

# CHICKEN SALTIMBOCCA

*Saltimbocca di pollo*

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 Wine Pairing: Pinot Grigio or Vernaccia  
 Makes 4 servings

**G:** In Italian cooking there are accepted formulas for specific recipes and, frankly, not too much experimentation. When you ask for saltimbocca, you will get veal cutlets topped with prosciutto with a sage leaf. But even a purist like myself will make an exception for this chicken-based version. My girls like chicken breast because it is lean, and I like to prepare it this way to be sure it has more flavor than usual. Be sure to pound the chicken to a uniform thickness (about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch) so it cooks evenly (see Tip, page 197). One of the reasons boneless chicken breast is difficult to keep from drying out is because it is thick in the middle and thin at the ends.

**D:** I love everything about chicken breasts. They are easy to prep, cook quickly, and are very versatile. Serve this with the Golden Roasted Potatoes (page 216) and a green vegetable, and you are good to go.

Special equipment: wooden toothpicks

4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves (about 7 ounces each)

4 thin, wide slices prosciutto, cut in half crosswise to make 8 pieces

8 large sage leaves

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup (35 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup dry white wine, such as Pinot Grigio

1. Cut each chicken breast half in two vertically to make 8 pieces total. One at a time, place a chicken portion between two plastic storage bags or sheets of plastic wrap. Using a flat meat mallet (or even a wine bottle or rolling pin), pound until about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick throughout.
2. One at a time, place a chicken breast portion on the work surface. Top with a piece of prosciutto and a sage leaf. Using a wooden toothpick, attach the sage and prosciutto onto the chicken. Turn the chicken over and season the underside (not the prosciutto side) with the salt and pepper. (If you salt the side that touches the prosciutto, it could be too salty.) Spread the flour on a plate. Dredge the bare underside of the chicken in the flour and shake off the excess.
3. Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 200°F.
4. Heat the butter and the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until the butter is melted and the foam subsides. Add 4 of the chicken portions to the skillet, prosciutto side down. Cook until the prosciutto is browned, about 3 minutes. Turn the chicken over and cook until the other side

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is browned and the chicken feels firm when pressed on top, about 3 minutes more. Transfer the chicken to a rimmed baking sheet and place in the oven. Repeat with the remaining chicken.

5. Pour out the fat in the skillet and return the skillet to medium-high heat. Add the wine to the skillet and bring to a boil, scraping up the browned bits in the skillet with a wooden spoon. Boil until the wine is reduced by half, about 3 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a platter. Remove the wooden toothpicks. Pour the pan sauce on top and serve immediately.

**TIP** It's a good idea to pound boneless and skinless chicken breast halves into uniform thickness so they cook more evenly. These days, with chicken breasts getting larger all the time, the breast halves are shaped like a humpbacked whale. This lumpy shape tends to result in overcooked ends and undercooked centers. Pounding the chicken to a thickness of about  $\frac{1}{3}$  inch throughout solves the problem.