frothy, about 1 minute. Slowly drizzle in a steady stream of slightly more than 1 cup peanut or sunflower oil, whisking continuously and vigorously until all the oil is really well combined and mayo is pale and silky.