Chicken Piccata with Peas and Pearl Couscous

4 plates, each with 2 small chicken cutlets and one quarter of the pea couscous | Active 30 min | Cook 25 min | Total 45 min

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups dry pearl couscous (240 g)
- 2 1/4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth (540 ml), divided: 1 3/4 cups for couscous and 1/2 cup for sauce
- 1 cup frozen peas (140 g)
- 1 1/2 lb boneless skinless chicken breast (680 g)
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour (24 g), for a thin coating
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g), divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper (1 g)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (15 ml), divided between batches
- 2 garlic cloves, minced (6 g)
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice (45 ml)
- 2 tablespoons capers, drained (18 g)
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter (14 g)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley (8 g)

Set out

Large saucepan with lid, 12-inch/30 cm skillet, Clean board and sharp knife, Rolling pin or meat mallet, Shallow flour dish, Food thermometer

Allergens

Wheat, Milk; check broth label for additional allergens. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Bring 1 3/4 cups/420 ml broth to a simmer in the saucepan. Add couscous and half the salt, cover and cook on low according to the package, usually 10–12 minutes. Stir in peas for the last 4–5 minutes, or the longer time required by their package. If the pan becomes dry before couscous is tender, add a little hot water. Remove from heat when tender and keep covered.

2. Split and flatten chicken into 8 small cutlets about 1/2 inch/1.3 cm thick. Season with remaining salt and black pepper. Lay cutlets in a shallow dish, sprinkle the measured flour evenly over both sides and pat it onto the meat. Wash hands and clean raw-chicken equipment.

3. Heat half the oil in the skillet over medium-high heat. Cook 4 cutlets for about 3 minutes per side until golden, then transfer to a clean plate. Repeat with the remaining oil and cutlets.

4. Lower heat to medium. Add garlic and stir for 20 seconds. Pour in remaining 1/2 cup/120 ml broth and scrape up browned bits; simmer for 2 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and capers. Return chicken and its juices; simmer gently for 1–3 minutes until every cutlet reaches 165°F/74°C.

5. Remove from heat and swirl in butter and parsley. Fluff couscous and peas, divide among four plates, and serve two cutlets and one quarter of the sauce on each.

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Estimated nutrition per serving

Calories: 545 kcal | Protein: 50.7 g | Carbohydrate: 56.4 g | Fat: 11.9 g | Fiber: 4.0 g. One of 4 servings. Batch yield: 4 plates, each with 2 small chicken cutlets and one quarter of the pea couscous. Base ingredients and full measured oil included; optional variations excluded. Estimates vary with brands, cooking and actual portions.

Get the sequence working for you

Flatten and portion the chicken before heating the skillet. Once cooking begins, the couscous pot can finish while the two chicken batches brown. Keep a clean plate beside the stove and a separate place for raw utensils. That arrangement saves more stress than trying to rush the final sauce.

A useful detail

Use the broth amount and timing on your pearl couscous package if they differ substantially; brands vary in size and absorption. Extra plain cooking water does not change the nutrition estimate.

Another way

Use 240 g dry small pasta shells instead of couscous, cooking in water according to the package and keeping the sauce broth separate.

Replace peas with 140 g trimmed fresh green beans, boiled separately in plenty of boiling water for at least 30 minutes until thoroughly soft, then drained and cut small before folding through the cooked couscous. Start the beans first and add their full preparation to your schedule; do not rely on the short final couscous simmer to cook raw beans.

Keep it well

Refrigerate chicken, sauce and couscous in shallow containers within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Keep at 40°F/4°C or below for up to 3 days. Reheat to 165°F/74°C throughout; loosen couscous with water and cover the chicken to retain moisture. Pack chilled portions with two cold sources.