

Breaded Cauliflower

serves 6

Another Cozzolino family favorite. The addition of bread crumbs and red sauce transforms plain cauliflower into a flavorful and exciting side dish.

1 head cauliflower

3 eggs

3/4 cup white flour

2 cups bread crumbs (See pg.)

1/4 cup cornmeal

**1 1/4 cups canola, peanut, or
grapeseed oil**

1 cup marinara sauce (see p g.)

Cut out the stem of the cauliflower with a paring knife, and break into florets. When you get toward the middle of the head, cut into medium-sized clusters of florets. The size should range from 1" to 2" in diameter.

Break the eggs into a wide, shallow bowl, large enough to roll a few florets around, and beat well. Place the flour into another bowl the same size. Mix the bread crumbs and cornmeal into a third bowl. Heat the oil on medium high heat in a large, straight-sided frying pan; cast iron works best. When a drop of water sizzles and jumps in the hot oil, the oil is ready for action. If the heat is too low, the cauliflower will be soggy; if it is too high, the cauliflower will burn on the outside before the inside is tender. Take the time to adjust the heat setting and try to get the oil just right.

Drop a floret into the flour and coat thoroughly, then place it in to the egg and coat well. Using a fork, scoop the floret out and place it into the bread crumbs; coat the floret thoroughly, lifting crumbs on top and shaking, being careful not to scrape the coating off. Drop the floret in to the hot oil, and repeat quickly until the pan is full but not crowded. Too many florets in at once will lower the temperature of the oil and make the cauliflower soggy. I start at the handle and add florets clockwise, so I can tell which I put in first.

As each floret turns golden brown underneath, use a fork to gently rotate until all surfaces are nicely browned. Turning the florets before they are nicely browned on the bottom will also tend to make the coating soggy. Also try not to pierce the florets with a fork, because the oil will be absorbed. Scoop out and drain on thick brown paper or cardboard. Continue until all the florets are used. If your oil is running out, scoop the burned solids out of the pan with a slotted spoon, add a little more oil, let it heat up, and resume.

Serve piping hot with a small dollop of red sauce on each floret. If they have cooled off, place under a broiler or in very hot oven for 1-2 minutes. As a variation, place in a baking pan, dollop with sauce, sprinkle shredded mozzarella and grated parmesan, and bake at 400° until bubbly hot. Serve with pasta, salad, and bread for a great feast even the kids will love.