



INGREDIENTS

Serves 4

Roasted chicken

- 1.4 kg (3 lb) free-range chicken
- 50 g (2 oz) unsalted butter, softened
- ½ tsp rock salt
- 3-4 tsp fresh thyme, chopped
- 1-2 tbsp water

Gravy

- 1.2 litres (42 fl. oz/ 2 pints) chicken stock
- ½ garlic bulb
- sprig of rosemary
- sprig of thyme

Note: Generally, allow 35-45 minutes cooking time per kilogram of chicken (15-20mins per lb).

METHOD

To roast the chicken

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 4.
- 2 Prepare the chicken by removing the innards, cutting off the wing tips, then trussing it firmly with string. Then smear the skin with butter, and sprinkle with rock salt and thyme.
- 3 Sit the chicken on top of the wing tips in a roasting tray, and place in the hot oven.
- 4 Regularly baste the chicken during cooking - use 1-2 tbsp of water for the first baste.
- 5 Add the rosemary, thyme and garlic to the stock and leave to infuse.
- 6 The chicken should be cooked after approx. 1.5 hours. Push a roasting fork into the thigh to see if the juices run clear. (The temperature of the leg meat should be at least 80°C.) Remove the chicken from the tin, leaving it to rest for 30 minutes before serving.

To make the gravy

- 1 Remove ¾ of the fat lying on the surface of the cooking juices in the roasting tin. Keep the wing tips in with the juices.
- 2 Scrape the base of the pan with a wooden spoon to remove the brown bits remaining. Bring this to a simmer, ladling in a tbsp of the stock to deglaze the pan. Gradually add the rest of the stock. Continue to simmer.
- 3 Remove the legs and breasts from the chicken. Cut the breasts into slices and keep warm.
- 4 Crush the chicken carcass and add it to the gravy, simmering for another 8-10 minutes until it thickens slightly - it should be more like a 'juice'



than a gravy.

- 5 Sieve the gravy and serve with the chicken.

ABOUT CHICKEN



Next time you have roast chicken, look carefully at the colour of the meat. Which areas of the bird have white meat and which have red? The colour of the meat is determined by how active the muscles are when the bird is alive. Active muscles are darker in colour than muscles that are not used much. The colour is due to the presence of a red-coloured pigment called myoglobin which is similar to haemoglobin that is present in blood. When flying, birds use muscles attached between their breastbone and their wings. How active was your chicken? Did it fly or walk very far? Where did you find the red meat and the white meat on the chicken?

- Basting a chicken during cooking cools its surface as the juices evaporate and also slows the transfer of heat into the meat.
- In an hour, a chicken can travel a distance of about 9 miles. The longest distance flown by any chicken is 301.5 feet. And the longest recorded flight of a chicken is thirteen seconds.
- China not only has the most people in the world, but also has the most horses (10 million) and the most chickens (over 3 billion).
- Queen Victoria was a passionate chicken breeder. The hen house built for her birds looked more like a palace!

If you want to learn more about the importance of a variety of food for human nutrition, then you might like to take our science short course, *Understanding human nutrition* (SK183).

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