

# Chicken Parmesan

Crisp, golden chicken cutlets topped (not drowned) with sauce, basil, and a trio of cheeses.

## Overview

This approach keeps the breading shatter-crisp by using only a *little* sauce on top (none underneath) and baking hot to finish. Parmesan is mixed into the panko for extra flavor, and the topping blends fresh mozzarella, provolone, and more Parmesan.

## At a Glance

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| <b>Yield</b>      | 4 servings  |
| <b>Prep Time</b>  | 15 minutes  |
| <b>Cook Time</b>  | 20 minutes  |
| <b>Additional</b> | 10 minutes (resting the breaded cutlets)  |
| <b>Total Time</b> | 45 minutes  |
| <b>Method</b>     | Pound cutlets; flour → egg → panko/Parmesan; shallow-fry; top; bake hot (450 °F / 230 °C) |

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## Ingredients

### Chicken & Breading

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (more as needed, for dusting)
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs (more as needed)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese (mixed into crumbs)

### For Frying

- About  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup olive oil (or as needed for a  $\sim \frac{1}{2}$ -inch layer)

### To Finish

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup prepared tomato sauce (plus extra warmed on the side, optional)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh mozzarella, cut into small cubes
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped fresh basil
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup grated provolone cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese (remaining, for topping)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil (for final drizzle)

## Equipment

Meat mallet; two sheets of heavy plastic or parchment; shallow bowls; fine strainer or sifter (optional, for flouring); large skillet; 9 × 13-inch baking dish; instant-read thermometer; rack or paper towels.

## Instructions

1. **Preheat.** Heat oven to 450 °F (230 °C). Set a rack in the upper-middle position.
2. **Pound cutlets.** Place each breast between sheets of plastic or parchment. Pound to an even  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thickness.
3. **Season & flour.** Season both sides generously with salt and pepper. Using a strainer (optional), dust evenly with flour on both sides; shake off excess.
4. **Bread.** Place beaten eggs in one shallow bowl. In another, mix panko with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Parmesan. Dip each floured cutlet in egg, then press into the crumb mixture to coat well. Set on a tray and let rest 10–15 minutes (helps coating adhere).
5. **Shallow-fry.** Heat about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high until shimmering. Fry cutlets until golden, about 2 minutes per side (they'll finish in the oven). Transfer to a rack or paper towels to drain briefly.
6. **Top (lightly).** Arrange cutlets in a baking dish. Spoon *2 tablespoons* sauce over each (no sauce underneath). Divide mozzarella, basil, and provolone evenly over tops. Sprinkle with the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Parmesan and drizzle each with about  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon olive oil.
7. **Bake hot.** Bake 15–20 minutes until cheese is browned and bubbly and the chicken reaches 165 °F (74 °C) in the center. Rest 3–5 minutes.
8. **Serve.** Garnish with extra basil if you like. Offer additional warmed sauce on the side to preserve the cutlets' crispness.

## Chef's Notes & Tips

- **Even thickness** ensures even cooking—pound the thick end to match the thin.
- **Season the chicken**, not the dredges; it sticks where you want it.
- **Parmesan in the crumbs** adds flavor and extra crunch.
- **Rest the breaded cutlets** 10–15 minutes before frying for better adhesion.
- **Go easy on sauce:** keep it on top only; serve more at the table if desired.
- **Hot oven, fast finish:** 450 °F browns cheese and re-crisps crumbs before overcooking.
- **Herb swaps:** substitute pesto or a pinch of dried Italian herbs if basil isn't handy.
- **Sauce quality matters:** use a good prepared tomato sauce or your favorite homemade.

## Serving Suggestions

Serve with spaghetti or another pasta, garlic bread, and a simple green salad. A crisp Italian white or light red pairs nicely.

*Food safety:* cook chicken to an internal temperature of 165 °F (74 °C).

*Make-ahead:* breaded cutlets can be refrigerated (unfried) up to 4 hours; let sit 10 minutes at room temp before frying.