

Delmarva Crab Cakes with Cucumber Tartar Sauce

BY RICK RODGERS DECEMBER 1998 FRIED & TRUE

YieldMakes 6 cakes

Ingredients

Cucumber Tartar Sauce:

1 cup 1/8-inch cubes peeled and seeded cucumber
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 scallion, white and green parts, finely chopped
2 tablespoons nonpareil capers, rinsed
1 teaspoon anchovy paste

Crab Cakes:

1/2 cup plus 1/3 cup dried bread crumbs
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 large egg, beaten
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 scallion, white and green parts, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 teaspoon Delmarva Seasoning, or store-bought Old Bay Seasoning
1 pound fresh lump crabmeat, picked over for cartilage
vegetable oil for deep-frying

Preparation

To make the sauce:

In a medium bowl, toss the cucumber with the salt. Let stand about 1 hour. Transfer to a sieve and rinse well under cold running water. Pat the cucumber dry.

In a small bowl, mix the drained cucumber, mayonnaise, scallion, capers, and anchovy paste. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. (The tartar sauce can be prepared up to 3 days ahead.)

To make the crab cakes:

Mix the 1/2 cup bread crumbs, the mayonnaise, egg, mustard, scallion, Worcestershire sauce, and Delmarva or Old Bay seasoning. Mix in the crabmeat with wet hands, form into 6 cakes about 3 inches wide. Place the remaining 1/2 cup bread crumbs in a deep plate. Coat the crab cakes in the crumbs and set aside.

Line a baking sheet with paper towels. Into a large deep skillet (preferably cast iron), pour vegetable oil to a depth of 1/2 inch, and heat over high heat until very hot but not smoking. Carefully add the crab cakes and cook, turning once, until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spatula, transfer to the paper towels to drain. Serve hot, with the tartar sauce on the side.

To make Delmarva Seasoning: Mix 2 teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon ground celery seed, 1 teaspoon dry mustard, 1 teaspoon sweet paprika, 1 teaspoon ground black pepper, 1 teaspoon ground bay leaf, 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves, 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice, 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger, 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg, 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom, and 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon. Will keep indefinitely in a tightly covered container in a cool, dark place. Makes about 3 tablespoons.