

# Six Degrees of Chicken Cutlet

Can't tell your Marsala from your saltimbocca? We're here to help

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How many ways can you possibly cook a pounded-thin chicken breast? Well, as any self-respecting red sauce menu will tell you, the answer is...a lot. The chicken cutlet is the stem cell of the kitchen: the stuff of life itself, a base protein that can, depending on how you cook it and sauce it, morph into a seemingly boundless array of codified, canonical Italian-American dishes.

Marsala. Milanese. Francese. But what does it all mean? What distinguishes chicken Parmigiana from piccata? With the help of the fine folks at Detroit's iconic **Amore da Roma**, we break it down.

CHICKEN  
PICCATA  
P. 94



## 1. Marsala

Lightly floured, sautéed, and served in a rich, silky pan sauce composed of butter, onions, caramelized mushrooms, and plenty of Marsala, the sherry-esque fortified wine from coastal Sicily.



## 2. Parmigiana

Crunchy cutlets gilded with a thin layer of marinara and a flurry of grated Parmesan (and for the non-purists, a blanket of mozzarella), broiled to perfection. Doesn't get much more iconic than this, folks.

## 3. Piccata

Less crunchy, more saucy. And no breadcrumbs this time: Instead, slices of chicken get dredged in seasoned flour, sautéed in butter, and smothered in an addictively tangy lemon-butter pan sauce studded with salty capers. Want to make it in the comfort of your own home? Easy. Check out our recipe on page 94.



## 4. Francese

Also known as Chicken French, this baby comes in a sauce similar to piccata (sans capers), but stands apart for its un-crisp texture: Cutlets get dipped in wet batter for an eggy, almost puffy exterior.



## 5. Saltimbocca

Cutlets are pounded out, layered with prosciutto and sage, rolled into tidy little packages (sometimes, not always), then dredged in flour and sautéed. The name literally translates to "jumps in the mouth."



## 6. Milanese

The ur-cutlet, simplicity at its finest: a crisp slab of breaded and pan-fried chicken breast, no sauce in sight, maybe a wedge of lemon or tuft of dressed arugula riding sidesaddle. Don't call it a schnitzel.