

Panko-crusted anything

Ka Wai Cheung, November 2023

Here's a go-to meal your kids won't complain about for once. It's called panko-crusted anything.

Ingredients

Three bowl plates. Don't have bowl plates? Use three frisbees.

An ice-cream scoops worth of some sort of whitish flour.

2 eggs (you may only need one).

3-4 good ice cream scoops of panko bread crumbs.

4-6 chicken tenders *or* 1 lb of a fish filet cut into pieces that look relatively similar to chicken tenders *or* pork chops without the bone (preferably). These are just a few ideas. You could also probably cut up tofu squares. Or, you could use a thin piece of steak. I think if you do that, you'd be making chicken-fried steak but I'm not positive. Moral of the story: You can panko crust pretty much anything.

Instructions

1. Place the three bowl plates down on the counter.
2. Put flour in bowl plate #1.
3. Crack an egg into bowl plate #2 and mix.
4. Into bowl plate #3 goes the panko. Be careful with this stuff. It gets everywhere.
5. Now you're gonna hear some people talk about a “wet hand-dry hand” technique for coating meat which promises to avoid having eggy panko

crusted fingertips. Here's a secret: It doesn't work. All ten digits will have eggy panko no matter what you do and you will wash your hands after each tender bath.

6. Take one of your chicken tenders (or substitutes) and lather it in the flour from bowl plate #1.
7. Then move it along to a quick bath in the egg wash of bowl plate #2.
8. Set it on top of the panko in bowl plate #3 and gently scoop-toss some of the residual panko with your other hand on top of the meat to coat it evenly.
9. Now place the panko-crusted raw meat onto a clean plate. Shit. I forgot to mention that you need a regular large plate so go ahead and jam a clean elbow between the cabinet handle and the cabinet door and slowly lean back to push that door out. Nice and easy. Nice and easy. Now grab that top plate with your free hand's contaminated thumb and forefinger. Try your best not to touch the plate underneath it. You nicked the second plate? That's fine, it'll dry.
10. Repeat steps 5 and 6 (except you don't need that new plate each time). Once you have a plate full of breaded tenders and clean hands, add about a ½ inch of oil to an 8-inch pan on medium-high heat.
11. After about 45 seconds, lift one tender and gently touch the tip of it to the oil to see if the oil bubbles. When it does, lay that tender gently down like you remember putting your eight-month old to bed back in the day.
12. You should be able to fit 2-3 tenders in your pan. After about a minute flip those guys around and the top should be a nice golden brown. Wait another minute and check the bottom side too. Once both sides are a nice golden brown, place them down on a plate and...no no no not on *that* plate because it had raw stuff on it remember? My mistake. Sorry again. You should've actually taken out *two* plates from Step 5. Still good, still good. Just dip those tenders back in the oil for a hot second to burn the salmonella away. Now put them on the clean plate, piping hot.
13. Serve room temperature and a bit soggy after the kids finally get off the iPad thirty minutes later.