

Anchovy Birds

Traditional Turkish Anchovy Birds (Hamsi Kuşu) recipe with crispy corn flour coating. Fresh Black Sea anchovies paired together and fried golden brown.

30 min

PREP

30 min

COOK

1h

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 2.2 lb anchovy
- 1 cup corn flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 0.5 cup sunflower oil
- 1 cup flour
- 2 egg

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the anchovies**

Remove heads and bones from 2.2 lb fresh anchovies, keeping fillets connected at the tail to create a butterfly shape. Rinse thoroughly under cold water and pat completely dry with paper towels.
- 2 Set up breading station**

Place 1 cup flour in the first shallow dish. Beat 2 eggs in the second dish until smooth. Mix 1/2 cup corn flour with 1 tsp salt in the third dish.
- 3 Heat oil**

Heat 1 cup vegetable oil in a heavy-bottomed pan over medium-high heat until it reaches 350°F (175°C). The oil should be about 2 inches deep.
- 4 Form anchovy pairs**

Take two anchovy fillets and place them flesh-side together with tails aligned to create a bird-like shape. Press gently to help them stick together.

5 **Bread the fish**

Dredge each anchovy pair first in flour, shaking off excess. Dip in beaten eggs, letting excess drip off. Finally coat completely in seasoned corn flour, pressing gently so the coating adheres.

6 **Fry until golden**

Carefully lower 3-4 anchovy pairs into the hot oil and fry for 2-3 minutes per side until golden brown and crispy. The coating should be crisp and the fish should flake easily.

7 **Drain and serve**

Transfer fried anchovies to paper towels and drain for 30 seconds. Serve immediately while hot and crispy.

Tips

Pat anchovies completely dry after cleaning to ensure the flour coating adheres properly - excess moisture will cause the breading to slip off during frying.

Keep your oil temperature steady at 350°F (175°C) using a kitchen thermometer - inconsistent temperature leads to uneven browning and greasy results.

Set up your breading station in order: flour, beaten eggs, seasoned corn flour, then have a plate ready for the coated fish to prevent coating from becoming gummy.

Sandwich the anchovy fillets with their flesh sides facing each other and tails aligned - this creates the characteristic bird-like appearance and prevents separation during frying.

Don't overcrowd the pan when frying - cook only 3-4 pieces at a time to maintain oil temperature and ensure even cooking.

Drain fried anchovy birds on paper towels for just 30 seconds, then transfer to serving plates immediately while the coating is still crispy.

Season the corn flour with salt before breading - this ensures even seasoning throughout the coating rather than just on the surface.

Use fresh oil or oil that hasn't been used for strong-flavored foods to avoid off-tastes that can overwhelm the delicate anchovy flavor.