

Loaves & Fishes

Have some stale bread lying around? Transform it into a terrific topping for my no-fuss breaded baked fish recipe. While homemade bread crumbs, fresh fish and fresh herbs make this dish really delicious, it's a forgiving enough preparation to enhance frozen fish and dried herbs. When necessary, you can use store-bought bread crumbs, such as panko, a feathery light type of grated Japanese bread particularly well-suited to fish. Many types of white fish work well this way, and you can customize the sauce. Instead of capers, try minced garlic and horseradish, or use cilantro and lime. In fact, you should easily find enough ways to vary the dish to see you through the Lenten season.

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If dinner guests should suddenly appear, the recipe (if not the ingredients) can easily be multiplied.

Breaded Baked Cod

4 skinless cod fillets (8 ounces each), or other white fish

Salt and pepper

¼ cup mayonnaise

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons capers, rinsed and chopped (optional)

2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs, like parsley, dill or tarragon, or 2 teaspoons dried

¾ cup dried bread crumbs

1 tablespoon olive oil

Lemon wedges, for serving

Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Grease a 9 by 13-inch pan and lay the fish in it, patting the fillets dry with paper towels. Season the fish with salt and pepper.

In a small bowl, combine the mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice, capers and half of the herbs. Spread the mixture evenly over the fish. Next, combine the remaining herbs with the bread crumbs and olive oil, tossing to coat evenly. Sprinkle the bread crumbs evenly over the mayonnaise mixture and press lightly to adhere.

Bake until the bread crumbs are golden brown and the fish flakes apart when gently prodded with a paring knife, about 15 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges.