

Southern Smothered Chicken: Tender, Juicy & Creamy Comfort Food

Prepare for a dish that defines Southern comfort food:



TIME
5-7 min

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INGREDIENTS

2 lbs bone-in, skin-on chicken pieces (such as thighs, drumsticks, or a mix)
Salt and black pepper, to taste
½ cup all-purpose flour (for dredging)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 large yellow onion, sliced
1 green bell pepper, sliced (optional)
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 cups chicken broth (low-sodium recommended)
½ cup heavy cream (optional, for extra creaminess)
Optional: 1 tsp dried thyme or poultry seasoning
Optional: Cooked white rice or mashed potatoes for serving

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Prepare & Brown the Chicken:** Pat the bone-in, skin-on chicken pieces very dry with paper towels. This helps achieve a good crispy skin. Season generously all over with salt and black pepper. Place the ½ cup all-purpose flour in a shallow dish. Dredge each chicken piece in the flour, shaking off any excess. In a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven with a lid, heat 2 tablespoons vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Once hot, carefully add the floured chicken pieces to the skillet (work in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding). Brown the chicken on all sides until deeply golden brown and crispy, about 5-7 minutes per side. Remove the browned chicken from the skillet and set aside.
- 2. Sauté Aromatics:** Reduce the heat in the skillet to medium. If there's excessive oil, you can drain a little, but leave some of the flavorful drippings. Add the sliced yellow onion and sliced green bell pepper (optional) to the skillet. Sauté, stirring occasionally, until the onions are softened and translucent, about 5-7 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook for another 1 minute until fragrant, being careful not to let it burn. If you removed the browned chicken in batches, this is also when you can sprinkle a tablespoon of the leftover dredging flour over the vegetables and cook for 1 minute, stirring, to create a quick roux that will thicken your gravy (optional, but adds body).
- 3. Build the Gravy & Simmer:** Pour in the 3 cups chicken broth, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the skillet (these "fonds" add immense flavor!). Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer. Return

the browned chicken pieces to the skillet, nestling them into the simmering gravy. If using, add 1 teaspoon dried thyme or poultry seasoning. Cover the skillet tightly with a lid, reduce the heat to low, and let the chicken simmer gently for 30-40 minutes, or until the chicken is incredibly tender and cooked through.

4. 4. Finish the Gravy: Once the chicken is tender, remove the lid. If using, stir in the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream. Increase the heat slightly to medium-low and let the gravy simmer gently, uncovered, for 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until it thickens to your desired consistency. Taste the gravy and adjust seasoning with additional salt and black pepper as needed.
5. 5. Serve: Serve the tender, smothered chicken generously with the rich gravy, spooned over fluffy white rice or creamy mashed potatoes. Garnish with fresh parsley if desired. Enjoy this deeply comforting Southern delight!

SWAPS & NOTES

Chicken Pieces: Bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs and drumsticks are traditional and recommended for the best flavor and juiciness in smothered chicken.

The bones add flavor to the gravy, and the skin helps brown the chicken before it's "smothered." Boneless, skinless chicken can be used for quicker cooking, but the flavor will be less robust.

Flour: All-purpose flour helps create a crispy crust on the chicken and thickens the gravy.

For a gluten-free option, you can use a gluten-free all-purpose flour blend.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Dry Chicken for Browning: Patting chicken dry and dredging in flour helps create a crispy, golden crust before simmering.

Brown Chicken Properly: Don't rush this step!

A deep brown sear adds immense flavor to both the chicken and the gravy.

Low and Slow Simmer: The "smothering" happens during this long, gentle simmer.

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