Main dishes / United States

Maryland Crab Cakes

Chunky jumbo lump crab bound minimally with egg and Old Bay, formed into thick patties, and seared in butter until the exterior is golden and the interior stays barely bound — almost all crab, no filler.

Time 75 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 parts Jumbo lump blue crab meat (picked for shell)
- ☐ 8 parts Large egg (beaten)
- ☐ 8 parts Mayonnaise
- ☐ 2 parts Old Bay seasoning
- ☐ 3 parts Dijon mustard
- ☐ 3 parts Fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- ☐ 6 parts Fine breadcrumbs or crushed crackers
- ☐ 8 parts Unsalted butter
- ☐ 4 parts Neutral oil (canola or vegetable)
- ☐ 5 parts Lemon wedges (for serving)

Let's make it.

01 In a large bowl, whisk together the beaten egg, mayonnaise, Old Bay, Dijon mustard, and chopped parsley until smooth and uniform. This is the entire binding and seasoning base — taste it on a cracker to calibrate the salt and spice before it touches the crab. The mixture should taste bright, slightly sharp from the mustard, and warmly spiced.

02 Add the crab meat and breadcrumbs to the binder. Using a large spatula or clean hands, fold very gently — five to eight slow, sweeping folds maximum. The goal is to coat the crab in the binder while leaving the lumps as intact as possible. Every time you stir, you break crab. Stop the moment the mixture barely holds together. It should look loose and shaggy, not smooth and paste-like.

03 Divide the mixture into six equal portions (roughly 100–120 g each). Gently press each into a thick disc about 4 cm high — do not compress too firmly. Place on a parchment-lined tray and refrigerate uncovered for 30 minutes minimum, up to 4 hours. The cold firms the binder and makes the patties dramatically easier to flip without falling apart in the pan.

04 Heat a heavy skillet (cast iron or stainless) over medium heat. Add the butter and oil together — the oil raises the smoke point, the butter brings color and flavor. When the butter foam subsides and the fat shimmers, carefully lower the patties in, leaving space between them. Do not move them. Cook 3–4 minutes per side. Resist flipping early — they will release cleanly once a golden crust has formed. Use a thin fish spatula and flip once only.

05 Transfer to warm plates immediately — do not rest them on a rack or they will steam and soften the crust. Serve with lemon wedges and a remoulade or simple tartar sauce alongside. The cakes are best eaten within two minutes of leaving the pan, while the contrast between the crisp exterior and the barely-bound interior is at its peak.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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