

chicken milanese SERVES 4

Crunchy breaded chicken hidden under a mountain of tart salad is just the kind of thing I want to eat on a warm summer night. Perhaps you agree.

These don't take long to make, but if you have some extra time, make extra chicken breasts so you'll have them in the refrigerator for sandwiches.

If you don't have summer tomatoes, skip the tomatoes altogether. You want flavor.

The photo is on page 278.

FOR THE CHICKEN

2 whole boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 2 pounds)

Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour

2 large eggs

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup freshly grated Pecorino

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk

About $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups dried bread crumbs

Olive oil, for frying

FOR THE SALAD

4 big handfuls arugula

2 ripe summer tomatoes, cored and cut into wedges

1 small red onion, sliced thin

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, or to taste

FOR THE CHICKEN

Cut the breasts into halves, and trim away any cartilage or visible fat. Lay the chicken pieces out on plastic wrap, cover with another sheet of plastic, and pound to about $\frac{1}{3}$ inch thick. If you don't have a classic meat pounder, use a rolling pin.

Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Set out three shallow bowls. Put the flour in one; beat the eggs in the second, then beat in the Pecorino and milk; and put the bread crumbs in the third. Dredge the chicken pieces in the flour and pat them, so you have just a thin dusting of flour. Then dip in the egg wash and dangle the chicken over the bowl to let the excess drip off. Finally, coat the chicken in the crumbs, pressing well to get a good coating. As you finish breading, put the chicken on a rack. You can prep the chicken this far a few hours in advance. Set the rack on a baking sheet, cover loosely with wax paper, and refrigerate.

Set a large skillet over medium-high heat and fill with about $\frac{1}{3}$ inch oil. Heat until the oil is shimmering. Fry the chicken 2 pieces at a time—no crowding—until golden brown on each side, and drain on another rack set over a baking sheet.

FOR THE SALAD

Rip the arugula into pieces and drop them into a mixing bowl. Add the tomatoes and onion and spoon on the extra-virgin olive oil; season with salt and pepper. Toss to get the salad coated with oil. Spoon on the vinegar and toss again. Taste a bit of the arugula and add more vinegar if you want.

To serve, put a chicken cutlet in the center of each dinner plate and top with a big heap of salad.

variations

The classic preparation is with a veal chop. You could substitute veal cutlets or pork chops—with or without bones—for the chicken.

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