A Handbook for Roast Chicken

How to Get the More Moisture and Flavor from Your Roast Chicken

A Prepared Pantry Publication
Remarkable! We thought we knew how to roast a chicken. After all, we had nearly a hundred years of kitchen experience between us. And the chickens we had roasted were good. We just didn’t know that they could be a lot better.

But now we know the secrets to roast chicken. After weeks in the test kitchen and a mountain of chickens, we know how to roast a chicken. And we’re willing to share those secrets with you.

In this handbook, we’ll tell you how to roast a chicken—how to get more flavor out of a chicken and how to make it moist and succulent. You’ll be roasting the most flavorful, tender, succulent chickens ever. We’ll show you how on videos. We’ll tell you how. We’ll tell you what tools are best. And then we’ll give you a pile of recipes to get you started. Your family and friends will be amazed. It makes that much difference.
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The Twin Dimensions of Great Chicken

We've all experienced dry, tasteless chicken. Sometimes it's hard to swallow or rubbery. But even good chicken isn't as tasty and succulent as it could be. To be really good chicken, it must be melt-in-your-mouth succulent and infused with flavor—both.

So we spent two weeks in the test kitchen in pursuit of these two dimensions—moistness and flavor. What we discovered was that one technique did not solve both problems; it took a combination of methods to make the very best chicken.

In this next section, we'll tell you about our two weeks in the test kitchen. We'll tell you of all the chickens that we roasted and what we discovered.

In the next section, we'll share four secrets to great chicken plus some additional tips and techniques. We'll describe each of these four techniques. But we'll do more than that. You'll find a video for each technique with step-by-step instructions. You will know these techniques.

Then we'll talk to you about the tools of the trade and recommend the equipment that will best fit your cooking.

Finally, we'll give you that pile of recipes. So let's get started . . .
Two Weeks in the Test Kitchen:
The Journey to Find the Best Roast Chicken

Sunday dinner is usually a highlight at our house. It’s a lingering, casual dinner, usually with extended family. Often we have a pot roast put on before church plus plenty of potatoes and gravy. Sometimes we have roast chicken—simply fixed with seasonings and herbs.

Somewhere along the line, we determined to find the best way to roast a chicken. So it was off to the test kitchen. We outlined the project—never dreaming that it would become so involved. First, we had to recruit Lou Anne Johnson, our chief kitchen engineer, and Debbie Frantzen, our operations manager and a qualified foodie. We were concerned that Lou Anne might not find chickens exciting enough for a major project, but once she saw where we were going, she was on board. We knew that Lou Anne would be exhaustive. Unlike anyone we’ve ever met, Lou Anne will bake from a cookbook—front to back—just for recreation.

So we began the research phase. We read everything that we could about roast chicken. We went on line. We looked in periodicals. We reviewed recipes in nearly every cookbook that we owned. We kept notes and dog-eared pages.

We were ready to get started. We would try different recipes and techniques until we found what worked. We would use staff for testers—especially the crew downstairs in Production and in Fulfillment. (Actually, we fed chicken to everyone that came through, sales people, delivery drivers, all.)

Lou Ann made the first trip to the grocery store. We live and work in a small town; there are about 3,200 people in Rigby. Food shopping consists of one grocery store which is remarkably well-stocked in most departments, for a little town in the country.

Lou Anne came back from the grocery store giggling.

“The meat department manager doesn’t understand where all his chickens went.” That’s because she bought them all.

Over the next week, we roasted tons of chickens. We roasted them horizontally and vertically, in the pan and on racks. We roasted them right out of the wrapping and after soaking them in brine.

Over and over, we’ve set chicken on plates in front of our conscripted testers. We filled plates with chicken, each with a placard identifying what chicken was on what plate.
They would walk down the line with plate in hand, adding a little chicken from each plate. Then we would quiz them.

“Did you like this one or that one better? What did you like best about that chicken?” Everyone likes a moist chicken. In fact, the most common complaint was, “This chicken is dry.”

Some of the chickens were soggy and greasy, at least in parts. Chickens have so much fat that there is quite a pool after baking. If the chicken is sitting in that pool, it’s greasy and soggy. With a rack, the juices dripped to the bottom of the pan and all the fat drained off for a healthier meal. So, very quickly we decided that our chickens had to be roasted on racks. (A rotisserie does the same thing.)

We used both horizontal and vertical racks. We could tell no difference in the meat but with the vertical racks, we had a nice even golden color on the skins. We found that if you use a horizontal rack, turn the chicken breast up so that the tender breast meat is turned away from the heating elements in the bottom of the oven.

Chickens roasted on racks were consistently dry. So we tried a vertical rack with an infuser. The rack has a cylindrical reservoir in the center that protrudes into the chicken’s breast cavity. As the chicken cooks, the liquid evaporates and fills the cavity. (Think “beer-can chicken”) We used apple juice, orange juice, water with herbs, and water with garlic. Any liquid made the meat much, much more moist and in every case was preferred over the dry rack-roasted chicken. It was clear that infusers made a much superior chicken.

While the infusers made for moist, succulent chicken, much superior to dry roasted, the infusers did not impart a lot of flavor. Maybe there is a trick to imparting flavor with these racks but we never discovered it. Still, we would not hesitate to purchase a vertical rack with an infuser for the moisture.

To create a moist chicken, we next tried a steam roast—roasting the chicken in a steamy pan. We placed the chicken on a rack in a pan and added water to a depth of 1 1/2 inches. Since we didn’t want a boiled-looking chicken, our strategy was to bake the chicken for about half the time with the lid off so as to brown the chicken skin nicely and then place the lid on the pan to capture the steam. The roasted chicken was attractive but the meat was not as moist and nice as when we used the infuser. We concluded that since the infuser concentrated the steam in the breast cavity and did so over the entire cooking, the resulting roast chicken was much more moist.

We tried soaking our chickens in water before roasting. Maybe the chicken would retain water for a moister roast. The results were surprising. While soaking the chicken in plain water did not do much, an hour in brine water made for a very moist, very succulent chicken.

### About the racks used:

We tested three racks in the roasting of our chickens: A horizontal nonstick rack that was large enough for a turkey, a nonstick vertical rack, a stainless steel vertical rack with an infuser. All of these racks are available at The Prepared Pantry. If you use either the horizontal rack or the nonstick vertical rack, soak your chickens in brine water before baking. With the rack with the vertical infuser, soaking is not necessary.
chicken. The brine water soak rivaled the chickens baked with a vertical rack and infuser; our testers couldn’t tell the difference.

So at this point, we had concluded that, in addition to roasting on a rack or rotisserie, a chicken is much more succulent when either infused with steam or soaked in brine. Not only is the chicken much better eating, it makes for a healthier, less fatty chicken. We found that the best brine water was one-half cup of salt to 8 or 10 cups of cold water and a soak time of about an hour in the refrigerator was about right.

We were giddy over our success. Never had we made such succulent, moist, roast chicken. And the techniques were simple—brining or infusing with steam. We couldn’t wait to share them with our subscribers.

By now we had fallen in love with our stainless steel vertical rack with infuser. It made chicken so moist and tender. But we were disappointed with the flavor. The rack is presented as a method to add flavor to chickens. We would fill the infuser reservoir with a beverage, stock, or juice, and it would impart some flavor to the chicken but not as much as we would like.

But then we read about tucking herbs and seasoning under the skin of a chicken, right against the meat. We had to try that. It was back to the store for more chicken.

We started baking chickens, making little pockets for seasoning under the skin on the breasts and thighs. We made garlic chicken, orange chicken, and lemon chicken. The technique worked. The chicken was now moist and flavorful.

But then we considered marinades.

A marinade has three purposes: it imparts flavor to the chicken, it adds moisture to the chicken to make it more succulent, and it breaks down tissues in the flesh for more tender meat. While a marinade works well for cut up chicken, it requires a lot of marinade to soak a whole chicken.

So we looked at injectors.

A hypodermic injector injects marinade deep into the flesh. The marinade imparts flavor and moisture and does help to break down tissues for more tender meat.

So we bought even more chickens and started experimenting with techniques and recipes. We made savory chickens and sweet chickens. We found that an injector is very easy to use and very effectively imparts flavors to the meat. It makes for a very flavorful, tasty roast chicken.

Now we had arrived. We knew how to make very succulent chicken and very flavorful chicken. We had four techniques in our arsenal: brining, infusing with steam, tucking seasonings and herbs under the skin, and injecting marinades. All four were very useful.

We’ll explain these four techniques, where each is applicable, and present an instructional video for each.
The Four Techniques for the Best Chicken

In our quest for the best roast chicken, we examined four techniques--two for flavor and two for moistness and tenderness. For flavor, we used a technique for putting herbs and spices under the skin and one for injecting chicken with a marinade. For moistness, we brined and infused chickens with steam. All four of the techniques are remarkably successful.

See the Video: Four Techniques for Better Chicken
Or type the following URL in your browser:
http://www.preparedpantry.com/4-Chicken-Techniques.htm

For Moistness and Tenderness: Brining

Brine the chicken for one hour, in the refrigerator, in a solution of 1/2 cup salt for ten cups water. If you brine the chicken, you can still insert flavors under the skin. Injecting marinade after brining does not work well.

For Moistness and Tenderness: Infusing with Steam

Infusing with steam leaves the chicken moist and tender without becoming soggy. The best way to infuse with steam is with a vertical rack with infuser. You can inject marinade into the chicken before baking with this method.

For Flavor: Inserting Herbs and Spices Under the Skin

With the back of a spoon, create pockets on the breasts and legs. Place spices or herbs in these pockets and spread around. This works best in conjunction with brining or infusing steam during baking.

For Flavor: Inserting Marinade
Use a marinade injector to insert a wide range of marinades directly into the meat of the chicken. Puree chunky marinades first—those with herbs or vegetables. This method works well in conjunction with a vertical rack with infuser.

How to Inject a Chicken with Marinade

It’s really quite simple, injecting a chicken with a flavorful marinade. We tried it over and over with different recipes until we had the technique down. You can use any marinade that will pass through the needle on your injector. The injector that we use has a large diameter needle with two large holes cut into the sides of the needle. Still, marinades with large pieces of herbs will not pass through. To solve that problem, we put chunky marinades in our blender and pureed them.

The techniques used here can also be applied to turkeys and modified for roasts.

1. Prepare the marinade. Depending on the strength of the marinade and how flavorful you will want your chicken, you will need a cup of marinade.
2. Leave the skin on the chicken. It will hold moisture and flavor and protect the tender breast meat from scorching.
3. Load your injector. You will need to load it several times to use all your marinade. Use the first third to marinate the legs and then one third in each of the two breasts.
4. Start with a leg. Insert the needle deep along the bone. Press lightly on the plunger to begin releasing marinade and then begin withdrawing the needle, slowly releasing the marinade as you withdraw the needle. Inject the other leg and both thighs.
5. Next inject the breasts. Insert the needle into the deepest part of the meat and inject marinade as you withdraw the needle. Tip the needle, inject the needle through the same hole again and press the needle into another part of the breast. Do this “directional drilling” again so that the entire breast has received marinade and yet there is only one hole in the skin.
6. Reload the plunger and inject the second breast. The objective is to get as much marinade as possible dispersed in the meat. There are two keys to loading up the chicken with marinade: probing the needle into different parts of the chicken and pressing on the plunger as you withdraw the needle thereby injecting marinade along the way.
7. Place the chicken in a bowl and return it to the refrigerator. Let it rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes so that the marinade can seep through the tissues.
8. Remove the chicken from the oven and prepare it to roast by wiping any marinade from the skin and basting the skin with melted butter. Marinade left on the skin may burn. Butter helps the skin brown properly.
9. Bake according to recipe instructions.

Notes:

1. After pureeing your marinade, if a piece still gets stuck in the needle, use a piece of fine wire to unclog the needle. A twist-tie stripped to the wire works perfectly.
2. With liquid within the meat, infused chickens take longer to cook. At 350 degrees allow up to two hours.
3. If you use an infuser, be sure and place a pan under the chicken to catch excess drippings. The infuser sets in a nine-inch pie pan perfectly.
4. It doesn’t work to inject marinade into a brined chicken. A brined chicken has retained water and there is less capacity for marinade. For the best chicken, use a vertical rack with an infuser to make the chicken very moist and an injector for the most flavor.
5. Don’t let the chicken sit for over 30 minutes in the refrigerator.
6. Do not leave the chicken on the counter. Food safety requires that raw chicken be refrigerated.
7. You can use leftover marinade that has not been contaminated with any juices from the chicken. Discard any marinade in the injector marinade that has touched the needle.
You can use two of the four techniques explained in this handbook without any special equipment: brining and inserting flavors under the skin. To be equipped for the other two techniques, you will need the following equipment.

**For infusing steam into your chicken:**

**Stainless Steel Vertical Roaster Rack with Infuser TN265**

This vertical roasting rack has a reservoir in the center of the catch basin. You fill this reservoir with water, a beverage, wine, or juice. The steam imparts some flavor to the chicken. It also makes the chicken moist and succulent.

**For injecting marinade into your chicken:**

**Professional Marinade Injector TN777**

You can make very flavorful, succulent chicken by injecting marinade into the meat with this hyperemic-type injector. If the marinade contains an acid, it will also help tenderize the chicken.

The secret is to load the meat with marinade, injecting marinade until it can hold no more. Poke a minimum number of holes into the chicken—one for each breast and one for each thigh—so that marinade does not seep from the extra holes.

This is an inexpensive and very useful tool for your kitchen that works as well with other meats as it does with chicken.
FAQ’s about Roasted Chickens

At what temperature should I roast my chicken?

In preparing this handbook, we read many recipes and found baking temperatures from 325 to 500 degrees. As a principle for roasting meat, a slow roast is preferred and results in a tender, moist product. And while we tried higher temperatures, we had better results with the oven set on 350 or 375 degrees.

One of the reasons offered for higher temperatures is the argument that higher temperatures are required to brown the bird. Not so. If you brush your chicken with melted butter before baking, it will brown very nicely.

What about stuffed chicken?

If you stuff your chicken with dressing will it be moist?

Not as moist as a brined chicken or one baked with an infuser. If you have a very moist dressing, it may help. But to be safe, the dressing must reach 160 degrees. (Dressing stuffed inside of a chicken or a turkey where unsafe juices can drip into the dressing, is a common source of food poisoning.) By the time the dressing in the far recesses of the chicken reaches 160 degrees, the tender breast meat will be overcooked and dry.

Won’t soaking in water do the same thing as soaking in brine?

No. We don’t understand the chemistry, but soaking in brine works much better than soaking in plain water. The chicken is moister and more tender. It seems that the salt water penetrates the walls of the cells better than unsalted water.

Do I use cold water or warm?

Cold water. You don’t want either the chicken or the water rising above 40 degrees. At 40 degrees, bacteria start to multiply much more rapidly.

Since it’s only an hour, can I let my chicken soak on the counter?

No. You have to keep the temperature below 40 degrees. If you kept adding ice to chill the water, you could.

If you really don’t have room in the refrigerator, consider a vertical roaster with infuser.

What does basting do?
Basting with butter helps brown the skin nicely and make it crisper. If you eat the skin, that’s important. The butter makes the skin taste better. We don’t think that the butter penetrates enough to make an appreciable difference in the flavor of the meat.

We rub our chickens with butter before baking but don’t bother to baste while baking.

How to Roast a Chicken

This is a basic chicken recipe but much more moist and tender than a chicken just popped into the oven.

1 whole chicken, 3 1/2 to 4 pounds in weight
2-3 tablespoons butter, melted
salt and pepper

1/2 cup salt for brining or use an infuser

Chicken can become very dry in roasting and nearly unpalatable. To avoid dry chicken, you need to infuse water into the chicken. You can do that in one of two ways. Use a vertical roasting rack with an infuser. In this way, you create steam in the body cavity that permeates the meat. The infuser can be loaded with water, juice, cider, pop, or beer. Herbs or spices can be added to the reservoir.

The other way to create a moist chicken is to soak it in a brine solution for an hour. The salt water will permeate the bird so that the chicken retains water prior to roasting. If you use a brine soak, dissolve one-half cup of salt in 8 to 10 cups of cold water and soak the bird for an hour in the refrigerator just prior to roasting.

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. If you are not using an infuser, soak the chicken in 8 to 10 cups of water with the 1/2 cup salt dissolved in the water.
2. Wash the chicken and pat it dry. Salt and pepper the body cavity. Place the chicken on a vertical or horizontal baking rack. If you have not soaked the chicken, use a vertical rack with an infuser. Fill the reservoir with the liquid of your choice.
3. Use a pastry brush to brush the skin of the chicken with the melted butter. Use a spoon to lift the skin away from the breast meat. Spoon any herbs or herb butter into the pockets and press on the skin to spread the paste onto the breasts or sprinkle salt and pepper into the cavities. (See how this is done in a video clip.)
4. Place the chicken in the center of the oven and roast it until it is done, about 1 1/2 hours. Test for doneness with an insta-read thermometer. (See below.)

Cook’s notes:

Do not overcook. Use an insta-read thermometer to tell when your chicken is cooked. The thermometer should be inserted deep into the meat but not against the bone since the bones tend to reach a higher temperature than does the meat. The breast meat should test 165 degrees and the thigh meat, 170.

You can roast a chicken without brining or without an infuser but the meat will tend to be much drier. The cooking times will be about the same.

Do not set the chicken in a baking pan to roast. The liquids will drain out of the chicken into the pan and permeate parts of the chicken to make it soggy and greasy. A rack allows the grease to drip away from the chicken.

How to Make Garlic Roasted Chicken

This chicken will be moist and flavorful and yet have the distinct flavor of oven roasted garlic.

Ingredients:

For the chicken

- 1 whole chicken, 3 1/2 to 4 pounds in weight
- 2-3 tablespoons butter, melted
- salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup salt for brining or use an infuser

For the garlic paste:

- 8 to 10 cloves of roasted garlic or 2 or 3 cloves of raw garlic.
- 1/4 cup softened butter.

Directions:

Roast chicken can be very dry and nearly unpalatable. To avoid dry chicken, you need to infuse water into the chicken. You can do that in one of two ways. Use a vertical roasting rack with an infuser. In this way, you create steam in the body cavity that permeates the meat.

The other way to create a moist chicken is to soak it in a brine solution for an hour. The salt water will permeate the bird so that the chicken retains water prior to roasting. If you use a brine soak, dissolve one-half cup of salt in 8 to 10 cups of cold water and soak the bird for an hour in the refrigerator just prior to roasting.
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. Make the garlic paste by mincing the garlic and then mixing it in a small bowl with the softened butter until you have made a paste. Set aside.
2. Wash the chicken and pat it dry. Salt and pepper the body cavity. Place the chicken on a vertical or horizontal baking rack. If you have not soaked the chicken, use a vertical rack with an infuser. Fill the reservoir with the liquid of your choice.
3. Use a pastry brush to brush the skin of the chicken with the melted butter. Use a spoon to lift the skin away from the breast meat. Spoon the garlic paste into the pockets and press on the skin to spread the paste onto the breasts. (See how this is done in a video clip.)
4. Place the chicken in the center of the oven and roast it until it is done, one hour to an hour and 15 minutes. Test for doneness with an insta-read thermometer. (See below.)

**Cook’s notes:**

Do not overcook. Use an insta-read thermometer to tell when your chicken is cooked. The thermometer should be inserted deep into the meat but not against the bone since the bones tend to reach a higher temperature than does the meat. The breast meat should test 165 degrees and the thigh meat, 170.

You can roast a chicken without brining or without an infuser but the meat will tend to be much drier. The cooking times will be about the same.

Do not set the chicken in a baking pan to roast. The liquids will drain out of the chicken into the pan and permeate parts of the chicken to make it soggy and greasy. A rack allows the grease to drip away from the chicken.
Roast Chicken with Wild Rice

When we lived in Minnesota, wild rice was readily available, harvested from the marshy lakes in the northern part of the state. We miss those rice dishes. So we decided to roast a chicken with wild rice. Again, this is a recipe for a tender, moist roast chicken.

The nut-like flavor of wild rice complements this moist chicken perfectly.

For the chicken:

1 whole chicken, brined
salt and pepper
4 cloves roasted garlic or two cloves raw garlic, minced
about 1 1/2 cups water
1 teaspoon sage
1 teaspoon oregano

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. To cook the chicken, place a rack inside of a large roasting pan with lid. Salt and pepper the chicken. With your fingers, create a pocket between the skin and breast meat on each side. Spoon half of the garlic on each side. Place the chicken breast side up in the pan on the rack. Pour the water into the pan to a depth of about 1 1/2 inches. Sprinkle the sage and oregano over the chicken breast and legs.
2. Place the chicken in the oven and set the timer for 30 minutes. Bake without the lid on the pan. After 30 minutes, check to make sure there is still water in the pan, add more if necessary, and put the lid on the pan. Bake for another 30 to 40 minutes or until the chicken tests done with an insta-read thermometer.

For the wild rice pilaf:

2 cups chicken broth
2 cups water
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup wild rice
1/2 cup long-grain rice
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
1 tablespoon butter
2/3 cup diced sweet onion such as Vandalia
2/3 cup carrot slices
8 ounces sliced mushrooms
1. While the chicken is cooking, make the pilaf. In a medium pan with a lid, bring the broth, water, and salt to a boil. Add the wild rice, turn the heat down, cover with a lid, and simmer for 30 minutes. Add the white rice, bring to a boil again, turn down to simmer, cover, and let simmer for 20 to 25 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and fluff the rice with a fork.

2. While the rice is cooking, sauté the vegetables. Melt the butter in a skillet. Sauté the carrot slices until they are almost tender. Add the diced onion and sauté for 2 or 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook for another couple minutes. Add the sautéed vegetables to the cooked rice.

Place the roasted chicken on a platter and surround the chicken with the rice pilaf. Garnish with sprigs of parsley if desired.

Honey Butter Roast Chicken

Like the honey-roast meats at the deli, this is a mildly sweet flavor that everyone in your family will enjoy. Make the marinade and inject in the chicken with a marinade injector.

For the chicken:

1 whole chicken
butter for basting

Make the marinade and set aside. (Recipe follows)

Wash the chicken and pat dry. Use a marinade injector to load the chicken meat with marinade. (See how to do this with a video.) After marinating, return the chicken to the refrigerator for 30 minutes to allow the marinade to seep through the meat.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

After 30 minutes, remove the chicken from the refrigerator. Wipe any marinade from the skin with a paper towel.

Place the chicken breast side up in the pan on the rack or on a vertical rack with an infuser and water to add steam to the chicken. (The chicken will be more moist and succulent with an infuser.)

Brush the chicken with melted butter.

Place the chicken in the oven for 1 3/4 hours or until the chicken tests done with an insta-read thermometer.

Note: Chicken cooks faster on a vertical rack where the heat can reach it from all sides. On a horizontal rack in a pan, cooking time is extended by about 15 minutes.

For the Honey Butter Marinade:
1/3 cup chicken broth
2/3 cup honey
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons butter

Add all the ingredients to a small saucepan and heat until the butter melts and the salt is dissolved. Cool to room temperature.

**Apricot Orange Chicken**

This sweet-spicy marinade makes a fantastic chicken. The marinade is made with an orange and apricot jam. You will use a marinade injector to inject marinade in the chicken.

**For the chicken:**

1 whole chicken
butter for basting

Make the marinade and set aside. (Recipe follows)

Wash the chicken and pat dry. Use a marinade injector to load the chicken meat with marinade. *(See how to do this with a video.)* After marinating, return the chicken to the refrigerator for 30 minutes to allow the marinade to seep through the meat.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

After 30 minutes, remove the chicken from the refrigerator. Wipe any marinade from the skin with a paper towel.

Place the chicken breast side up in the pan on the rack or on a vertical rack with an infuser and water to add steam to the chicken. (The chicken will be more moist and succulent with an infuser.)

Brush the chicken with melted butter.

Place the chicken in the oven for 1 3/4 hours or until the chicken tests done with an insta-read thermometer.

Note: Chicken cooks faster on a vertical rack where the heat can reach it from all sides. On a horizontal rack in a pan, cooking time is extended by about 15 minutes.

**For the Apricot Orange Marinade:**

1/2 cup orange juice
1/2 cup apricot jam
zest from one orange
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons butter

Add all the ingredients to a small saucepan and heat until the butter melts and the salt is dissolved. Cool to room temperature. Puree the mixture in a food processor or blender.

Dressy Italian Chicken

This chicken has a nice Italian touch. Use Italian salad dressing and inject in the chicken with a marinade injector.

For the chicken:

1 whole chicken
butter for basting
1 cup Italian salad dressing

Wash the chicken and pat dry. Use a food processor to pulverize any chunks in the Italian dressing. Use a marinade injector to load the chicken meat with marinade. (See how to do this with a video.) After marinating, return the chicken to the refrigerator for 30 minutes to allow the marinade to seep through the meat.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

After 30 minutes, remove the chicken from the refrigerator. Wipe any marinade from the skin with a paper towel.

Place the chicken breast side up in the pan on the rack or on a vertical rack with an infuser and water to add steam to the chicken. (The chicken will be more moist and succulent with an infuser.)

Brush the chicken with melted butter.

Place the chicken in the oven for 1 3/4 hours or until the chicken tests done with an insta-read thermometer.

Note: Chicken cooks faster on a vertical rack where the heat can reach it from all sides. On a horizontal rack in a pan, cooking time is extended by about 15 minutes.
Mexicali-Lime Roast Chicken

This chicken has a nice south-of-the-border touch with cilantro and lime. Make the marinade and inject in the chicken with a marinade injector.

For the chicken:

1 whole chicken
butter for basting

Make the marinade and set aside. (Recipe follows)

Wash the chicken and pat dry. Use a marinade injector to load the chicken meat with marinade. (See how to do this with a video.) After marinating, return the chicken to the refrigerator for 30 minutes to allow the marinade to seep through the meat.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

After 30 minutes, remove the chicken from the refrigerator. Wipe any marinade from the skin with a paper towel.

Place the chicken breast side up in the pan on the rack or on a vertical rack with an infuser and water to add steam to the chicken. (The chicken will be more moist and succulent with an infuser.)

Brush the chicken with melted butter.

Place the chicken in the oven for 1 3/4 hours or until the chicken tests done with an insta-read thermometer.

Note: Chicken cooks faster on a vertical rack where the heat can reach it from all sides. On a horizontal rack in a pan, cooking time is extended by about 15 minutes.

For the Mexicali-Lime Marinade:

1/2 cup cider vinegar
1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
juice from one lime
1 tablespoon taco seasoning
3 cloves garlic, whole
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons butter

Add all the ingredients, including the whole cloves of garlic, to a small saucepan and heat until the butter melts and the salt is dissolved. Cool to room temperature. Puree the mixture in a food processor or blender.