Cleo Coyle's Perfect Breaded Pork Chops

Text & photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi, who writes the Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle with her husband, Marc Cerasini

Breading and pan frying pork chops may look like a retro comfort food, but it's actually one of the best, quick methods for sealing in juices in today's leaner cuts of pork. As any chef will tell you, fat means flavor, which is why today's pork often cooks up dry and bland. Unless you can find heirloom pork with the kind of marbled fat that we used to enjoy, cooking up juicy chops can be a tricky endeavor. One way to give today's leaner pork more flavor and juiciness is to brine the meat overnight. It's a method that yields good results, but it also takes time. So how do you cook up savory pork chops fast? We bread them. The breading seals in the juices during the shallow pan frying, followed by the quick oven baking. The chops are perfectly cooked, delicious, and juicy. We hope you enjoy our foolproof method for making mouthwatering breaded pork chops. ~ ***Cleo***

Ingredients

4 to 6 one-inch thick pork chops (about 3 pounds)

1-½ cups unseasoned breadcrumbs or panko*

½ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

1 teaspoon oregano

½ teaspoon cumin

½ teaspoon finely ground sea salt

2 large eggs

1 tablespoon milk *(or water)*

½ cup all-purpose flour

½ cup (or more) of oil *(double if using 2 skillets)*

***Note:** panko (Japanese-style breadcrumbs) is what you see in my photos. Standard breadcrumbs are a bit less crunchy but just as delicious.*

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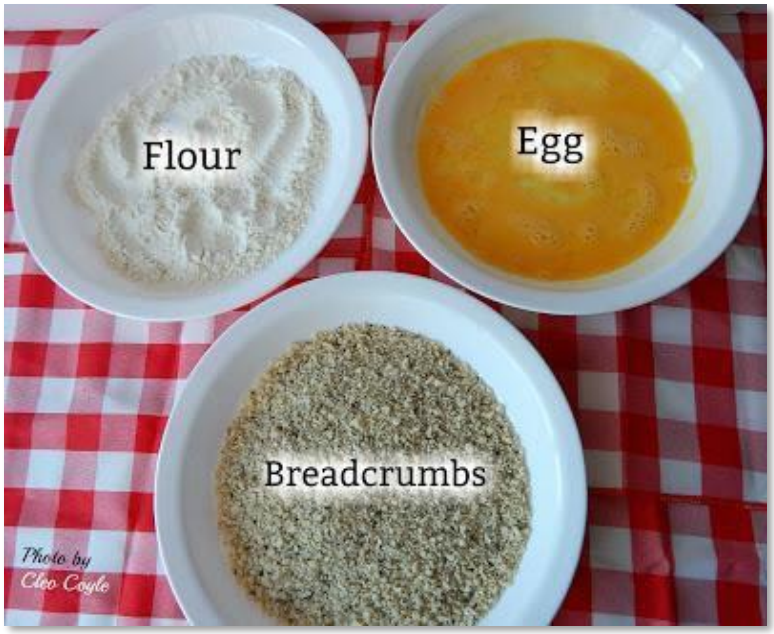
Directions

Step 1: First preheat your oven to 325° F. Prepare the breading by mixing unseasoned breadcrumbs, grated Parmesan, oregano, cumin, and salt in a pie or cake pan (or shallow bowl). In a second pan or shallow bowl, beat the eggs with the milk (or water). Into a third pan or shallow bowl, place the flour.



Step 2: Wash the pork chops in cool water and pat off excess moisture with paper towel. Dip chops, one at a time, in the flour, then the egg mixture, and finally the breadcrumbs. Press firmly, making sure that the crumbs stick to the meat.

First coat with the flour…

Then with the egg wash…

Finally, coat with the breadcrumbs—remember to press firmly, making sure the crumbs stick to the meat…

COOKING TIPS

Step 3: Warm ½ cup of oil in a large skillet on medium-high heat. When the oil is rippling, add the chops and quickly reduce the heat. Lightly brown the chops on each side for about 3 minutes, turning once. Here are a few notes for getting the best results...

* Do not overlap the chops, only fry one layer at a time.

* Do not fry the chops in oil that is too cool or you'll end up with greasy instead of crispy breading. Watch for the oil to ripple. Test the oil by dropping in a few crumbs of breading. If the breading sizzles in the oil, it's ready. (And if the oil smokes, you've gone too far the other way, reduce the heat!)

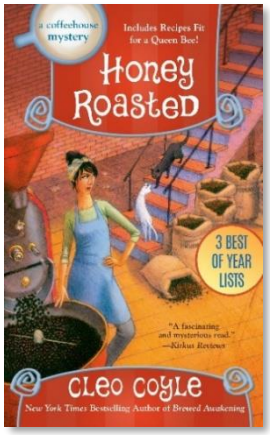
* While hot oil is what you want, if it's too hot, the chops may brown too quickly in the 3 minutes of cooking time per side. So give one test chop a peek halfway through the cooking time and reduce the heat if necessary to prevent over-browning.

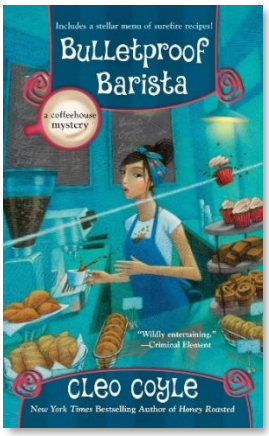
* See photos as a guide for the correct color, golden brown...

* If making 6 chops, either use two skillets (3 chops in each skillet) OR remove the 3 finished chops from the pan and set aside. Then discard the old oil, wipe the pan with a paper towel, and add a fresh ½ cup of oil for your final 3 chops.

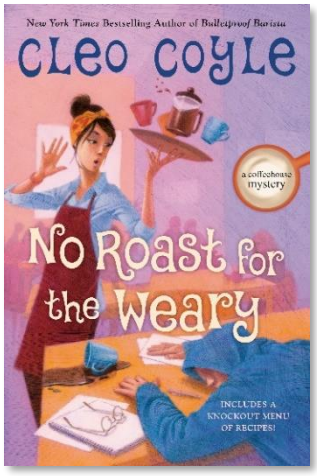
Step 4: Place your skillet (or 2 skillets) of chops into the preheated 325° F. oven for 20 minutes, turning the chops once halfway through the cooking time. Chops will come out golden brown with the natural juices locked inside. If making 6 chops, you can either place 2 skillets in the oven or arrange the chops in one skillet (as you see in our photo above, just be sure to turn the chops halfway through the 20 minutes). Then you can…

Eat with joy! ~ Cleo





The Coffeehouse Mysteries are bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeehouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes. To learn more and see more recipes, visit Cleo Coyle's online coffeehouse at www.CoffeehouseMystery.com And her recipe blog at www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com



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