

Fishcakes

Serves 4 as a main course or 8 as a starter

Ingredients

400g floury potatoes or leftover mashed potato

250g fish; almost any fish will be ok to use

1 or eggs, beaten

40g flour, for coating

50g fresh white breadcrumbs

2 tbsp vegetable oil for frying

Flavourings of your choice – here are some suggestions:

- A couple of tablespoons of chopped chives and a few capers
- Some grated strong Cheddar, wholegrain mustard and chopped parsley
- A teaspoon of red or green curry paste and a handful of chopped coriander
- A few chopped anchovies, lemon zest and a finely chopped chilli
- Chopped cooked spinach, dill and horseradish

Method

Peel the potatoes and cut into evenly sized chunks. Put into a large pan and cover with cold water. Add a generous pinch of salt and bring to the boil, then turn down the heat slightly and simmer until tender but not mushy. Drain and put back into the hot pan for a minute to dry off, then mash. Or skip this step and use leftover mashed potato.

Meanwhile, put the fish into a large pan and just cover with water. Bring to a simmer, then gently cook for 3–5 minutes, depending on the size of the fillets, until the skin, if any, pulls off easily, and it's just beginning to flake. Drain, skin if necessary and set aside to cool, then break into flakes and add to the potatoes. Or skip this step and use leftover fish. Tinned fish also works well – just make sure it is properly drained.

Add your chosen flavourings to the bowl, season and mix together gently, adding the beaten egg to bring the mixture together into patties – it shouldn't be too sloppy so you might not need the whole egg. Use your hands to form into four large cakes or eight smaller ones.

If you have some egg left over, put this in a shallow bowl, or use another egg. Tip the flour and breadcrumbs on to separate saucers. Dip each fishcake in turn into the flour, the egg, and finally the breadcrumbs until thoroughly coated. If you like your fishcakes super crispy you can dip them twice in the egg and breadcrumbs. If you have time, put the fishcakes in the fridge for half an hour to firm up. You can also freeze them at this stage.

Heat a frying pan and add the oil. Add the fishcakes, in batches if necessary, cook for 5 minutes on a medium-high heat until golden and crispy, then turn them carefully over and repeat on the other side.