

## THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



### **Chicken Parmesan** (rewritten but not changed from Cook's Illustrated's *The New Best Recipe*)

Serves 4

I didn't use this sauce.

I hate pounding meat. My chicken breasts were already pretty thin, so I didn't bother, but I'm more likely to cut breasts in half to form two flatter cutlets than I am to pound them thinner.

#### Breaded chicken cutlets:

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (5 to 6 ounces each)  
¼ cup table salt  
Ground black pepper  
1½ cup fresh bread crumbs  
¾ cup all-purpose flour  
2 large eggs  
1 tablespoon olive oil, plus more for frying

#### Tomato sauce:

2 cloves garlic, minced  
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes  
½ teaspoon dried basil  
½ teaspoon dried oregano  
¼ teaspoon sugar  
Salt and ground black pepper

#### To finish:

8 ounces spaghetti or linguine  
3 ounces (¾ cup) shredded mozzarella cheese  
¼ cup (0.5 ounces) grated Parmesan cheese

1. Pound the chicken breasts to an even ½-inch thickness. In a medium mixing bowl, dissolve the salt in 4 cups of cold water; immerse the chicken in the water and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Drain and pat dry. Set the chicken aside for 10 minutes to allow it to continue drying; season with pepper.
2. For the sauce: Heat the garlic and oil together in a large saucepan over medium-high heat until the garlic starts to sizzle. Stir in the tomatoes, basil, oregano, sugar, a pinch of salt, and 2 grinds of pepper and bring to a simmer. Continue to simmer until the sauce thickens a bit and the flavors meld, 10-12 minutes. Taste the sauce, adjusting the salt if necessary. Cover and keep warm.
3. Bring 3 quarts of water to a boil in a large pot. Adjust an oven rack to the top position and heat the broiler.
4. Meanwhile, transfer the bread crumbs to a shallow bowl. Place the flour in a separate shallow bowl. In a third bowl, beat the eggs with 1 tablespoon of oil. Coat the chicken thoroughly in the flour, shaking off the excess, then dip in the egg mixture. Dip both sides of each chicken cutlets in the bread crumbs, pressing to form an even coating. Transfer the breaded chicken cutlets to a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet. Allow the coating to dry for 5 minutes.

5. Add 1 tablespoon of salt and the pasta to the boiling water. Cook according to the package instructions; drain and return to the pot.
6. Meanwhile, heat ¼-inch of olive oil in a 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Transfer two cutlets to the pan and cook, without moving, until golden brown and crisp, about 2½ minutes. Flip the cutlets, reduce the heat to medium, and continue cooking until the second side is thoroughly browned, 2½ to 3 minutes. Transfer the cooked cutlets to a (clean) wire rack. Repeat with the remaining cutlets, using new oil. (Otherwise the breading bits from the first batch of oil will burn.)
7. Top each cutlet with 3 tablespoons of mozzarella and 1 tablespoon of parmesan. Place the baking sheet with the chicken under the broil; cook until the cheeses melt and are spotty brown, about 3 minutes.
8. Spoon 1 tablespoon of sauce over each cutlet. Toss the remaining sauce with the pasta. Serve immediately.