



Catfish Piccata with Pickled Lady Peas over Elfo's Special Rice Cake

By Chef LeAnne Gualt

Pickled Lady Peas

Ingredients:

1 cup lady peas
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup white wine vinegar
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water
1 tablespoon kosher salt

Instructions:

1. Rinse the lady peas thoroughly, removing any debris.
2. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add the peas and cook for 3 minutes.
3. Strain and immediately transfer to an ice water bath to stop the cooking process.
4. In a large jar, combine vinegar, water, and salt. Shake well to mix.
5. Add the cooled peas to the jar. Seal and refrigerate for 3–6 days, shaking the jar daily.
- 6.

Elfo's Special Rice Cakes

Ingredients:

1 cup rice (e.g., Two Brooks Sable Rice or any preferred variety)
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ –2 cups chicken stock (adjust based on rice type)
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large shallot or $\frac{1}{2}$ onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
12 jumbo Gulf shrimp, peeled and deveined
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups grated Parmesan cheese
Zest of 1 lemon
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups panko breadcrumbs
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 large eggs, beaten

Salt and pepper, to taste

Neutral oil for frying (e.g., grapeseed, avocado, or canola)

Instructions:

1. Cook rice in chicken stock according to package instructions. Let cool.
2. Coarsely chop mushrooms in a food processor. Wipe out the processor and coarsely chop shrimp (do not over-process into a paste).
3. In a skillet over medium heat, melt butter with olive oil. Sauté shallot/onion until translucent.
4. Add mushrooms and cook until browned. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Stir in garlic and half the chopped shrimp. Cook for 1 minute, until shrimp just begin to turn pink. Let mixture cool.
6. In a large bowl, combine rice, mushroom-shrimp mixture, remaining shrimp, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Parmesan.
7. Using a $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup scoop, form into cakes. Place on a parchment-lined sheet pan and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes (preferably overnight).
8. Preheat oven to 250°F (120°C).
9. Set up a dredging station with three bowls: flour, beaten eggs, and panko mixed with remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Parmesan. Season each with salt and pepper.
10. Dredge each cake in flour, then egg, then panko. Refrigerate for another 30 minutes.
11. Heat 1½–2 inches of oil in a deep skillet to 350°F (175°C). Fry cakes in batches until golden brown on both sides. Transfer to a rack-lined sheet pan and keep warm in the oven.

Catfish Piccata

Ingredients:

- ½ cup Wondra or all-purpose flour
- 4 Mississippi farm-raised catfish fillets (approx. 6 oz each)
- ¼ teaspoon salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ⅓ cup white wine
- 2 tablespoons pickled lady peas (or capers)
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- Juice of 1–2 lemons (to taste)
- 1½ tablespoons minced flat-leaf parsley (leaves and tender stems)

Instructions:

1. Spread flour in a shallow dish. Season catfish fillets with salt and pepper, then dredge in flour, shaking off excess.
2. In a large skillet, heat butter and olive oil over medium-high heat. Add fillets (presentation side down) and cook 3–4 minutes until golden. Flip and cook another 2 minutes until opaque. Transfer to a warm platter.
3. Wipe out skillet. Add pickled peas (or capers) and cook for 1 minute.
4. Add white wine and bring to a boil. Reduce by half, about 2 minutes.
5. Whisk in lemon juice and parsley. Cook for 2 minutes.
6. Reduce heat to medium. Add butter and whisk until sauce is smooth and slightly thickened. Season to taste.

To Plate:

1. Place two rice cakes on each plate.
2. Top with a piece of catfish.
3. Spoon sauce over the top and garnish with fresh parsley.