

This is a SUMMARY of the recipe on the website. We've removed all the guiding pictures and most of the tips. We suggest you read through all the material on the website and use this only if you like to have a piece of paper to refer to during cooking.

OUR 'PERFECT' ROAST CHICKEN

1 whole chicken (see above), preferably with the giblets
rosemary, preferable fresh (we have it in the garden), about 1 tsp whole pepper corns
Baking Powder
Poultry seasoning (optional, sometimes we do it, sometimes not; depends on what you are after)
salt, approx 3/4 tsp per pound of chicken, we like Morton's Kosher
1 large onion sliced, about 1/4" thick pieces
2 medium to larger carrots, peeled, julienned into relatively thick pieces
1 stalk celery sliced and cut into pieces about the size of the pieces of carrot
a little oil or cooking oil spray
butter

Gravy & Mashed Potatoes

Snow or Snap Peas sautéed with olive oil, salt and pepper

The day before you want to make your bird, take the bird and pat it all over with paper towels until it is as dry as you can make it. What we do is put some paper towels in our large 14" non stick frying pan and put the chicken in there (it is the right size and easy to clean). The extra paper towels help to absorb more water as you are drying it off.

In a spice grinder, coffee grinder reserved only for spices or a mortar and pestle, grind up the rosemary and pepper. The amount of rosemary is really to taste, we probably use about 2 TB for our 5 lb bird, but that might be too much for your tastes.

Take a wooden spoon and carefully ease it under the skin of the breast. The non spoon side is good to start with since it can also help you break the 'seam' holding the skin down across the top middle. Once you have done that, use the spoon side to carefully put the skin up all over the breast. Watch out, it can tear. That isn't going to destroy your chicken, but try to avoid it. Reach down with your fingers to the legs and gently lift the skin away from them as well as you can.

First take enough baking powder to rub all over the outside of the chicken (top, bottom, sides, wings, legs, etc.). You don't need a lot. Next, using the rosemary, salt and pepper mixture, carefully rub some of it under the skin of the breast and as far down onto the legs and around them as well as you can. Then rub the spice mixture all over the outside of the chicken. Do you have enough? Always make more than you need, but it is also a question of how much you like the herb(s). Place the bird in a container and put in the fridge. Check out the picture. Make sure there is a lot of space around the chicken. You don't want to cover it and try and keep as much of the bird away from the sides of the container. This will help dry out the chicken which makes for crispier skin. If you have giblets, just toss them in the container.

The next day take the chicken out of the fridge early (if you are doing that, see the introductory notes above). This bird came out an hour before cooking time. If you have it use a cast iron frying pan that is a little larger than the bird. Spray the pan with cooking oil or just use a little oil and spread it around. Line the bottom with the onion slices. Toss the carrots and celery on top of the onions. Put the bird on top of that. Truss the chicken so that the legs are tied together.

Preheat your oven to 450 degrees.

If you've got one, put your probe thermometer in the deepest part of the breast not touching the bone. If you don't have a probe thermometer, get one! You won't regret it. Take some aluminum foil the size of the breast (we usually fold it over so it is a double thickness), lightly butter it and stick it over the breast (the butter is the glue). Put the chicken in the cast iron pan in the oven. If there are giblets, by all means put them in the pan as well. Not required, but at this point we also set a kitchen timer for 50 minutes. So far we've never had a chicken cook in less time, but you never know, so use your judgment on the amount of time. On average our 4 1/2 lb chickens have cooked in a properly heated oven in about 50 minutes, the 5 1/2 pounder took about an hour.

After 20 minutes take the aluminum foil off of the breast. We do that with tongs as fast as we can since opening the oven really does release a lot of heat.

At about the 50 minute point you could quickly take out the chicken (carefully, the frying pan handle is hot and sometimes we forget and grab it. Don't!). Tilt it and see if the 'juices run clear'. If they are still red, put the chicken back. Wait a few minutes and repeat until they do run clear. If you have a probe thermometer (see the recipe on the website), using your probe alarm wait till it hits 140 degrees and take out the chicken (but read the stuff about food safety on the website). Then, take an instant read thermometer and test several places around the deepest part of the breast. Make sure you don't have any cold spots. They should all be at least 140. If they aren't put it back in for a few minutes and repeat till it is done. Take the pan out of the oven.

Take the chicken out of the frying pan and place it elsewhere.

Using a spatula take the vegetables out of the cast iron frying pan and put them on a plate. If there is any chicken fat in the pan you can carefully try to pour it out (remember that pan and handle is HOT), or if you don't care, just leave it there. It is possible the onions may almost be burnt. We like them really caramelized so it doesn't bother us. If you find that happening, next time cut the onions and, if needed, the other vegetables thicker. Place your frying pan on the stove (if that wasn't where it landed in the first place) and turn on the heat relatively high.. Pour in some water and using a spatula scrape up all the brown bits. If you've already started your gravy (see recipe below), pour it all into the gravy pot, otherwise, pour it into another container. Return the vegetables to the frying pan. If the vegetables are not cooked through (we like them to have started getting brown at least), add a little oil to the pan and cook them to your liking. By this time some juices will probably have come out of your chicken and when you pick the chicken up more will pour out of the cavity as well. We collect all those juices and put them into the gravy pot. We put the chicken back on top of the vegetables in the frying pan.

Let the chicken rest uncut and uncovered for 20 minutes.

During the 20 minute wait here's what we do: Finish the gravy. Saute sugar snaps or snow peas. Make mashed potatoes (if you don't have a pressure cooker, start this earlier).

After the 20 minutes, if there are just two of you and you want to impress yourselves, chop the chicken down the middle, then place each half onto a hot plate. Pile on the vegetables from the frying pan (reheated if necessary), the peas and the mashed potatoes. Douse with gravy..

Check out the website to see how we make our gravy and mashed potatoes.