

Chef from the Hood Recipes



Chef:

Alden and Tina Girolo

Restaurant:

Pacific Market

Recipe:

Alden & Maria's Crab Cakes

Ingredients

4 tablespoons (or 1/2 stick) butter
Finely chopped vegetables: 1/2 cup chopped onion; 1/2 cup chopped celery; 2 cloves chopped garlic; 1 cup chopped red bell pepper
6 to 8 ounces fresh crab meat from the Pacific or Fiesta crab pot (Local Dungeness crab is nearing season's end; the Pacific and Fiesta meat counter sells both whole cooked crab and shelled crab meat) 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon worstershire sauce
salt & freshly ground pepper
2 cups crushed Ritz crackers
2 large eggs (whites only) PLUS 2 whole eggs
3 cups Panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
vegetable oil for frying
garnishes: chopped green onion; lemon wedges;
dipping sauce

Alden, Tina and their three daughters were together this past Easter, which coincidentally, fell on Alden's birthday as it did in 1943, the year he was born. Eldest daughter Maria made these crab cakes which Alden loved. She says, "My dad was crazy about these crab cakes. He would be pleased that I am sharing my recipe! He didn't like the cakes to be too spicy, but you can add a few drops of Tabasco sauce to the crab mixture if you'd like. Serve them with your favorite dipping sauce and lemon wedges." Recipe makes 10 cakes; we suggest you double it!

Prep: chop vegetables, but don't pulverize them! Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. (Cast iron is perfect.) Add vegetables and sauté until they soften up. Turn off heat and transfer vegetables to a large bowl.

Mix: To vegetables, add crab meat, lemon juice and worstershire sauce. Mix with a large spoon. Mix in crushed crackers. Taste, adding salt, pepper and Tabasco if you'd like. Caution! Ritz crackers are salty, so use salt sparingly! Lastly, beat 2 egg whites in a small bowl with a fork. Fold the egg whites into the mix. The egg whites will help hold the mix together.

Shape: Using a scant 1/3 cup measure, shape mix into 10 cakes. Flatten each to about 3". Place cakes on a sheet pan; freeze or refrigerate about 10 minutes or until firmed up, but not frozen! Meanwhile, beat 2 eggs with a fork in a small bowl. Place Panko in a shallow container. Remove cakes from fridge and dip each into beaten egg, then into Panko to coat.

Fry: Wipe out your pan, or get out a clean one and add about 1/4" to 1/2" of oil to it. Heat oil over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Add cakes, a few at a time, so oil temperature does not drop suddenly. Add oil, a little at a time if needed as you fry. Do not crowd the pan! Fry each cake until golden, then flip and fry other side. As cakes cook, place in single layer on paper towels to drain. Garnish crab cakes and serve warm!