



Wiener Schnitzel is one of Austria's most famous and beloved dishes. The name "Wiener Schnitzel" translates to "Viennese cutlet," and it is traditionally made with thinly pounded veal, coated in breadcrumbs, and fried to golden perfection. Austrian law protects the authenticity of this dish, ensuring that only veal cutlets can be labeled as Wiener Schnitzel. When prepared correctly, Wiener Schnitzels are crispy on the outside while remaining tender and juicy on the inside. This dish is typically served with a wedge of lemon and a side of [potato salad](#), cucumber salad, or fries.

The Key Ingredients for an Authentic Wiener Schnitzel

To prepare traditional Wiener Schnitzels, you need a handful of high-quality ingredients. Each ingredient plays a crucial role in achieving the authentic taste and texture of this Austrian delicacy.

Essential Ingredients:

- **4 (5-ounce) veal cutlets** - The star of the dish, thinly pounded for tenderness.
- **1/4 cup all-purpose flour** - Helps the egg coating adhere to the meat.
- **1/2 teaspoon kosher salt** - Enhances the flavor of the cutlets.
- **2 large eggs, well beaten** - Acts as the binding agent for the breadcrumbs.
- **1/2 cup breadcrumbs** - Provides the signature crispy coating.
- **Oil or lard, for frying** - Traditionally, clarified butter or lard is used for frying.
- **4 lemon slices** - Used as a garnish to enhance the flavor.

High-quality ingredients ensure that your Wiener Schnitzels turn out flavorful, crispy, and tender. Always choose fresh veal and high-quality breadcrumbs for the best results.

Step-by-Step Guide: How to Make Wiener Schnitzels at Home

Making Wiener Schnitzels from scratch is simple if you follow a step-by-step approach. This classic dish requires careful preparation to achieve its signature texture and flavor.

Step 1: Prepare the Veal Cutlets

Place each veal cutlet between two sheets of plastic wrap. Use a meat mallet or rolling pin to pound them to about 1/4-inch thickness. This ensures even cooking and a tender bite.



Step 2: Set Up the Breading Station

Prepare three shallow dishes:

1. Mix flour and salt in the first dish.
2. Beat the eggs in the second dish.
3. Fill the third dish with breadcrumbs.

Step 3: Coat the Cutlets

Dredge each cutlet in flour, ensuring it is completely covered. Shake off excess flour. Next, dip the cutlet into the beaten eggs, allowing the excess to drip off. Finally, coat the cutlet in breadcrumbs, but do not press them into the meat. This keeps the coating light and crispy.

Step 4: Fry the Cutlets

Heat about 1/4-inch of oil or lard in a skillet to 350°F (175°C). Fry each cutlet for 2-3 minutes on one side until golden brown. Flip and cook for another 2-3 minutes. Make sure the cutlet “swims” in fat to prevent it from sticking and to create an airy crust.

Step 5: Serve and Enjoy

Remove the cutlets from the oil and drain them on paper towels. Serve immediately with lemon slices and your favorite side dishes.

Secrets to Achieving the Perfect Crispy Coating

A perfectly crispy coating is essential for the best Wiener Schnitzels. Here are some expert tips:

- **Use fresh breadcrumbs** – Homemade breadcrumbs or high-quality store-bought breadcrumbs work best.
- **Do not press the breadcrumbs into the cutlet** – A light coating helps the crust puff up and stay crispy.
- **Ensure the oil is at the right temperature** – If the oil is too cold, the schnitzel will absorb too much fat. If it's too hot, the breading will burn.



- **Fry in batches** – Crowding the pan will lower the oil temperature and result in soggy schnitzels.
- **Drain on paper towels** – This helps remove excess oil while keeping the coating crispy.

Following these steps will ensure that your Wiener Schnitzels turn out light, crispy, and delicious every time.

Traditional Side Dishes That Pair Well with Wiener Schnitzels

A Wiener Schnitzel meal is incomplete without the perfect side dish. Here are some traditional Austrian pairings:

- **Potato Salad** – A classic side dish made with vinegar, mustard, and onions.
- **Cucumber Salad** – A refreshing accompaniment featuring thinly sliced cucumbers in a light dressing.
- **French Fries** – Crispy fries make for a hearty and satisfying meal.
- **Lingonberry Jam** – A sweet and tangy condiment that adds depth to the dish.

Each of these sides enhances the flavors of Wiener Schnitzels, making your meal more enjoyable.

Wiener Schnitzel vs. Other Schnitzels: Understanding the Differences

Below is a comparison table highlighting the key differences between Wiener Schnitzel and other popular schnitzels:

Type of Schnitzel	Meat Used	Traditional Origin	Coating	Cooking Method
Wiener Schnitzel	Veal	Austria	Breadcrumbs	Deep-fried in clarified butter or lard
Schweineschnitzel	Pork	Germany	Breadcrumbs	Deep-fried in oil



Hähnchenschnitzel	Chicken	Germany/Israel	Breadcrumbs	Pan-fried or deep-fried
Jägerschnitzel	Pork or veal	Germany	No breadcrumbs, served with mushroom gravy	Pan-fried
Rahmschnitzel	Pork or veal	Germany	No breadcrumbs, served with a creamy sauce	Pan-fried
Zigeunerschnitzel	Pork or veal	Germany	Breadcrumbs, served with bell pepper sauce	Pan-fried

Tips for Storing and Reheating Wiener Schnitzels

If you have leftover Wiener Schnitzels, proper storage and reheating techniques will help maintain their crispiness.

Storing:

- Allow the schnitzels to cool to room temperature before storing.
- Place them in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Reheating:

- **Oven method:** Preheat to 350°F (175°C), place schnitzels on a wire rack, and heat for 10 minutes.
- **Skillet method:** Reheat over medium heat in a lightly oiled pan for 2-3 minutes per side.
- **Avoid microwaving:** This will make the breading soggy.

Proper reheating ensures that your Wiener Schnitzels remain crispy and delicious even the next day.

Variations and Modern Twists on the Classic Wiener Schnitzel

While Wiener Schnitzels are traditionally made with veal, there are several delicious variations to try:



- **Chicken Schnitzel** – A lighter alternative using pounded chicken breast.
- **Pork Schnitzel** – A budget-friendly option with rich flavors.
- **Vegetarian Schnitzel** – Uses tofu, seitan, or TVP as a meat substitute.
- **Gluten-Free Schnitzel** – Made with gluten-free flour and breadcrumbs.

These modern twists allow everyone to enjoy the delicious taste of Wiener Schnitzels, regardless of dietary preferences.

Final Thoughts

Wiener Schnitzel stands apart due to its traditional use of veal and its protected status under Austrian law. While other schnitzels share similarities, they often incorporate different meats, coatings, or sauces, making each variation unique. Regardless of the type, schnitzels remain a [beloved dish worldwide](#), enjoyed in various forms and flavors.

By understanding these differences, you can choose the perfect schnitzel for your taste and culinary adventures!