

Making Perfect Italian Chicken Cutlets

Tips and Recipes from Culinary Mystery author Cleo Coyle

Text and photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi who writes [The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#) with her husband, Marc Cerasini.



The skinless, boneless chicken cutlet is one of the most user-friendly ingredients for whipping up a quick, tasty meal. Slap it on a crusty roll, and you've got the perfect hot sandwich. Add mashed potatoes and gravy, and you have an easy fried chicken dinner. Add a splash of red sauce, some grated mozzarella and Parmesan (and a glass or two of vino), and you'll be singing [Rossini](#). No matter how you choose to *finish* these babies, you'll want to start things off right, and today I'm happy to share my tips for making the perfect, golden chicken cutlet, the kind that delights with a crunch of breading on the outside and melt-in-your-mouth tenderness on the inside...

Cleo's Tips

Tip 1 - Give the bird a whack: It's not enough to start with fresh, thin sliced chicken breast fillets, you need to give each breast a blow (or three) with the business end of a meat hammer for the kind of tender cutlet that you can cut with a spoon.

Tip 2 - Spice up your breading: Some cooks use panko and that's a nice way to go. But I prefer the traditional flour, egg, bread crumb coating with a twist. Start with your favorite brand of Italian seasoned bread crumbs and boost that flavor with additional ingredients. I add grated Pecorino Romano or Parmesan cheese, garlic powder, and dried herbs (see recipe). Optional red pepper flakes nicely spice things up for those days when I want a little heat with my meat.

Tip 3 - Oil temperature is key: If you start with oil that's too cold, your chicken will absorb too much grease and the breading may be soggy. If your oil is too hot, your chicken will burn on the outside and be raw in the center. Wait for the oil to ripple and then test it carefully by adding a few drops of water into the pan. If the water "dances" on the oil, it's ready. See the recipe below for more tips on frying.

Tip 4 - Finish with freshness: Nothing tops off a perfectly sautéed chicken cutlet like fresh squeezed lemon juice. It's also a delicious finisher for side dish vegetables like *dorati e fritti* zucchini or broccoli rabe. (Download my free recipes by clicking the links under the photos at the right.)



[Click here](#) for my [Broccoli Rabe recipe](#).



[Click here](#) for Italian Fried Zucchini (aka "dorati e fritti")

Cleo Coyle's Italian Breaded Chicken Cutlets

Text and photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi who writes [The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#) with her husband, Marc Cerasini.

See my 4 tips on the previous page for making the perfect breaded cutlets, and may you... Eat with joy! ~ Cleo



Ingredients:

- 1 ½ - 2 pounds boneless breast fillets, sliced thin (*about 9 cutlets*)
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 large eggs, beaten + 1 teaspoon water or milk
- 2 cups Italian seasoned bread crumbs
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley (*if you like add rosemary, as well*)
- 1 Tablespoon grated Pecorino Romano (*or Parmesan*) cheese
- Dash of garlic powder or red pepper flakes (*optional*)
- Olive oil or vegetable oil (*at least 1/4 cup, see directions for more info*)
- (*optional*) 1 lemon sliced thin



Step 1 - Prep the fillets: Rinse fillets in cold water. One at a time, place the fillets on a clean, flat surface. Using the tenderizing (spiky) end of a meat hammer, whack the breast a few times to flatten it even more, then flip it and repeat. Dredge each breast well in all-purpose flour and set aside on a plate.

Step 2 - Prep the breading: Pour the Italian seasoned bread crumbs into a shallow bowl, pie plate, or cake pan, and boost the flavor by adding the oregano, dried parsley, grated cheese, and (optional) rosemary, garlic powder, and/or red pepper flakes. Whisk until blended.



Free Recipe Guide to
Cleo's new culinary mystery
Brewed Awakening:
[click here.](#)

Step 3 - Coat the chicken: Crack the eggs into another shallow bowl or pie pan and whisk to blend, adding a teaspoon of water or milk to thin the mixture a bit. Now dredge each flour-coated breast into the beaten egg mixture, coating both sides of the chicken fillet. Allow excess to drip off and transfer to the seasoned breading. Coat both sides of each fillet completely with the breading. Allow excess breading to fall away. Keep the breaded fillets in a single layer. (I use flat plates or a sheet pan.)



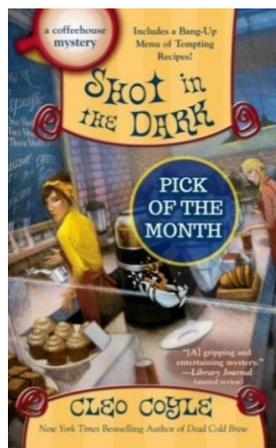
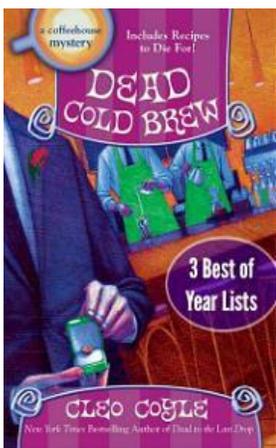
Step 4 - Cook and finish: Place a large skillet over medium heat and pour in oil until it reaches the depth of about 1/2 inch. When the oil is rippling and a drop of water dances on it, you're ready to cook. Don't crowd the pan. The more fillets you place into the oil, the more you are reducing the oil's temperature and risking a greasy, soggy end.

Once the chicken hits the oil, sauté two to three minutes. This is (admittedly) a tricky endeavor. You may need to decrease the heat a bit if the chicken is cooking too quickly or increase it if the oil's temperature is dropping too fast.

When the chicken is golden brown, flip it. Cook on the other side for another two to three minutes. Hold finished cutlets in warm (200 degree F.) oven while you cook additional batches. If you're cooking multiple batches, the oil will need to be replaced. When it becomes brown or full of crumbs, pour it out, wipe the pan and start with new oil.

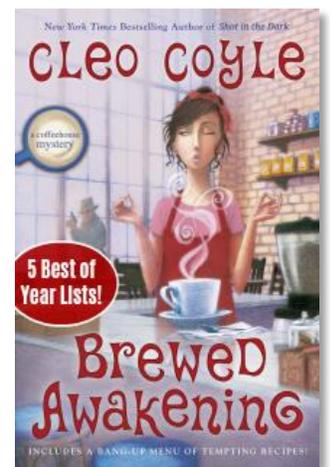
Just before serving (and not too early or the chicken will become soggy) squeeze on fresh lemon juice, and...

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



[Dead Cold Brew](#) [Shot in the Dark](#)
National Bestseller *Starred Review –*Library Journal*
 Free Recipe Guide [here](#). Free Recipe Guide [here](#).

New! [Brewed Awakening](#)
5 Best of Year Lists!
 Free Recipe Guide [here](#).