

Fried Fennel Slices

<http://userealbutter.com/2012/04/09/fried-fennel-slices-recipe>

1 bulb fennel
1 cup flour
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground pepper
3 eggs
2-3 cups panko or bread crumbs
oil for deep frying

Give the fennel a rinse under water. Trim the fennel of its leaves just above the bulb. I like to reserve the leaves for garnish. Remove any damaged outer layers. Cut the bulb in half lengthwise (a line of longitude, not an equator), then cut each half in two to get four quarters (still lengthwise cuts). Lay each quarter on its side and make 1/4-inch slices that should resemble fans. Be sure to cut them so the core keeps each slice together. I managed about 20 slices before they got too small. Mix the flour, salt, and pepper together in a medium bowl. Beat the eggs in another bowl. Place the panko or bread crumbs in a third bowl.

Set 2-inches of vegetable oil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Your target temperature should be about 375°F, but if you don't have a thermometer, the oil is generally ready when you flick some breadcrumbs in and they sizzle. Meanwhile, get a plate ready for your breaded fennel slices. Dip a slice in egg, then coat in flour, then dip in egg again (this gets messy), and finally coat in panko or bread crumbs. Repeat with all of your slices. When the oil is ready, place the slices in one at a time. Don't put them all in at once, you want them to fry in a single layer without overcrowding. After a couple of minutes or when the bottoms turn golden brown, flip the slices with a pair of tongs and let the other side brown up (about a minute or two). Remove from oil and set on paper towels or a cooling rack to drain. Repeat until all of the slices are fried. Serve with lemon wedges, aioli, or a dipping sauce of your choice. Makes about 20 slices.