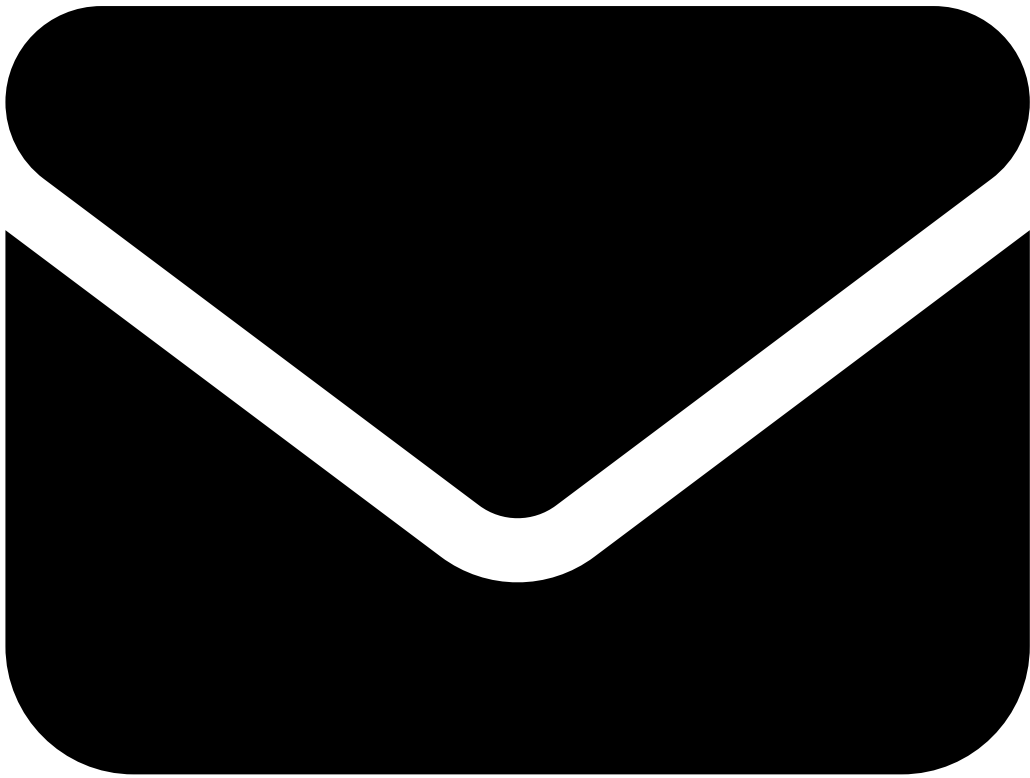


Homemade Italian Breadcrumbs (Pane Grattugiato)

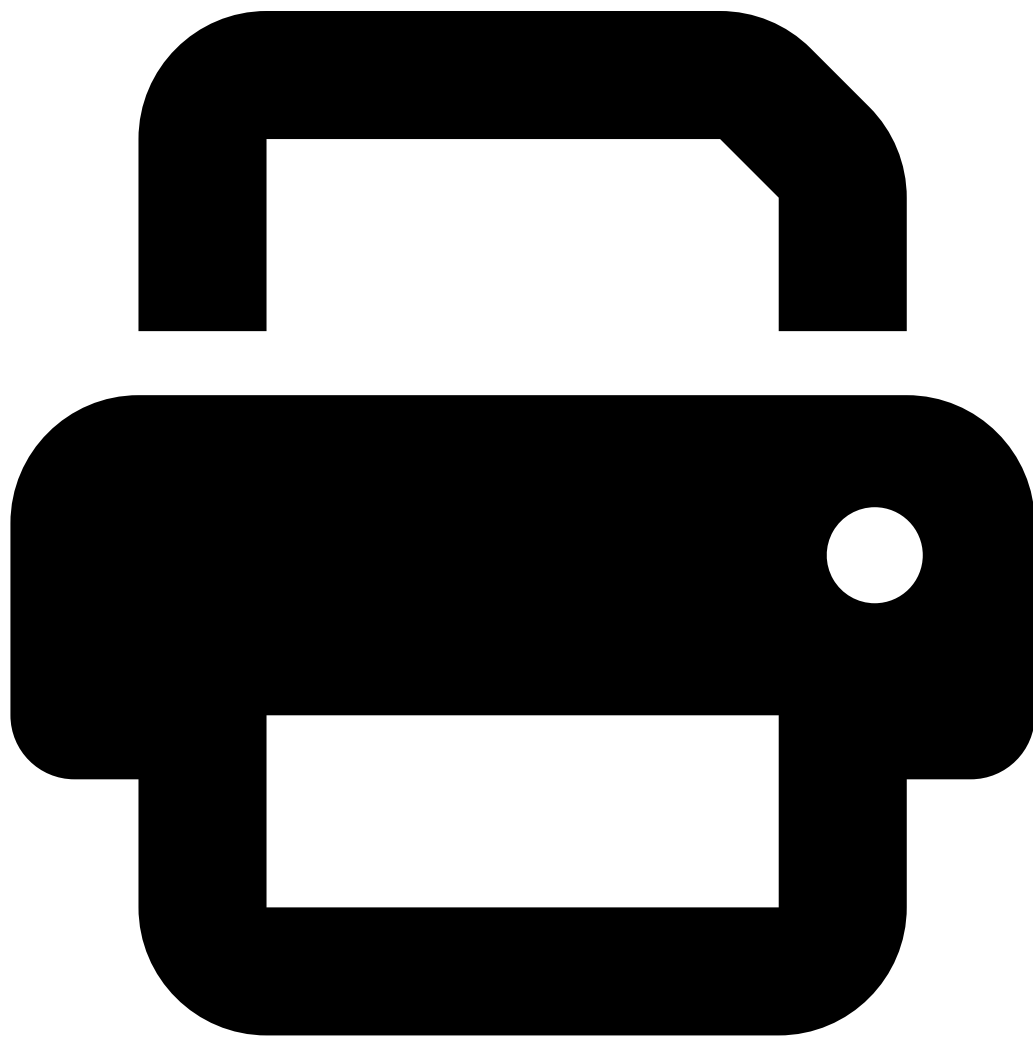
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Don't throw away that leftover Italian bread. Turn it into homemade breadcrumbs instead. These simple Italian breadcrumbs are one of those kitchen staples I always kept on hand during my years in the restaurant business. They're inexpensive, easy to make, and so much better than most packaged breadcrumbs.

Use them to bread chicken, fish, eggplant, or zucchini, sprinkle them over pasta, top baked dishes, or toast them with olive oil and garlic for an instant crispy topping.

Why Make Homemade Italian Breadcrumbs?

Growing up in Italy and spending 40 years in the restaurant business taught me not to waste good food. Leftover bread was never something to throw away. Once it became stale, it had another purpose.

Homemade breadcrumbs have a better texture and fresher flavor than store-bought breadcrumbs, and you can make them exactly how you want them—fine, coarse, plain, seasoned, or toasted.

And you don't need a special kind of bread. A good loaf of Italian bread, French bread, sourdough, or even leftover dinner rolls will work beautifully.

Things to know about this Homemade Italian Breadcrumb recipe

My Restaurant Tip

Here's something I learned over the years: **don't make every breadcrumb the same.**

Fine breadcrumbs are best when you need an even coating. Coarser crumbs are much better when you want crunch. And toasted breadcrumbs can completely change a simple plate of pasta or vegetables.

So when you have leftover bread, don't automatically turn all of it into one batch of fine crumbs. Make a few different textures and keep them ready for whatever you're cooking.

That's the kind of simple kitchen habit that saves money, prevents waste, and makes everyday food taste better.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use fresh bread to make breadcrumbs?

Yes, but stale or dried bread is much easier to process and produces a better breadcrumb. If your bread is fresh, dry it

in a low oven first.

What type of bread is best for Italian breadcrumbs?

Italian bread is my first choice, but almost any sturdy bread will work. Avoid very soft, moist bread unless you dry it thoroughly first.

Should Italian breadcrumbs be seasoned?

They don't have to be. I recommend keeping some plain because you can season them differently depending on the recipe.

Can I freeze homemade breadcrumbs?

Yes. Store completely cooled breadcrumbs in an airtight freezer-safe container or bag. They can be used directly from the freezer.

5 Ways to Use Homemade Italian Breadcrumbs

1. Bread Chicken Cutlets

Homemade breadcrumbs are perfect for classic Italian chicken cutlets. Use a fine crumb for an even, golden coating, then fry or bake until crisp.

☐ Try my Crispy Pan-Fried Italian Chicken Cutlets

For a lighter option, my **Oven-Fried Lemon Chicken Cutlets** use breadcrumbs, Parmesan, parsley, and lemon for a crispy coating without deep frying.

2. Make a Crispy Pasta Topping

One of my favorite ways to use leftover bread is to turn it into a crunchy topping for pasta. Toast the breadcrumbs in olive oil until golden and spoon them over your favorite pasta.

□ **Try my Pasta di Santo Giuseppe**, a traditional Southern Italian pasta finished with toasted breadcrumbs instead of cheese.

3. Make Crispy Eggplant Cutlets

This is where homemade breadcrumbs really shine. A good breadcrumb coating gives eggplant that crispy, golden exterior while keeping the inside tender.

□ **Try my Pan-Fried Eggplant Cutlets, Milanese Style.**

4. Add Them to Stuffed Vegetables

Breadcrumbs are an important part of many Italian fillings. They help bind ingredients together while adding just enough texture.

Try them in **Meat-Stuffed Eggplant Rollatini**, where breadcrumbs help bind the savory meat and Parmesan filling.

They're also wonderful in vegetable-based fillings, like my **Baked Vegetarian Zucchini Meatballs**.

5. Make Italian Meatballs and Meatloaf

Breadcrumbs are one of the little ingredients that make a big difference in Italian meatballs and meatloaf. They help bind the mixture and keep the finished dish tender.

Final Thoughts

Homemade breadcrumbs are one of those little kitchen basics that are easy to overlook, but once you start making your own, you'll wonder why you ever bought them.

And if you have a loaf of bread that's past its prime, **don't throw it away**. Dry it, grind it, and give it another life.

That's how we cooked in my restaurants—and it's how I still cook at home.

Homemade Italian Breadcrumbs (Pane Grattugiato)



Homemade Italian breadcrumbs are an easy way to turn leftover bread into a versatile kitchen staple. Use them for breading chicken and vegetables, topping pasta, making meatballs, stuffing vegetables, and adding a crispy golden finish to baked dishes.

- 4 cups cubed stale Italian bread
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp. dried Italian seasoning,
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 250°F.
2. Cut stale bread into small cubes and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet.
3. Bake until the bread is completely dry, about 10–20 minutes. Do not let it become deeply browned.
4. Cool completely.
5. Transfer the dried bread to a food processor and pulse until the desired texture is reached.
6. Add parsley, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper and pulse a few more times to combine.
7. Store in an airtight container or freeze for longer storage.

pantry staples

Italian

homemade Italian breadcrumbs