

KITCHEN

CFS in Miniature

It took me a while to like chicken fried steak (see page 46). Living in Texas, I'd tried it, but frankly it was too big and manly for me; the thick breading, the sheer size of the thing, was overwhelming. Then I met Elouise Adams Jones (right), who was relaunching her beloved Houston restaurant Ouisie's Table—and who was famous for her CFS. At a preopening party, she served this tiny, clever version of the classic. I loved it. —MARGO TRUE

*In the Saver Library*

THIS BOOK from our library was particularly helpful in researching this issue's peanut feature. We recommend it for your library, too.

PEANUTS: THE ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY OF THE GOOBER PEA by Andrew F. Smith (University of Illinois Press, 2002). In this captivating volume, Smith, the editor-in-chief of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* and a prolific author, details the complete history of the peanut and includes 19th- and 20th-century recipes that document its sometimes nutty use in everything from coffee to omelettes.

RECIPE

Ouisie's Chicken Fried Steak with Pepper Gravy in Biscuits

MAKES 1 DOZEN

ELOUISE "OUISE" Adams Jones serves these hors d'oeuvres on their own, but feel free to pass around a bowl of the extra gravy, if you like.

FOR THE BISCUITS:

2 tsp. vegetable shortening
2 ½ cups flour
4 tsp. baking powder
1 ½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. sugar
1 ¼ cups finely grated white cheddar
2 scallions, trimmed and finely sliced
1 ¾ cups heavy cream
2 tbsp. butter, softened

Freshly ground black pepper

3 eggs
½ cup heavy cream
2 cups milk
½ cup vegetable oil
¼ cup bacon grease
2 8-oz. pieces trimmed beef top round, pounded to a ¼" thickness and cut into sixths
½ cup beef stock
1 tbsp. worcestershire sauce
6 dashes Tabasco
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
¼ tsp. cayenne

FOR THE STEAK:

1 ½ cups plus 3 tbsp. flour
Salt

1. For the biscuits: Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a baking sheet with shortening and set aside. Sift flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar into a large bowl. Add cheese, scallions, and cream, stirring until dough just comes together. Turn dough out onto a floured surface and quickly knead 8–10 times. Roll dough out to a ½"-thick 6" x 8" rectangle and, using a 2" round cookie cutter, cut out 12 biscuits. Put biscuits on prepared baking sheet. Bake until golden brown, turning baking sheet, if necessary, to brown biscuits evenly, 20–25 minutes.

2. For the steak: Preheat oven to 200°. Put 1 ½ cups of the flour into a wide shallow dish. Season flour with 1 tbsp. salt and ½ tsp. black pepper and set aside. Put eggs, cream, and ½ cup of the milk into another wide shallow dish, beat well, and set aside. Heat oil and bacon grease together in a large cast-iron skillet over medium heat until hot or about 360° on a candy thermometer. Meanwhile, working with 4 pieces of meat at a time, lightly season both sides with salt and pepper. Dredge beef in seasoned flour, shaking off excess, then dip each side into egg mixture, then dredge in flour again, shaking off excess. Fry meat in the hot fat, turning once, until dark golden brown on each side, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a wire rack set over a baking sheet and keep warm in oven. Repeat seasoning and cooking process with remaining meat and flour and egg mixtures, transferring meat to oven as done.

3. Discard all but 3 tbsp. of the fat from the skillet and heat over medium heat. Add remaining flour and cook, whisking constantly, until golden about 2 minutes. Gradually whisk in stock, remaining milk, worcestershire, Tabasco, garlic, cayenne, and ½ tsp. black pepper. Season to taste with salt; simmer, stirring, until thickened, about 5 minutes.

4. To assemble biscuits, slit them crosswise three-quarters of the way through. Spread bottom half of each with some butter. Stuff each biscuit with a piece of steak, spoon on some gravy, and close biscuit.