

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 12-14 minutes
- Total Time: 30 minutes
- Servings: 4 chicken breasts
- Difficulty Intensity: Easy / Beginner-Friendly
- Heat/Power Intensity: Air Fryer set to 400°F (200°C)

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Why You'll Love This Recipe

- **Maximum Crispiness, Minimal Oil:** By using panko breadcrumbs and a quick spritz of cooking spray, you get deep-fried crunch using 85% less oil.
- **Juicy & Tender Every Time:** Halving or pounding chicken breasts to an even thickness guarantees fast, uniform cooking without drying out the meat.
- **Versatile Flavor Profile:** Seasoned with a blend of garlic, onion, smoked paprika, and Italian herbs, this chicken pairs seamlessly with pastas, fresh salads, or sandwich buns.

Ingredients List

For the Chicken & Coating:

- **Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breasts:** 2 large breasts (about 1.5 lbs / 680g total), sliced horizontally into 4 thin cutlets (or pounded to 1/2-inch thickness).
- **All-Purpose Flour:** 1/2 cup (can substitute with 1:1 gluten-free baking flour).
- **Eggs:** 2 large eggs, beaten well.
- **Milk or Water:** 1 tablespoon (to thin the egg wash).

- Panko Breadcrumbs: 1 cup (Japanese-style panko creates the ultimate crunch).
- Grated Parmesan Cheese: 1/4 cup, finely grated (adds rich, savory umami to the crust).
- Olive Oil Spray or Avocado Oil Spray: For spraying the air fryer basket and chicken.

The Seasoning Blend:

- Garlic Powder: 1 teaspoon
- Onion Powder: 1 teaspoon
- Smoked Paprika: 1 teaspoon (or sweet paprika)
- Italian Seasoning: 1 teaspoon
- Fine Sea Salt: 1 teaspoon
- Freshly Cracked Black Pepper: 1/2 teaspoon

Equipment Needed

- Air Fryer (basket or oven style)

- 3 shallow bowls or pie dishes (for the dredging station)
- Meat mallet or rolling pin
- Meat thermometer (instant-read)
- Tongs
- Baking spray mister

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prep the Chicken

1. **Even the Thickness:** Place the chicken breasts flat on a cutting board. Place one hand flat on top of a breast and carefully slice horizontally through the center to create two thinner cutlets. Alternatively, place cutlets between two sheets of plastic wrap and pound gently with a meat mallet until evenly 1/2-inch thick.
2. **Pat Dry:** Thoroughly pat the cutlets dry with paper towels. Removing excess moisture ensures the flour and breadcrumbs adhere tightly to the meat.

Step 2: Set Up the 3-Step Dredging Station

1. **Station 1 (Flour & Seasoning):** In a shallow bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour,

garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika, Italian seasoning, sea salt, and black pepper.

2. Station 2 (Egg Wash): In a second bowl, beat the 2 eggs together with 1 tablespoon of milk or water until smooth.
3. Station 3 (Panko Crust): In a third bowl, combine the panko breadcrumbs and grated Parmesan cheese.

Step 3: Bread the Chicken Cutlets

1. Flour Coating: Take one chicken cutlet and dredge it in the seasoned flour mixture. Shake off any excess flour gently.
2. Egg Dip: Dip the flour-dusted cutlet into the egg wash, ensuring all sides are lightly coated. Allow excess liquid to drip off.
3. Panko Press: Place the cutlet into the panko and Parmesan mixture. Press down firmly on both sides so the breadcrumbs adhere fully to the entire surface. Transfer the breaded cutlet to a clean plate and repeat with the remaining cutlets.

Step 4: Air Fry to Crispy Perfection

1. Preheat: Preheat your air fryer to 400°F (200°C) for 3 to 5 minutes. (Preheating ensures immediate searing and maximum crispiness).

2. Arrange: Lightly spray the air fryer basket with non-stick cooking spray. Place the breaded chicken cutlets into the basket in a single layer. *Do not overcrowd or overlap the pieces; cook in two batches if necessary.*
3. Oil Spritz: Generously spray the tops of the breaded cutlets with olive oil or avocado oil spray. This is essential for getting that golden, toasted finish on the breadcrumbs.
4. Air Fry Intensity: Cook at 400°F (200°C) for 6 minutes. Open the basket, carefully flip the cutlets using tongs, spritz the tops lightly with oil spray again, and cook for another 5 to 7 minutes.

Step 5: Check & Rest

1. Internal Temperature Check: Insert an instant-read meat thermometer into the thickest part of the chicken breast. It must reach an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C).
2. Rest: Transfer the crispy cutlets to a wire rack or cutting board and let them rest for 3 to 5 minutes before slicing. Resting allows the juices to redistribute inside the meat so every bite stays tender.

Expert Chef Tips for Success

1. Don't Skip the Panko: Standard fine breadcrumbs work, but Japanese panko breadcrumbs have a lighter, airier texture that yields a far crispier crunch in the air fryer.

2. **Avoid Aerosol Non-Stick Sprays:** Propellants in aerosol cooking sprays (like standard Pam) can degrade the non-stick coating of your air fryer basket over time. Use a refillable oil spray bottle filled with pure olive or avocado oil instead.
3. **Cook in Single Layers:** Overcrowding traps steam instead of circulating hot air, resulting in soggy breading. Give each piece of chicken at least half an inch of clearance.

Storage & Reheating Instructions

- **To Store:** Keep leftover chicken cutlets in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3–4 days.
- **To Reheat:** Avoid the microwave, which will make the breading soft and chewy. Instead, pop the cutlets back into the air fryer at 375°F (190°C) for 3 to 5 minutes until heated through and crispiness is restored.
- **To Freeze:** Allow cooked cutlets to cool completely. Freeze in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet for 1 hour, then transfer to a freezer-safe zip-top bag for up to 2 months. Reheat directly from frozen at 360°F (180°C) for 10–12 minutes.

Serving Suggestions

- **Classic Dinner:** Serve alongside garlic mashed potatoes and air-fried asparagus or green beans.
- **Chicken Parmesan:** Top cutlets with a spoonful of warm marinara sauce and melted

mozzarella cheese during the last minute of air frying.

- Crispy Sandwich: Layer onto a toasted brioche bun with garlic aioli, crisp lettuce, pickles, and sliced tomato.
- Sliced Salad Topper: Slice cutlets diagonally and serve over a fresh Caesar or garden salad for a high-protein lunch.

Comprehensive Nutrition Facts

Servings per Recipe: 4 Cutlets

Serving Size: 1 breaded chicken cutlet (approx. 160g cooked)

Metric	Amount Per Serving
Calories	345 kcal
Total Fat	11g
<i>Saturated Fat</i>	<i>3.5g</i>
<i>Trans Fat</i>	<i>0g</i>
Cholesterol	135mg
Sodium	680mg
Total Carbohydrates	22g
<i>Dietary Fiber</i>	<i>1.5g</i>
<i>Total Sugars</i>	<i>1g</i>
Protein	38g
Vitamin D	0.4mcg (2% DV)
Calcium	95mg (8% DV)
Iron	2.2mg (12% DV)
Potassium	480mg (10% DV)