

# CRAB CAKES with BELL PEPPER SAUCE

Serves 6 to 8.

By Dennis W. Viau; modified from a restaurant recipe.

These crab cakes are filled with crab meat. It is best to use good lump crab, the largest chunk you can find in the store. The flavor will be much better.



## **Ingredients:**

### ***For the Roasted Bell Pepper Sauce:***

2 red bell peppers, seeds and membranes removed  
½ cup (3 ounces/85g) chopped onion  
1½ cups (350ml) heavy cream  
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard  
Salt and pepper to taste  
2 to 4 fresh basil leaves, chopped

### ***For the Crab Cakes:***

1 pound (454g) fresh lump crab meat  
1 large egg  
3 ounces (85g) freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese  
1 clove garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons sour cream  
½ tablespoon chopped fresh Italian (flat leaf) parsley  
Salt and pepper to taste  
½ cup (118ml) olive oil for frying  
1 cup (5 ounces/142g) all-purpose flour  
or ½ cup (33g) bread crumbs or panko

## **Directions:**

### ***To Prepare the Sauce:***

Trim the bell peppers by removing the stem, seeds, and white membrane. Cut into wide pieces and arrange skin side up on a baking sheet. Roast in a 450°F (232°C) oven for 10 minutes with the rack at the highest position, then broil, watching closely, until slightly charred on the surface.

Sauté the onions in a large skillet over medium heat until tender and translucent, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the roasted peppers and sauté 1 minute. Add the cream, pepper (hold the salt until later), and basil leaves. Cook 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool a few minutes.

Pour the sauce ingredients in a food processor or blender and purée until smooth. Filter through a wire strainer, discarding the solids. You might need to push the liquid through the strainer with a large spoon or spatula. Adjust for salt. Cover and set aside. Heat prior to serving.

### ***To Prepare the Crab Cakes:***

Mix together the crab meat, egg, cheese, minced garlic, sour cream, and parsley. Season with salt and pepper. Shape about 3 ounces (85g) of the crab mixture into a round flat cake. The mixture breaks up easily; so shape gently. Dredge in the flour or bread crumbs, coating both sides. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat and fry the cakes until golden on both sides, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

Plate 1 or 2 crab bakes per serving and garnish with sauce, pooling sauce on the plate. Serve immediately.

## STEP-BY-STEP

1



These are the ingredients for the sauce.

2



A Gordon Ramsay video showed an easy way to remove the flesh of a pepper and leave the seeds behind. Trim off the green stem first and then set the pepper on its top. Cut, a little off center, down the sides to remove the flesh.

3



Here is a close up of trimming the peppers. By cutting downward a little off center, you trim around the seeds, leaving them still attached to the stem end.

4



Arrange the pepper pies, skin side up, on a sheet pan. You can spread the pan (or the foil in my case) with a little olive oil. Roast in the upper part of a 450°F (232°C) oven about 10 minutes.

5



While the peppers are roasting, peel and chop about a quarter of one large onion. You need about half a cup, which is about 3 ounces (85g).

6



After the peppers roast for 10 minutes, you can place them beneath the broiler to char them a little for a slightly smoky flavor.

7



Sauté the chopped onion until tender and translucent, 6 to 8 minutes.

8



While the onions are sautéing, chop a couple basil leaves. The way they are chopped doesn't matter because they will be puréed later in a food processor and then filtered out with a strainer.

9



When the onions are tender, add the peppers and sauté an additional minute.

10



Add the cream and basil. Season with pepper. Simmer for about 5 minutes. Then let cool for a few minutes.

11



Pour the sauce ingredients into a food processor or blender and then purée until smooth.

12



Filter the sauce through a wire strainer, discarding the solids. You might need to push the liquid through the strainer with a large spoon or spatula. This is a good time to adjust for salt.

**13**

These are the ingredients for the crab cakes.

**14**

Assembly is fairly easy. Put everything except the oil and the flour (or bread crumbs) in a large bowl and mix well.

15



Shape about 3 ounces (85g) of the mixture into round flat cakes. I used exactly 3 ounces and the mixture yielded 7 cakes. The mixture does not stick tightly to itself, like meatballs do; so handle them gently. They will hold their shape, but will break up if not handled delicately.

16



Heat oil to frying temperature (350°F/177°C) in a large skillet. Use enough oil to submerge about half the cake in the oil. Fry the cakes until golden on both sides, turning them gently, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Meanwhile, heat the sauce to serving temperature.

17



Plate a crab cake and garnish with the roasted red pepper sauce, letting the sauce pool on the plate. Serve immediately.

## Conclusion

These crab cakes are relatively easy to make. They would work well for a light lunch, or as a first course or main course for dinner. The sauce raises these crab cakes to a higher level, turning something rather plain into a dish that looks special. The flavor of these cakes is very good, rich in the flavor of crab meat.