

# Crispy Cutlets with Fennel Salad

Serves 2

This crispy cutlet, inspired by the New York City restaurants I love so much goes by many names, but all you need to know is that it's chicken (or pork) and it's crispy. The pounding of the chicken is what really makes it, but yes, you can simply bread a thinly sliced cutlet for a different (perhaps juicer, less crispy) effect. The salad here is made with fennel, but you can use any crunchy vegetable, dressed with lemon and herbs to eat alongside. This recipe serves two, but you can easily double it for more cutlets; just be sure to wipe the skillet free from any burned crumbs between rounds.

**2 cups panko bread crumbs**

**Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**1 large egg, beaten to blend**

**1 8–10 oz. boneless, skinless chicken breast or pork chop**

**1 shallot, thinly sliced**

**2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, plus 1 quartered lemon for serving**

**1 fennel bulb or 4 stalks celery, thinly sliced**

**1 cup mixed herbs, such as parsley, chives and dill, coarsely chopped (or just use fennel fronds)**

**¼ cup canola oil, plus more as needed**

**Dijon mustard and cornichon pickles, for serving (optional)**

**Dirty martini with olives and a twist (optional)**

1. Place panko in a shallow baking dish or wide, shallow bowl and season with salt; set aside.
2. Whisk egg with a teaspoon or of water until well blended, season with salt, and place in another shallow baking dish or wide, shallow bowl; set aside.
3. Slice chicken breast (or pork chop) in half horizontally, so you have two thin cutlets. Working with one piece at a time, place one cutlet between two sheets of parchment paper (alternatively, use a Ziploc bag or plastic wrap).
4. Using a small, heavy-bottomed skillet, gently but firmly pound the chicken or pork until it's as thin as can be, about ⅛" thick (don't go too thin, though, or it'll be hard to bread and not that fun to eat).

**ALISON ROMAN**

5. Season chicken or pork with salt on both sides then dip into the egg mixture. Using your hands (or tongs, but I prefer hands), pick up the cutlet, letting any excess egg wash run off. Place it directly into the bread crumbs and, like you're burying something in the sand, cover it with bread crumbs. Firmly press the crumbs into the cutlet so that the entire surface of both sides is covered with a tight layer of crumbs. Shake off any excess crumbs, and set cutlet aside, either on a plate or baking sheet. Repeat with remaining cutlets (you can refrigerate at this stage up to two days, or freeze up to 2 weeks).

6. Combine shallot and 2 tablespoons lemon juice in a medium bowl and season with salt; set aside.

7. Heat canola oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Once oil is shimmering, add cutlets, and using tongs, press slightly so that it makes contact with the skillet and the oil. (This will help an even browning as the chicken contracts and buckles.) Cook until golden brown and crispy on one side, about 3 minutes. Carefully flip the cutlets and cook until the other side is just as golden brown, another 2 or 3 minutes. Remove from the skillet and transfer to a paper towel-lined plate; season with salt. Repeat with remaining cutlets.

8. To serve, add fennel and any fronds or herbs to the shallot, toss, and season with salt and pepper. Place a crispy cutlet on each plate and nestle the fennel salad alongside (not on, lest you disturb the crunchy exterior). Serve with lemon wedges for squeezing over as you cut off each bite, mustard for dipping, cornichons for snacking, and the martini for drinking.