

O Cap'n! My Cap'n!

Written by Debbi Covington
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Last month, on the internet of all places, there was a wicked rumor that my all-time favorite childhood cereal was being taken off the market. The reason the cereal was being removed from supermarket shelves was because it contains a mere 12 grams of sugar per serving. Seriously?! What would Cap'n Crunch be without sugar!? The good news is that the Captain isn't being forced to walk the plank and that Cap'n Crunch is still available. In celebration of this happy news I decided to look for recipes that used Cap'n Crunch cereal as an ingredient. Does anyone else remember the yummy chicken tenders from Planet Hollywood that were rolled in crushed cereal and then deep fried? Amazingly enough, there are a handful of delicious and unique recipes using Cap'n Crunch. A few of them are listed below. I must admit that I haven't tried them all – at least not yet. I'd love to hear feedback if you're brave enough to give one or more of them a test run! My email address is: debbic@cateringbydebbicovington.com.

The Captain's French Toast

3 large eggs
2½ tablespoons sugar
1 cup heavy cream
½ cup milk
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
½ (14-ounce) box Cap'n Crunch cereal, crushed
6 thick slices egg bread (Challah)
2 tablespoons butter

Beat the eggs and sugar in a bowl until smooth. Pour in the cream, milk, vanilla extract, cinnamon and nutmeg; whisk until smooth. Pour the crushed cereal into a shallow dish; set aside. Dip the bread into the egg mixture, two pieces at a time, until the egg mixture has been soaked into the center of the slices, about 30 seconds per side. Press the soaked bread into the crushed cereal until coated on both sides. Set the finished pieces aside on a baking sheet. Melt the butter in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the French toast in the hot pan until golden on both sides, about 3 minutes per side. Serves 6.

Cap'n Crunch Chicken

2 cups Cap'n Crunch cereal
1½ cups corn flakes
1 egg

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1 cup milk
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon black pepper
2 pounds chicken breast tenders
Vegetable oil, for frying

Coarsely crush the two cereals and set aside. Beat the egg with milk and set aside. Stir together the flour, onion and garlic powders and black pepper; set aside. Heat the vegetable oil in a large heavy skillet to 325 degrees. Dip the chicken pieces into the seasoned flour; coating well. Shake off excess flour. Dip into the egg and milk mixture and then dip into the cereal mixture, coating well. Dip coated chicken tenders carefully into the hot oil and cook until golden brown and fully cooked, 3 to 5 minutes depending on the size. Drain on paper towels and serve hot with Creole mustard. Serves 4 to 6.

Cap'n Crunch Crab Cakes

¾ cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon Thai chili-garlic sauce
1 tablespoon lime juice
1½ teaspoon lime zest
1 pound lump crab meat
1½ cups fresh cilantro, chopped
1/3 cup chopped red onion
1 egg, lightly beaten
3 cups panko (Japanese-style bread crumbs)
2 cups Cap'n Crunch, crushed (about 3 ½ cups, uncrushed)
Vegetable oil, for frying

In a small bowl, blend the mayonnaise, chili-garlic sauce, lime juice and lime zest. In a large bowl, combine the crab meat, cilantro and onion. Stir in 1/3 cup of the mayonnaise mixture and the egg. Reserve the remaining mayonnaise mixture for garnish. In a third bowl, combine the panko and Cap'n Crunch. Stir 1½ cups into the crab mixture. Form into ½-inch thick cakes, using half cup measurements for each. Dredge the cakes in the remaining cereal mixture. Arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet. Cover and chill for 1 hour or up to 8 hours. In a large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons oil over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add the crab cakes and cook until golden brown and cooked through, about 4 minutes per side. Serve hot, topped with a dollop of the remaining mayonnaise mixture. Serves 4.

Cap'n Crunch Seared Tuna

¼ cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon yellow mustard
Olive oil
1 pound fresh tuna, cut into 2 long rectangular blocks
Kosher Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 cups Cap'n Crunch, crushed into a fine powder
Asian chili sauce

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5 green onions, thinly diced

Mix mayonnaise and mustard together in a small bowl; set aside. Lightly oil the tuna and season it with salt and pepper. Press the tuna into the cereal making sure it is coated on all sides. Heat a nonstick pan, then add a tablespoon of olive oil to it. When the oil begins to smoke, add the tuna and sear quickly on all sides until browned, about 15-20 seconds per side. Remove and slice into ½ -inch pieces. Spread the mayonnaise-mustard mixture on a serving platter, top it with the sliced tuna and drizzle a bit of the chili sauce over the top. Garnish with green onions. Serves 4 to 6 as an appetizer.

Cap'n Crunch Bars

6 cups Cap'n Crunch cereal

1 (8-ounce) package semi-sweet chocolate chips

1 (8-ounce) package butterscotch chips

1 cup miniature marshmallows

Grease a 9x13-inch cake pan. Melt the chocolate and butterscotch chips in a double boiler. Place Cap'n Crunch and marshmallows in a mixing bowl. Pour in melted chocolate-butterscotch chip mixture and mix until blended. Press into prepared pan. Cool completely before serving. Makes 20 bars.

Cap'n Crunch Candy

20 ounces white (or chocolate) chips

5 cups Cap'n Crunch Peanut Butter Cereal

2 cups salted peanuts

Melt white chocolate chips over a double boiler. Add cereal and peanuts. Drop by spoonfuls onto waxed paper. Cool to set.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com . She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at debbic@cateringbydebbicovington.com.