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Chicken Parmesan -Grandpa Style

Serves: 4 to 6

Prep time: 1:15 mins.
Cook time: 15 mins.

Skill level: easy, but takes time

Cooking method: cooktop, large skillet pot for pasta, baking sheet with wire rack.

ingredients:

- 2 large boneless skinless chicken breasts (about 8 ounces each)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup plain breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan, plus more for serving
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup plus 1/3 cup olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, finely grated
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- (2) 28-ounce cans diced tomatoes
- 3 sprigs basil, plus torn leaves for serving
- 8 ounces whole milk mozzarella, shredded
- 12 ounces spaghetti

instructions:

Step 1) Set a wire rack inside a rimmed baking sheet. Line another rimmed baking sheet with foil. Cut two 12-inch sheets of plastic wrap.

Step 2) Cut the chicken breasts in half lengthwise, making 4 roughly equal pieces; they should look like large chicken tenders. Place one sheet of plastic on a clean cutting board. Put one chicken piece in the center of the plastic and top with the other sheet of plastic. Pound the chicken with the flat side of a meat mallet, starting in the center and working your way to the edges, until the chicken is 1/4-inch thick. Transfer to the wire rack. Repeat with the remaining chicken, one piece at a time. Liberally sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Step 3) Put the flour in a pie plate and dredge the chicken 1 piece at a time, turning to coat and packing the flour into the crevices. Shake to remove any excess and return to the rack. Repeat with the remaining chicken.

Step 4) Whisk the breadcrumbs, 1/4 cup of the Parmesan, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper in a medium bowl until combined. Whisk the milk and egg in a medium bowl until combined. Dip the dredged chicken into the milk mixture, allowing any excess to drip off. Then pack the seasoned breadcrumbs firmly onto the chicken.

Step 5) Very gently shake off any excess and return to the rack. Refrigerate uncovered at least 30 minutes and up to 12 hours.

Step 6) Meanwhile, make the sauce. Heat 1/3 cup of the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the garlic, oregano and red pepper flakes and cook until very fragrant but not brown, about 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, basil and 1 teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer and cook, uncovered, until the tomatoes are very tender and the liquid has reduced by half, about 30 minutes. Smash the tomatoes with a potato masher until almost smooth; it's ok if it's a little chunky. Season with salt.

Step 7) Heat the remaining 1/2 cup oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2 cutlets and cook until the coating is golden brown, about 1 minute per side; the chicken will not be cooked through. Transfer to the foil-lined baking sheet in a single layer 3 inches apart. Repeat with the remaining cutlets.

Step 8) Arrange an oven rack directly under the broiler and preheat to high. Arrange the chicken in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet, spaced 3 inches apart. Top each cutlet with 2/3 cup of the sauce and spread evenly to coat. Sprinkle each cutlet with 1 tablespoon of the Parmesan and 1/2 cup mozzarella. Broil until the cheese melts and starts to brown in spots, 2 to 3 minutes.

Step 9) Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Cook the spaghetti, stirring occasionally, until al dente. Drain and transfer to the remaining sauce. Gently stir until the sauce coats the pasta. Transfer the spaghetti to a serving dish and top with the chicken. Sprinkle with more Parmesan and serve with torn basil.

grandpa's thoughts:

I love this recipe! It's easy, but it takes some time. Don't skip the refrigeration step.

A key is that the Parmesan is mixed into the crust as well as on the top.

Once you try this, you will make it over and over again. Plan to make extra for leftovers. You won't regret it. Absolutely delicious! Entire family devoured and leftovers were just as amazing!