

## Chicken Picatta

This is a simple and delicious way to prepare chicken. I love the savory combination of capers and lemons. I like this dish too because it is simple and can be prepared on the spur of the moment or made ahead of time and heated up when guests arrive. It travels well too; I have made this recipe for friends who were recovering from surgery, and dropped it off for the family when someone dies. The beauty of the dish is that it is all ready to go and all the person you are bringing it to has to do is heat it up and serve it. I often accompany this with rice pilaf and green beans (steamed and then tossed with a hint of lemon zest, sea salt and butter). When bringing the meal to others I prefer to make a medley of roasted new potatoes, onions, celery and carrots and a Salad to round out the meal. I typically purchase whole boneless chicken breasts and then butterfly each breast or filet each breast into two or three cutlets. But if you have a local butcher you can get beautiful chicken breasts already cleaned of fat and fillaments and fillet ready to use, that makes it easy when you are strapped for time or cooking for a crowd. I was cooking this dish for a 100 hungry men on a Christian Men's retreat and there were a few gluten allergies so instead of using flour, I used a combination of brown rice flour and fava bean flour, it came out great, it is a great substitution for anyone with a gluten free diet. The sauce is something else that is individual to taste. Sometimes I use only some fresh lemon juice, lemon zest, butter and some white wine or lemoncello omitting the chicken stock entirely. I also rarely add the cream but my friend Paula who has made this dish often loves it with the additon of the cream.

## Chicken with Lemon and Capers

### INGREDIENTS:

- 8 lbs of chicken breasts
- 5 eggs
- 2 cups flour (for brown rice, fava bean or rice flour)
- 6 Lemons
- 2 Bottles of small capers
- 3 sticks of butter
- 1 cup chicken broth (optional)
- 1/2 cup white wine or lemoncello (optional)
- 1/2 cup light cream or half and half (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Olive oil to fry the cutlets

### PREPARING AND FRYING THE CUTLETS:

Prepare the cutlets, if necessary cut away any fleshy filaments. Wash the chicken, patdry and then either butterfly the chicken breast or pound to thin cutlet thickness (about 5/16 or 6/16" thickness). I rarely

pound the chicken. I prefer to either butterfly the breast or filet the breast into three cutlets. If you like you can lightly season each cutlet with salt and pepper.

Place oil in a fry pan sufficient to deep fry several chicken cutlets at a time. The oil should be high enough to cover the chicken  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way when placed in the pan. Heat the oil. In a bowl/dish good for dipping, beat the eggs adding a little salt and pepper and set aside. I sometimes add some milk or a dash of cream to this, but prefer it best with just eggs. If you find that as you are dipping and dredging the chicken and you are running low on the eggs and have only a couple of cutlets left, you can mix some milk or even water into the eggs to make them stretch.

In another bowl/dish good for dredging, mix the flour and salt and pepper.

Dredge the pounded chicken cutlets in the flour mixture and shake off the excess flour then dip in the beaten eggs coating the whole cutlet. You can prepare 3 -4 of the cutlets in this fashion and place on a dish, then when the oil is hot enough to fry, gently place the cutlets in the heated oil. The egg batter will puff up a little and you will notice as the cutlets cook they will begin to brown, turn the cutlets to cook on both sides making sure to turn them over at least once. Do not overcook or overbrown but you want to get a nice color to the cutlet without it being too dark or burning. When the cutlet is cooked and nicely browned, remove it and place the cutlet in a baking dish that has been buttered or sprayed with oil. Continue to repeat this process to cook all the cutlets and line them slightly overlapping in the baking dish (make sure to keep the dish covered in between to keep the cutlets warm).

#### **MAKE THE LEMON CAPER SAUCE:**

When the cutlets are done frying I discard the oil (sometimes I will set aside  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the oil, strained). Once the oil is safely removed from the pan and the pan is cooled down enough to handle, towel dry the pan to clean and remove any remnants of frying the chicken. Using the same pan, melt the butter. As the butter is melting add the drained capers (rinse the capers a few times in fresh water and drain the water out) and the juice from 3 lemons along with a few lemon rings and the zest of one lemon. I usually reserve 3-5 lemon rings to place on the dish when completed. Sauté the butter, capers and lemon juice until the flavors marry and sauce is bubbling. You may have to adjust this and add more butter or lemon juice as necessary depending on the amount of chicken you have. You can also prepare this sauce and then turn off the heat and set aside. Sometimes I add a cup of homemade chicken stock, but this is optional. I also sometimes add white wine or a bit of lemoncello. If I am in a hurry, boxed chicken broth works great or if there is none handy, a few chicken bouillon cubes dissolved in some water is another time saver. If you want to make the sauce a little creamier, add a cup or so of chicken broth and cook till the sauce is bubbling and then blend in some half and half or light cream, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup and whisk this in quickly stirring constantly to blend well.

When the sauce is done, pour it over the cutlets making sure that there is a generous amount of sauce over the cutlets. I usually arrange a few of the lemons and capers on top. You can serve immediately, or if you are preparing other items or waiting for guests, you can prepare, cover with foil and leave to warm in the oven. With sufficient sauce, the chicken should not dry out.