

Steve's Crispy Crab Cakes

- 1 pound (500 grams) blue crab meat
- 2 pounds (1 kilogram) king crab, in shell
- 3 medium onions, finely chopped (about 2 1/4 cups/625 mL)
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) oil
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) salt
- 1 cup (250 mL) butter
- 2 cups (500 mL) flour
- 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) milk
- 2 stalks celery, finely chopped (about 1/2 cup/125 mL)
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped (about 3/4 cup/175 mL)
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 6 teaspoons (30 mL) celery seeds
- 6 teaspoons (30 mL) coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) dried red pepper flakes
- 3 tablespoons (50 mL) salt
- 1 loaf fresh whole-wheat bread, blended in a food processor for bread crumbs (this yields about 6 1/2 cups/1,625 mL fresh bread crumbs)
- 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) cornmeal
- 1 cup (250 mL) fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 3 eggs + 1/4 cup (50 mL) water

In a large bowl, add the blue crab meat. Shell the king crab, squeezing out any excess moisture from the meat and add to the bowl. Add the celery and red bell pepper. Set aside.

In a large saucepan, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the onions and 1 tablespoon (15 mL) salt and stir frequently until softened, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and stir onions until lightly golden. As the onions dry, add a few tablespoons of water and stir more until deeply golden. Set aside to cool.

In another large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk in the flour, changing to a wooden spoon to stir in the flour (it gets quite thick). Stir in the milk until uniformly combined (it should resemble the texture of smooth mashed potatoes). Set aside to cool.

Add the celery seeds, coriander seeds, red pepper flakes and 2 tablespoons (25 mL) salt to a spice grinder and grind. Transfer to a food processor with the garlic and 1/4 cup (50 mL) of water. Puree until smooth. Add to the large bowl with the crab-meat mixture.

Toast 5 cups fresh breadcrumbs in a 400 F/200 C oven until deeply golden and dried, about 5 minutes. Add to the large bowl with the crab-meat mixture. Stir in the cooled caramelized onion and butter-flour-milk mixture. Stir together gently with your fingers to ensure the crab meat remains in large chunks.

Divide the mixture into 30 equal sized patty shapes (using a scale to ensure an even portion works best). Put the 1 1/2 cups flour (375 mL) in one medium-sized bowl; the egg-water mixture in another; and the remaining 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) fresh breadcrumbs, cornmeal and chopped parsley in the third. Lightly coat each portioned crab cake in flour, then egg mixture, then breadcrumb-cornmeal mixture.

The breaded crab cakes can be frozen in a single layer on a wax paper-lined baking sheet, then bagged for future use or browned in 2 teaspoons (10 mL) of oil over medium heat until crispy and brown. If you brown after freezing, be sure to brown while the crab cake is still frozen and finish heating it through in a 375 F/190 C oven for a further 7 to 10 minutes. Serve with the sour cream and herb sauce below.

Herbed Sour Cream Sauce

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) finely chopped fresh chives
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) finely chopped fresh parsley
- 2/3 cup (150 mL) sour cream
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) salt
- 1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) ground black pepper

In a small bowl, combine the chives, parsley, sour cream, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Serve with crispy crab cakes.