

Chicken Croquettes With Velouté Sauce

1 large chicken	2 teaspoons minced tarragon
1 qt. canned or boxed chicken stock	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup white wine or dry vermouth
1 large onion	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Madeira or sherry
2 scraped carrots, sliced	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup, plus $\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy cream
2 celery stalks, sliced	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk
1 leek (optional), sliced	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour, plus 1 cup sifted
2 bay leaves	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable oil
4 peppercorns	$1\frac{1}{3}$ cups grated Swiss or Jarlsberg
4 sprigs thyme, plus 1 tablespoon leaves	5 large whole eggs
4 sprigs plus $\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced parsley	4 egg yolks
1 stick, plus 4 tablespoons butter	4 cups fine, dry breadcrumbs
4-6 mushrooms, minced	Salt and pepper
3 tablespoons minced shallots	Oil for frying

Poaching the Chicken

Place chicken breast side up in a large Dutch oven (at least 6-quart capacity). Pour on the chicken stock. Place the onion, carrots, celery, leek, bay leaves, peppercorns, thyme and parsley sprigs in the liquid. Add enough water to cover the chicken. Add 2 teaspoons of salt. Bring slowly to the simmer, skimming off the scum. When no more scum accumulates, partially cover the pot and simmer for 3 to four hours. Remove the chicken from the stock and cool slightly. Remove the skin, and extract all the meat from the bird. Mince the chicken meat, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until ready to use.

Preparing the Stock

Strain the broth into a large pot, pressing down on the vegetables to extract the flavor. Chill the stock until the fat congeals at the top. Either spoon away the fat or skim paper towels across the top to remove as much fat as possible. Once degreased, boil for 3 to 5 minutes to concentrate the stock.

Making the Chicken Cream Filling

Gently cook the minced shallots and mushrooms in 4 tablespoons of butter in a large pot for about 5 minutes. Add the minced chicken and cook for 2 minutes over low heat. Add the white wine or vermouth and the Madeira and boil until the liquids are nearly evaporated. Add the 2 teaspoons of minced tarragon and the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of minced parsley.

In another saucepan, bring $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups of stock, plus the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup each of heavy cream and milk to the simmer. Melt the stick of butter in a large enameled pot. Whisk in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of flour and cook for several minutes, not allowing the mixture to brown. Whisk in the hot stock, cream, and milk until the mixture thickens. Beat the 4 egg yolks with the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cream in a small bowl. Slowly beat in a ladleful of the velouté mixture, then return this to the pot with the remaining velouté. Simmer for a few minutes adding salt and pepper to taste. Sauce will be very thick.

Add $\frac{3}{4}$ of the velouté plus the grated cheese to the chicken mixture. Reserve the remaining veloute. Butter a 10- x 13-inch baking pan and spread the chicken mixture into the pan,

smoothing the top. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to overnight. Over low heat whisk in about 2 cups or more of the remaining chicken stock into the remaining velouté until you get a consistency you like. This will serve as the sauce for the croquettes

Coating the Croquettes

Sift 1 cup of flour onto a plate. Place 2 cups of the breadcrumbs on another plate. In bowl beat the 5 eggs with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetable oil and a little salt and pepper. Cut the chicken mixture into 18 even squares. With a spatula remove a square and one at a time shape into a cylinder. Roll the cylinder in the flour and dip into the egg-yolk mixture being certain it is covered. Roll in the breadcrumbs and pat them crumbs gently into the croquette. Add the last 2 cups of breadcrumbs to the plate when needed.. When all the croquettes are done, dip them once again in the egg mixture and roll again in the crumbs. Place them on a plate and refrigerate at least one hour.

Frying the Croquettes

Heat to 350° enough vegetable oil to cover more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the croquettes. Alternately, they may be cooked in a deep-fryer. An electric skillet is the perfect pan for these. Fry until golden brown on all sides.

If you cook in a frying pan, you need to turn the croquettes gently, being sure that the underside is browned before you flip them. If necessary, you can keep them warm in a 300° oven. Serve with the heated velouté sauce.

The Simplified Version

A much easier, but still acceptable, version can be made with already-cooked leftover chicken and store-bought chicken stock. You can't hope to achieve the same luscious results, however. Simply adjust the measurements of the cream-filling and coating recipes to accommodate the amount of leftover chicken you have on hand.