

Chicken Marsala

Serves 4

Our wine of choice for this dish is Sweet Marsala Fine, an imported wine that gives the sauce body, soft edges, and a smooth finish. to make slicing the chicken easier, freeze it for 15 minutes.

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 cup unbleached all purpose flour
4 (5 to 6 ounce) boneless , skinless chicken breast, tenderloins removed and breasts trimmed
Table salt and ground black pepper
2 1/2 ounce pancetta (about 3 slices), cut into pieces 1 inch long and 1/8 inch wide
8 ounces white mushrooms, wiped clean and sliced (about 2 cups)
1 medium garlic clove, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 teaspoon)
1 teaspoon tomato paste
1 1/2 cup sweet Marsala
1 1/2 tablespoons juice from 1 lemon
4 tablespoon (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves

1. Adjust an oven rack to the lower middle position, place a large oven-safe dinner plate on the oven rack, and heat the oven to 200 degrees. Heat the oil in a 12 inch skillet over medium high heat until shimmering. Meanwhile, place the flour in a shallow baking dish or pie plate. Halve the chicken horizontally, then cover the chicken halves with plastic wrap and pound the cutlets to an even 1/4 inch thickness. Pat the chicken breasts dry. Season both sides of the breasts with salt and pepper, working with one piece at a time, coat both sides with flour. Cooking the cutlets in two batches, place 4 floured cutlets in a single layer in the skillet and cook until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Using tongs, flip the cutlets and cook on the second side until golden brown and the meat feels firm when pressed with a finger, about 3 minutes longer. Transfer the chicken to the heated plate and return the plate to the oven while you cook the remaining cutlets.

2. Return the skillet to low heat and add the pancetta; saute, stirring occasionally and scraping the pan bottom to loosen the browned bits, until the pancetta is brown and crisp, about 4 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the pancetta to a paper towel lined plate. Add the mushrooms and increase the heat to medium high; saute, stirring occasionally and scraping the pan bottom, until the liquid released by the mushrooms evaporates and the mushrooms begin to brown, about 8 minutes. Add the garlic, tomato paste, and cooked pancetta; saute while stirring until the tomato paste begins to brown, about 1 minute. Off the heat, add the Marsala; return the pan to high heat and simmer vigorously, scraping the browned bits from the pan bottom, until the sauce is slightly syrupy and reduced to about 1 1/4 cups, about 5 minutes. Off the heat, add the lemon juice and any accumulated juices from the chicken; whisk in the butter 1 piece at a time. Season with salt and pepper to taste and stir in the parsley. Pour the sauce over the chicken and serve immediately.