



## **CORNMEAL CRUSTED CATFISH DESERT SOLITAIRE**

Serves 4

The origins of this recipe are said to have been attributed to Edward Abbey, the park ranger nature writer, who was like the Thoreau of the Wilderness Movement. On one of his more challenging trips, while floating Utah's Green River, after five days and out of food rations, he created this dish from their reserve of bacon fat, a bag of cornmeal and catfish caught from the river. He wrote about this in his classic book *Desert Solitaire*.

The spicy, crunchy coleslaw is a nice foil to the smoky, bacon rich taste of the catfish—which should always be served with a great Tartar sauce.

4 10-ounce catfish fillets cut in two lengthwise along the bone line

2 eggs

½ cup milk

1½ cup cornmeal

½ cup all-purpose flour

1 T chili powder

1 T garlic powder

Optional herbs, we used some fresh oregano from the garden

½ tsp salt

2 cups bacon fat

***For the batter:***

In a large mixing bowl lightly scramble eggs and whisk in milk. In a separate bowl mix/sift together flour, cornmeal and dry spices. A quarter cup at a time, stir or whisk in dry ingredients carefully to avoid lumps. When done, it should have the consistency of pancake batter, thick enough to stick to the fish without running.

When ready to cook, spoon the bacon fat into a 12" cast iron skillet and place on the hot part of the grill over the flames for 5 minutes. The pan is ready when the fat is very hot or a pinch of the cornmeal coating sizzles when dropped in the pan. Move the pan to the side of the grill where the heat is lower.

Dip each fillet in the batter to coat on all sides, letting excess drop into the batter bowl. Carefully drop each fillet into the hot fat. Cook for 2 minutes on one side in the pan. Carefully flip each fillet and return the pan to the hot part of the fire and cook for approximately 1-2 more minutes. Remove from fire and let settle in pan on countertop or table.

You can tell when the fish is cooked if the end breaks off easily with a fork or knife. Remove fillets from pan and drain on a kitchen towel.

Serve on Fireworks Slaw and top with Spicy Tartar Sauce.

**FIREWORKS COLESLAW**

½ lb green cabbage thinly sliced, about 4 cups  
½ lb red cabbage thinly sliced  
2 carrots, thin julienne or grated  
⅔ cup mayonnaise  
¼ cup apple cider vinegar  
1 small jalapeno, seeded and julienned  
½ cup red onion, thinly sliced  
1 T sugar  
½ tsp salt

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the vinegar, salt and sugar. Stir in the mayonnaise and blend well. Add half the cabbage mixing well to coat. Continue with remaining cabbage, add carrots, jalapeno and onion, toss thoroughly. Refrigerate to let flavors blend.

### **SPICY TARTAR SAUCE**

½ cup mayonnaise

Zest of 1 lemon

Juice of the lemon

½ jalapeno, finely diced

2 T minced red onion

4 T kosher pickle, roughly chopped

Place all ingredients in a small bowl and stir to mix well. Keep refrigerated.