Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 10-15 minutes
Total time: 35 minutes
Yield: 4 servings

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Introduction

Canned okra often gets a bad reputation. Between the texture and the reputation for being “slimy,” many home cooks shy away from it. However, with the right technique, canned okra can be transformed into a delicious, crispy treat that rivals fresh okra! The key is removing

the excess moisture and using a robust breading system.

This recipe is perfect for a quick appetizer, a side dish for dinner, or even a topping for salads. Whether you are looking to save money, use up pantry staples, or simply try a new way to enjoy okra, this recipe will guide you through the process of turning canned goods into a crunchy masterpiece.

Ingredients

For the Okra:

- 2 (14.5 oz) cans of cut okra (or whole okra, sliced into rounds)
- 1 cup buttermilk (or 1 cup milk mixed with 1 tbsp lemon juice)
- 1 large egg

For the Breading:

- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp garlic powder

- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp salt (adjust to taste)
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper (optional, for heat)

For Frying:

- Vegetable oil or peanut oil (enough for deep frying, roughly 2-3 inches in a deep pot)

For Serving (Optional):

- Lemon wedges
- Sea salt flakes
- Your favorite dipping sauce (Ranch, Remoulade, or spicy mayo)

Equipment

- Colander
- Paper towels
- Deep fryer or heavy-bottomed pot (like a Dutch oven)
- Candy/Deep-fry thermometer
- Slotted spoon or spider strainer
- Wire cooling rack
- Mixing bowls (2)

Instructions

Step 1: The Critical Drain (10 minutes)

The most important step in this recipe is removing moisture. Canned okra is packed in liquid; if you fry it wet, it will steam, not crisp, and the breading will slide off.

1. Open your cans of okra and pour them into a colander.

2. Rinse the okra thoroughly under cold running water to remove the “canned” flavor and excess sodium.

3. Shake the colander vigorously to remove excess water.

4. Spread the okra out on a layer of paper towels. Place another layer of paper towels on top and press down gently.

5. Pro Tip: Let the okra sit on the paper towels for at least 10 minutes while you prepare the breading station. The drier the okra, the crispier the final product.

Step 2: Prepare the Breading Station

Set up two shallow bowls or pie plates.

1. Wet Mix: In the first bowl, whisk together the buttermilk and the egg until smooth.

2. Dry Mix: In the second bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper. Whisk until evenly distributed.

Step 3: Heat the Oil

1. Pour your frying oil into a deep pot or deep fryer. You want about 2 to 3 inches of oil.

2. Heat the oil over medium-high heat until it reaches 350°F (175°C) . Use a thermometer to maintain this temperature. If the oil is too cool, the okra will be greasy; if it is too hot, the outside will burn before the inside is hot.

Step 4: Bread the Okra

1. Take a handful of the dried okra and toss it in the buttermilk/egg mixture. Ensure each piece is coated.

2. Using a fork or your fingers, transfer the wet okra to the dry cornmeal mixture.

3. Toss the okra in the dry mix until it is well coated. Press the coating gently onto the okra to ensure it adheres.

4. Important: Do not overcrowd the bowls. Work in small batches.

5. Place the breaded okra on a wire rack or a plate lined with parchment paper while you finish the rest of the batch.

Step 5: The Fry (10-15 minutes total)

1. Carefully lower a batch of the breaded okra into the hot oil using a slotted spoon. Do not drop them from high up (to avoid splashing).

2. Intensity/Fry Time: Fry for 2 to 3 minutes, or until they are golden brown and floating.

3. Note: Because canned okra is already cooked and softened, you are really just cooking the breading. It cooks fast!

4. Remove the okra from the oil using a slotted spoon or spider strainer.

5. Transfer to a wire cooling rack (do not use paper towels directly under the hot okra, as it will steam and soften the crust).

Step 6: Season and Serve

1. Immediately sprinkle the hot okra with a pinch of sea salt flakes.

2. Serve hot with lemon wedges and your favorite dipping sauce.

Recipe Timing and Intensity

- Prep Intensity: Low to Medium. The most labor-intensive part is drying the okra, which requires patience.

- Cooking Intensity: High. Deep frying requires your full attention to monitor oil temperature and prevent burning. You cannot walk away.

- Time Breakdown:

- 0:00 – 0:10: Draining and drying okra.
- 0:10 – 0:15: Preparing breading and heating oil.
- 0:15 – 0:30: Breadng the okra (hands-on).
- 0:30 – 0:35: Frying the batches (active).

Nutritional Information (Per Serving)

Disclaimer: Nutritional values are estimates and will vary based on the specific brands of canned okra used, the oil absorption rate, and exact portion sizes.

- Calories: 280 kcal
- Total Fat: 12g (Saturated Fat: 2g)
- Cholesterol: 50mg
- Sodium: 600mg (Varies greatly based on canned okra brand; rinse well to reduce)
- Total Carbohydrates: 36g

- Dietary Fiber: 4g
- Sugars: 3g
- Protein: 6g
- Vitamin C: 15% DV
- Calcium: 10% DV
- Iron: 15% DV