

# ITALIAN CHICKEN CROQUETTES

Makes about 3 dozen.

By Dennis W. Viau; modified from a recipe in  
*The Fine Art of Italian Cooking* by Biuliano Bugialli.

The flavor of these Chicken Croquettes is light and delicate, perfect for a luncheon, appetizer, or side dish. I think they would be excellent on a buffet table, kept warm in a chafing dish. I have served them as a main course, with other sides, and they worked well.



## Ingredients:

2 large potatoes (12 to 14 ounces (340 to 400 grams) each)  
Salt for the potato boiling water  
4 slices of bread; crusts removed<sup>1</sup> (see Notes at end)  
1 cup (240ml) cold milk<sup>2</sup>  
10 sprigs Italian (flat leaf) parsley; leaves only  
¾ pound (340g) boneless chicken meat (light or dark)<sup>3</sup>  
1 medium clove garlic; minced  
2 large eggs (mine are about 2 ounces (55g) each, in the shell)  
¼ cup (28g) freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
1 cup (115g) unseasoned bread crumbs  
8 cups (2 liters) vegetable oil for frying  
Lemon wedges for garnish<sup>4</sup>

## Directions:

Peel, coarsely chop, and boil the potatoes in salted water until tender when pierced with a fork, 20 to 30 minutes. Drain and push through a potato ricer, or mash with nothing added. Set aside until needed.

Place the bread slices in a bowl and add the milk. Turn the bread occasionally to soak up the milk evenly. Set aside until needed.

Chop the parsley fine. Coarsely chop the chicken and mince in a food processor to a fine texture.

Combine the chicken, parsley, garlic, eggs, and cheese in a bowl. Season with freshly ground black pepper. Squeeze excess milk from the bread and break up the bread well. Add it to the chicken mixture with the riced potatoes. Combine well. If the mixture seems too wet, add some bread crumbs, a tablespoon or two at a time, until the mixture is stiff enough to hold a shape. It should still be moist.

Heat the oil in a saucepan to 375°F (190°C). Taste mixture for salt by cooking a dab on a fork, and adjust.

Arrange the bread crumbs on a plate. Using two tablespoons, shape a heaping tablespoon of mixture to form an oval, like a small egg, and roll gently in the bread crumbs. Fry in the hot oil, a few at a time, to a rich golden brown. Drain on paper towels.

Serve warm with lemon wedges for garnish.

The **Step By Step** guide begins on the following page.

## STEP-BY-STEP

1



Assemble your *mise en place*. As you can see, I'm using bagel slices rather than bread. I prefer the denser texture. I sliced each bagel into three slices. The middle slice was used for the croquettes. The top and bottom slices were dried in a 225°F (105°C) oven for 1½ hours and then finely chopped in a food processor for the unseasoned bread crumbs used in this recipe. I am using boneless chicken thighs above, but feel free to use chicken breast meat if you prefer.

2



Heat water to boiling, add about a tablespoon of salt, boil the coarsely chopped potatoes until tender when poked with a fork. Cooking time will depend on how large the potato chunks are. Smaller piece of potato will cook faster.

**3**

Remove the leaves from the parsley sprigs, discarding the stems.

**4**

Chop the parsley fairly fine and set aside until needed.



5



Put the bread in a bowl and pour in the milk. Turn and rotate the slices often to absorb the milk evenly. As stated in the Notes below, I would have tried substituting homemade chicken stock in this step, if I had any. I was fresh out, having used up all mine by making homemade chicken soup.

6



If you have a potato ricer, this kitchen utensil is an effective and efficient way of mashing potatoes quickly. If you don't own one, you can mash the potatoes with a regular potato masher. Try to eliminate most, if not all, of the lumps. Mashing potatoes too long can give them a gummy texture. In this recipe, a little bit of gumminess to the potatoes won't matter. Don't season the potatoes as you mash them. You'll add seasoning in a later step.

7



Here are my riced potatoes. The utensil was aptly named. This looks like bowl of steamed rice.

8



Coarsely chop the chicken and mince in a food processor until finely chopped. Don't reduce it to a paste; it should have some texture. It should take only a few seconds.



Combine the chicken, parsley, garlic, eggs, and cheese in a bowl. Season with freshly ground black pepper. Squeeze excess milk from the bread and break up the bread well. Add it to the chicken mixture with the riced potatoes. Combine well. If the mixture seems too moist, it can be stiffened with some of the bread crumbs. It should be moist, but it should also hold a shape. This mixture is now ready to shape into croquettes. Taste for salt by picking up a dab with a fork and cooking in the hot oil. Adjust for salt.

**10**

Arrange the bread crumbs in a shallow bowl.



**11**

Using a pair of tablespoons, shape a heaping spoon of the mixture into an oval, like a small egg. Use one spoon to gently push the croquette off the spoon and onto the bread crumbs. This step might take a little practice, but once you get the hang of it, it goes quickly.

**12**

Gently roll each croquette in the bread crumbs to coat evenly.

**13**

Heat the oil to 375°F (190°C). Fry the croquettes, a few at a time, to a rich golden color. This takes only about a minute or two.

**14**

Using a wire spider or other strainer, transfer the cooked croquettes to a plate lined with paper towels to drain.



15



Arrange the cooked croquettes on a serving dish. Slice lemon wedges and arrange on a plate for garnish. You could also make a dipping sauce. See the Notes below.

## Conclusion

These Italian Chicken Croquettes are wonderfully stylish. They would be appropriate for a luncheon or served on a buffet. The flavor is light and delicate, perfect for a garnish of lemon or with a dipping sauce.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I often substitute bagels for bread, especially in stuffing for chicken or turkey. Bagels have a dense texture, giving more body to the stuffing. For this recipe I cut each of 4 bagels into three slices. The middle slice was for the croquettes. The top and bottom slices were dried in a 225°F (105°C) oven for 1½ hours and then chopped in a food processor for the bread crumbs used in this recipe. I used a course sieve to sift out the larger chunks.

<sup>2</sup> If I had homemade chicken stock when I first prepared this recipe I would have used stock rather than milk for a more savory flavor. I was out of stock; therefore, I chose milk according to the original recipe.

<sup>3</sup> When serving these croquettes as a main course I use 1 pound of chicken for a more meaty flavor and texture.

<sup>4</sup> Rather than lemon wedges, you could make a dipping sauce for these croquettes, such as a honey-mustard sauce made with yoghurt, or a mayonnaise-based sauce such as honey-mayonnaise seasoned with a little ground rosemary.

