



Perfect Roast Chicken

Text and recipes by Janice Cole

Crispy on the outside, tender on the inside and tasty throughout—our can-do techniques make it easy to roast whole birds or pieces.

Thai Green Curry Chicken Thighs

Chicken thighs are the perfect cut for this punchy marinade because their rich meatiness balances the classic trio of Thai flavors: sweet, salty and spicy. The longer you marinate the chicken, the spicier it becomes.

- 1 cup coconut milk
 - 1½ tablespoons Asian fish sauce
 - 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
 - 1 tablespoon green curry paste*
 - 1 tablespoon canola oil
 - ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped cilantro, divided
 - 8 bone-in skin-on chicken thighs
- 1 Whisk all ingredients except cilantro and chicken in small bowl until blended. Stir in ¼ cup of the cilantro.
 - 2 Make 3 diagonal ½-inch-deep cuts across chicken thighs, making sure to cut through skin and into meat. Place chicken in resealable plastic bag; add coconut milk mixture. Massage bag to coat chicken. Refrigerate 8 hours or overnight, turning occasionally.
 - 3 Heat oven to 400°F. Line large rimmed baking sheet with foil; spray with cooking spray. Remove chicken from marinade, shaking off excess; place on baking sheet. Discard marinade.
 - 4 Bake 25 minutes; brush chicken with pan drippings. Remove excess drippings with spoon or baster. Bake an additional 10 minutes; brush with pan drippings. Bake an additional 10 minutes or until chicken is browned and no longer pink in center. Brush with pan drippings; sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons cilantro.

4 servings

PER SERVING: 360 calories, 24 g total fat (8.5 g saturated fat), 32.5 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 115 mg cholesterol, 260 mg sodium, 0 g fiber

tip *Curry paste can be found in the Asian section of many supermarkets or specialty stores. This combination of chiles and seasonings is used to flavor many Thai dishes.

Red curry paste, the most common, is made with dried red chiles, while green curry paste is made with fresh green chiles.

wine Serve a fruity white or a rustic red: the 2008 Dr. Loosen Riesling from Germany (\$14) or the 2005 Beronia Rioja Reserva from Spain (\$16).

Crispy Potato Wings

Crushed potato chips add salt and crunch to these hard-to-resist wings that provide fried chicken taste without the fuss. Make sure to cook them on a rack to retain their crispness. Experiment with your favorite flavored chips for different tastes.

- 8 oz. potato chips (8 cups)
 - ½ teaspoon garlic salt
 - ½ teaspoon paprika
 - ¼ teaspoon pepper
 - 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 - 3½ lb. chicken wing drumettes
- 1 Heat oven to 425°F. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with foil; top with cooling racks. Spray racks with cooking spray.
 - 2 Crush potato chips in resealable plastic bag with rolling pin (you should have 2½ to 3 cups finely crushed chips). Place in shallow bowl or pie pan; stir in garlic salt, paprika and pepper. Place oil in small bowl. Lightly dip chicken in oil; roll and press into chip mixture. Place on racks.
 - 3 Bake 40 to 45 minutes or until chicken is golden brown and no longer pink in center, rotating baking sheets after 20 minutes.

About 32 wings

PER WING: 110 calories, 8 g total fat (1.5 g saturated fat), 5.5 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate, 15 mg cholesterol, 80 mg sodium, .5 g fiber

wine Match with a refreshing white or a plush red: the 2008 Skuttlebutt Sauvignon Blanc Sémillon from Australia (\$16) or the 2007 Terra Noble Carmenère Gran Reserva from Chile (\$17).

Chicken with Marinated Olives and Roasted Tomatoes

This dual method of cooking chicken—first browning the breasts on the stovetop and then finishing them in the oven—ensures perfect golden brown, tender and moist results.

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves
 - ½ teaspoon coarse salt
 - ¼ teaspoon pepper
 - 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage
 - 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil, divided
 - 2 cups cherry tomatoes
 - ⅓ cup fresh sage leaves
 - 1 cup pitted (marinated) ripe or green olives
- 1 Heat oven to 400°F. Spray large rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
 - 2 Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper; sprinkle with chopped sage. Heat large skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add 1 tablespoon of the oil; heat until hot. Cook chicken 3 to 4 minutes or until golden brown on both sides; place on baking sheet, browned-side up.
 - 3 Toss tomatoes and sage leaves with remaining 1 teaspoon oil in medium bowl; arrange around chicken. Nestle olives in tomatoes around chicken.
 - 4 Bake 8 to 12 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink in center. Serve with olives and tomatoes.

4 servings

PER SERVING: 260 calories, 14.5 g total fat (2.5 g saturated fat), 28 g protein, 5.5 g carbohydrate, 75 mg cholesterol, 835 mg sodium, 2.5 g fiber

wine Sip a zesty white or a dark red: the 2008 Monkey Bay Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand (\$15) or the 2008 Santa Julia Malbec from Argentina (\$14).



Member tester Casey Phillips says...
“Everyone liked the sage in this dish. The chicken was cooked to perfection and was very moist.”

ROASTING KNOW-HOW

THE BEST PAN



- Use a shallow roasting pan for beautiful browning and quick cooking. (We use a rimmed baking sheet in these recipes.) Pans that are too deep shield the chicken from the heat of the oven, resulting in less browning and longer cooking times.
- Use a rack when directed (see Crispy Potato Wings, pg. 41). It allows the drippings to drain so the chicken stays crisp.

MINIMAL FAT

- To minimize fat-laden drippings, remove the excess fat from a whole chicken's cavity, and cut away excess skin on chicken pieces.
- For the best flavor, season the chicken on all sides, as well as inside the cavity of a whole chicken.



BROWNE & MOIST



- For beautifully browned and succulent boneless skinless chicken breasts, use a dual cooking technique: First brown the rounded side of the breasts on the stovetop, then finish cooking them, browned-side up, in the oven.
- When roasting a whole chicken, cover it loosely with foil at first to begin cooking but not browning. Remove the foil towards the end of cooking to promote browning. Turn a whole chicken during roasting to promote even cooking and avoid overcooking the breasts.

DONE JUST RIGHT

- To check a whole chicken for doneness (170°F), insert an instant-read thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh, being careful not to touch the bone.
- Use a thermometer to check chicken pieces for doneness (165°F), or gently press the meat. Juices should run clear, and the meat should feel firm but slightly springy (chicken breasts that feel very firm may be overcooked). If you're unsure, make a small incision in the thickest part of the chicken; the meat should be creamy white in the center, not pink.



Garlic Butter Roast Chicken and Vegetables

Skip the deli roast chicken—here's the real thing. A make-your-own garlic butter that's smeared over the chicken emits a wonderful aroma as the chicken bakes and infuses the chicken and vegetables with mellow garlic flavor and buttery goodness.

- 1 (4-lb.) whole chicken
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper, divided
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon minced garlic, divided
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 8 fingerling or new potatoes, halved lengthwise or quartered if large
- 8 medium carrots
- 8 oz. Broccoflower (green cauliflower), cut into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 2 large onions, cut into 1-inch wedges
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted

- 1 Heat oven to 400°F. Spray large rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. Pat chicken dry; remove excess fat around cavity. With kitchen shears, cut off and discard wing tips. Sprinkle outside and cavity of chicken with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of the salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of the pepper.
- 2 Combine softened butter, 1 tablespoon of the garlic and parsley in small bowl; spread over chicken. Place chicken, breast-side up, in center of baking sheet; cover loosely with foil. Bake 15 minutes. Turn chicken to one side; bake an additional 15 minutes. Turn chicken to other side; bake an additional 15 minutes.
- 3 Meanwhile, toss potatoes, carrots, Broccoflower and onions with melted butter and remaining 1 teaspoon garlic, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper in large bowl. Remove foil; place chicken breast-side up. Arrange vegetables around chicken.
- 4 Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until chicken is golden brown, internal temperature reaches 170°F. and vegetables are tender. Remove from oven. Cover loosely with foil; let stand 10 minutes before carving.

4 servings

PER SERVING: 775 calories, 41 g total fat (16.5 g saturated fat), 59 g protein, 44 g carbohydrate, 205 mg cholesterol, 815 mg sodium, 9 g fiber

wine Pick a white with notes of lemon or a robust red: the 2008 Xanadu Dragon Unoaked Chardonnay from Australia (\$18) or



Garlic Butter Roast Chicken and Vegetables

the 2005 Corte Majoli Valpolicella Superiore Ripasso from Italy (\$18).

Balsamic-Maple Glazed Chicken Drumsticks

Boil equal parts maple syrup and balsamic vinegar for a few minutes, whisk in a dab of butter, and you've created the über-appealing thick and glossy caramel glaze that coats the chicken. It's so easy and so good.

- 8 chicken legs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried oregano, preferably Greek
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup balsamic vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pure maple syrup
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons butter, softened

- 1 Heat oven to 375°F. Line large rimmed baking sheet with foil; spray with cooking spray. Place chicken on baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt and pepper; sprinkle

with nutmeg and oregano. Bake 40 minutes or until pale brown.

- 2 Meanwhile, bring vinegar and syrup to a boil in small saucepan over medium-high heat. Boil 3 to 4 minutes or until thickened and reduced by almost half, swirling or stirring pan occasionally. Whisk in butter until melted. Bring to a rapid boil; remove from heat.
- 3 Reserve $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the glaze; generously brush remaining glaze over chicken. Bake 10 to 15 minutes or until chicken is golden brown and no longer pink in center. Brush with pan drippings; drizzle with reserved $\frac{1}{3}$ cup glaze.

4 servings

PER SERVING: 395 calories, 15.5 g total fat (6 g saturated fat), 29 g protein, 32.5 g carbohydrate, 95 mg cholesterol, 410 mg sodium, 0 g fiber

wine Pick a mouthwatering, lime-rich white or a full-bodied red: the 2008 Tamar Ridge Riesling Devil's Corner from Australia (\$19) or the 2008 Chakana Malbec Reserve from Argentina (\$17).

LABEL LANGUAGE

Use this guide to sort through the terminology used on chicken labels. Those that are regulated by USDA standards are noted.

AIR-CHILLED

Chickens are rapidly chilled in cold rooms to minimize bacteria growth, as opposed to the standard method of immersing chickens in cold water. Proponents believe that air-chilling produces safer, firmer meat and crisper skin.

HUMANE OR FREE-FARMED

Chickens can't be caged. They must have ample space for natural behaviors and stress-free lives.

ORGANIC (USDA)

Chickens must have access to the outdoors and be raised according to USDA organic standards. They must be fed an organic all-vegetarian diet and cannot be given artificial ingredients, hormones or antibiotics.

FREE-RANGE (USDA)

Chickens must be allowed access to the outdoors, but there are no requirements regarding time or the outdoor conditions.

GRAIN-FED

Chickens are fed a vegetarian diet.

HALAL (USDA)

Chickens are butchered and prepared according to Islamic guidelines.

KOSHER (USDA)

Chickens are butchered and prepared under rabbinical supervision.

NATURAL (USDA)

Chickens can't contain artificial ingredients or added color and should be minimally processed. The label must explain what makes the chicken natural, like "contains no artificial ingredients." The term is confusing because chicken can contain added ingredients like seaweed extract that are natural but not naturally part of chicken.

NO ANTIBIOTICS (USDA)

Chickens must be raised without antibiotics.

NO HORMONES (USDA)

Packages labeled this way are slightly misleading because it's illegal to give hormones to chickens. When a label states "No hormones," it must be followed by "Federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones."



Smoky Salted Chicken Breasts

This recipe showcases what a significant impact simple ingredients can have. Three spices—smoked paprika, cumin and sea salt—meet up in a rub that not only adds loads of flavor but gives the chicken a beautiful brick-red color.

- 1½ tablespoons smoked paprika
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon coarse sea salt, plus additional for garnish
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 4 bone-in skin-on chicken breast halves
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

- 1 Heat oven to 375°F. Line small rimmed baking sheet with foil; spray with cooking spray.
- 2 Combine paprika, cumin, ½ teaspoon of the salt and pepper in small bowl. (If back of rib bones are attached to breast, cut off if desired.) Brush both sides of chicken with oil; sprinkle and rub spice mixture over both sides of chicken. Place on baking sheet.
- 3 Bake 45 to 50 minutes or until chicken is golden brown and no longer pink in center. Serve sprinkled with additional sea salt.

4 servings

PER SERVING: 220 calories, 11 g total fat (2.5 g saturated fat), 27.5 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 75 mg cholesterol, 455 mg sodium, 1 g fiber

wine Match with a flavorful red: the 2006 KWW Cathedral Cellar Triptych from South Africa (\$17) or the 2007 Papa Luna Grenacha Syrah Monastrell from Spain (\$22). [n](#)

Janice Cole is *Cooking Club* magazine's food editor and food stylist. She's currently working on a chicken and egg cookbook (Chronicle).