

PARMESAN CRUSTED PORK CHOPS ✦

One cannot live solely on a diet of beef, chicken, and fish as the chief proteins in a meal. Pork chops are the champs of weeknight cooking. They don't require much preparation, they cook fast, and they offer a ton of tasty variety.

These Parmesan crusted pork chops are easy to make and are delightful when properly prepared. I've tried them many ways, and, believe me, you do not want them overcooked, dry, and tough. The key to cooking pork chops is making sure they don't dry out when you fry, bake, or grill them. The hints below will help to cook the chops so they stay tender, moist, and delicious.

When buying, look for bone-in pork chops about an inch thick. Why bone-in? Well, the bone actually slows the cooking time—not long, just a few minutes—but even a few minutes can make the difference between moist, tender pork chops and dry, tight-textured ones.

Of course, thinner, boneless pork chops are still a great option, if you keep a close eye on them. They cook fast.

2 pork loin chops, about 1" thick
¼ cup buttermilk
¼ cup egg substitute (X)
2 tbsp panko bread crumbs
2 tbsp grated Asiago (or Parmesan) cheese
½ tsp paprika
½ tsp dried parsley
½ tsp garlic powder
¼ tsp fresh ground black pepper
olive oil cooking spray
1 tbsp olive oil

Preheat a toaster oven to 350°F.

Mix the buttermilk and X well in a pie plate or pan. Dip the pork chops into this, turn over, dip again, until both are well covered.

Let them rest in the mixture while preparing the coating.

Mix the cheese, bread crumbs, paprika, garlic powder, and pepper and place in a pie tin or plate. Redip the pork chops in the liquid and then put them into the dry plate, to coat all sides. Pack the mixture onto all sides of the chops.

Place the chops into a baking pan lined with non-stick foil, spray the surface with cooking spray, and drizzle the olive oil across the pan. Add the chops to the pan and pack some of the remaining dry mixture on top, then spray the top of the chops with cooking spray.

Insert a cooking thermometer, if the chops are thick enough, and put the pan in the oven. Bake until the thermometer hits 140°F and then turn off the oven. The chops will keep cooking as they rest for 5 minutes or so. Remove and serve when the internal temperature is 145°F. If, while baking, one side browns faster than the other, turn them over to equalize the color and texture.

Serves 2.