



How to Roast Heritage-Style Chicken

Cooking Instructions by Kathryn Sommerlad

Because of their unique breeding and longer, outdoor life, heritage-style chickens develop firm texture, and the rich flavour that people used to expect from chicken meat. These special birds need to be cooked slower than modern fast-grown factory chooks, using lower temperatures and moist cooking methods. Your extra care and attention will be truly rewarded.

Basic Herb Seasoning (Stuffin')

- 2 – 3 cups fresh breadcrumbs (hand crumbled)
- 2 or 3 sliced shallots
- 2 tblsps. chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tsps. mixed dried herbs
- Olive oil

For an extra special seasoning, try adding some chopped bacon, pine nuts and finely diced apple.

Mix all ingredients together, using just enough olive oil to combine the mixture. Spoon into cavity of chicken, pressing in lightly as you go. At this point I'm probably meant to tell you to "truss the chicken" (i.e. tie the legs together and tuck the wings under). I usually just push the bottom flaps in to help hold in the stuffing.

Cooking Instructions

- I recommend cooking in a pre-heated moderately slow oven at 150°C - 160°C and cooking for a minimum of 45 minutes per 500 grams.
- Cover the bottom of a roasting pan with approximately 1cm of water. Place the chicken breast-side up into the pan, rub lightly with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper if desired.
- Cover loosely with foil and place in oven.
- Baste regularly with the pan juices throughout the cooking process and add more water if it evaporates too much.
- Remove the foil towards the end of the cooking process, putting it aside to cover the resting chicken later on. Continue basting until cooked.
- To check if the chicken is cooked: insert a knife or skewer into the thigh. If the juices run clear, and not pink, and if the leg rocks easily in the socket, it is ready.
- Leave the chicken to rest for approximately 10-20 minutes, loosely covered again with the foil. During this time you may like to turn the oven up really high to have crunchy baked vegetables.

Essential Tips:

- Frozen chicken must be thawed completely before cooking and the safest way to do this is in the refrigerator for a minimum of 48 hours – I like at least 3 days.
- Wash all preparation surfaces and equipment carefully after preparing the chicken.
- Leftover cooked chicken (if there is any!) must be refrigerated quickly.