

Something we never admit but all know is true: Even bad chicken Parmigiana is good. We totally eat—and love—it cold, same as pizza. It can be made with suck-o tomato sauce or questionable “cheese” that looks like baked Shrinky Dinks, and still we accept it. Imagine what properly melty mozzarella-blanketed chicken Parmigiana could be under the best circumstances—coated with potato chips, smeared with a bright electric-green sauce—and you should arrive at this tour de force. Try it in sub form on a long, thick roll, slapped with extra pesto, topped with arugula leaves, and hit with a squeeze of lemon. Or, bypass the broiler and eat the chicken without the cheese or pesto, enjoying the maximum crunch from the chips.

POTATO-CHIP CRUSTED CHICKEN WITH ARUGULA PESTO

serves 4

1½ cups packed fresh arugula

**½ cup packed fresh flat-leaf
parsley leaves**

**1 medium clove garlic, roughly
chopped**

**¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons
toasted hazelnuts, roughly
chopped**

**2 ounces Parmesan cheese,
coarsely grated (scant
¾ cup)**

**¼ teaspoon kosher salt,
plus more to taste**

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

**¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon
all-purpose flour**

**Freshly ground black pepper
to taste**

¼ cup whole milk

**1½ cups finely crushed kettle-
style potato chips**

¾ teaspoon cayenne pepper

**4 skinless, boneless chicken
breast halves
(8 to 10 ounces each)**

**8 (¼-inch-thick) slices fresh
unsalted mozzarella**

In a food processor, pulse together the arugula, parsley, garlic, hazelnuts, Parmesan, and salt to form a paste, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Slowly stream in the olive oil as you continue pulsing to form a smooth, bright sauce. Taste and adjust for salt as needed. (See *How to Pesto*, page 139.)

Place a baking rack on a parchment-lined baking sheet and coat the rack with cooking spray. Set a rack in the oven so that when your chicken is raised on the baking rack, it's 2 or 3 inches away from the broiler. Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Spread ¼ cup flour on a large plate and season with a pinch each of salt and black pepper. Add the milk to a medium bowl and season with a pinch each of salt and black pepper. Fill a separate medium bowl with the potato chip crumbs, the remaining 1 tablespoon flour, and the cayenne. Stir to combine.

Season each chicken breast on both sides with a pinch each of salt and black pepper. One at a time, dip each breast in the seasoned flour to coat, shaking off any excess, then dunk in the milk, letting any excess drip off, and roll through the potato-chip mixture, pressing to coat. Place on the prepared baking rack. Pat any remaining potato-chip coating on top of the breasts.

Bake the chicken breasts until their crusts are golden, they're just cooked through, and their juices run clear, 18 to 20 minutes. Remove the chicken from the oven and turn on the broiler.

Cover each breast with 2 pieces of mozzarella. Return the chicken to the oven and broil until the cheese is bubbling and just beginning to brown, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a large serving platter and let rest for 5 minutes. Gently smear a few spoonfuls of the pesto over each breast and serve.