

Chicken Paupiettes with Lemon-Tarragon Sauce

A paupiette is a thin piece of chicken, beef or veal that is stuffed and rolled before cooking. When this particular version is sliced, it reveals a colorful pinwheel design of vegetables and meat.

Bring a saucepan three-fourths full of water to a boil over high heat. Add the spinach leaves and blanch for 5 seconds. Using a slotted spoon, transfer them to a plate, arranging them so that they may be easily separated; set aside. Add the carrot to the same boiling water and blanch for 2 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Using a meat pounder, pound each chicken breast between 2 sheets of plastic wrap to a uniform thickness of about ¼ inch. Season the chicken with salt and pepper and place on a work surface. Arrange 3 spinach leaves atop each breast, covering the meat completely. Top the spinach with the prosciutto and then the carrot, dividing evenly and leaving a ½-inch border on each of the 2 short ends of the chicken. Fold the short sides in over the filling and, beginning from a long side, roll up tightly. Tie each roll at 2-inch intervals with kitchen string.

Heat a nonstick fry pan over medium-high heat. Coat the pan with nonstick cooking spray. Add the rolls, seam sides down, and cook until browned, about 4 minutes. Turn and continue to cook until the chicken is opaque throughout, about 4 minutes more. Transfer the rolls to a cutting board and let rest for 8 to 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over high heat, combine the broth and shallot and bring to a boil. Boil for about 5 minutes. In a small bowl, stir together the arrowroot and lemon juice until the arrowroot is dissolved, then whisk the mixture into the sauce. Boil until reduced to ⅔ cup, about 7 minutes. Remove from the heat and whisk in the fromage blanc and chopped tarragon. Ladle the sauce onto warmed individual plates. Slice the rolls and fan over the sauce. Garnish with tarragon leaves and serve hot. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Lifestyles Series, *Fresh & Light*, by Lane Crowther (Time-Life Books, 1998).

Ingredients for Chicken Paupiettes with Lemon-Tarragon Sauce

- 12 large spinach leaves
- 1 carrot, peeled and julienned
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves, each 5 oz.
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 2 oz. thinly sliced prosciutto, trimmed
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 large shallot, chopped
- 2 tsp. arrowroot
- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbs. fromage blanc
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh tarragon, plus leaves for garnish

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Organic and Free Range

The terms “organic” and “free-range” are not standardized and are subject to different interpretations. Generally, organic poultry is fed a diet of feed grown without the use of pesticides. Free-range poultry has at least limited access to the outdoors. The meat is often firmer in texture and more richly flavored than that of cage-raised birds. Your butcher is the most reliable source of information about different types of poultry; he or she should be familiar with the producers and be able to tell you how the chickens were raised.

Chicken Classifications

- Broiler-fryer is a young bird that weighs from 2¾ to 4 pounds and is small enough to cook through when broiled or fried.
- Roasters are larger birds, weighing in at 5 to 8 pounds, perfect for slower oven roasting and perhaps providing leftovers for another meal.
- Stewing hens, or fowl, are older birds destined for the soup pot, where long simmering will tenderize the tougher flesh.
- A capon is a neutered rooster that has been fed a rich diet to encourage full-flavored, juicy meat; it is perfect for roasting.

Chicken Safety

- Chicken is highly perishable and should not be allowed to sit at room temperature for more than 2 hours at most. To err on the side of caution, do not let it sit out for more than 30 minutes.
- Before and after you handle raw chicken, wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and lots of soap. Be sure to thoroughly wash any cutting surfaces, dishware and kitchen tools that also came in contact with the raw chicken.
- In order to destroy food-borne bacteria, a chicken must be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F.

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Technique Class: Healthy Cooking Series: Chicken

A chicken stew is hearty and warming, a roast chicken is elegant and savory, and a chicken breast can be cooked in minutes. One of the reasons for chicken’s extraordinary popularity is its versatile nature; the other reason is its healthy nature. A lean protein, chicken is a staple of healthy diets—serve it chopped on top of fresh salads, in simple soups and in the recipes featured here.

Good cooking begins with good-quality ingredients, so it’s important to know how to select the best poultry that you can find.

Choosing Chicken

Fresh poultry is preferred over frozen for its superior flavor and texture. Look for meaty, plump birds that are free of bruises or tears. Skin color is not necessarily an indication of quality. A wide variety of chicken parts are available, but it’s often more economical to buy whole birds and cut or bone them yourself.

Whole birds should look plump, and their skin should be free of discoloration or feathers. The color of the skin depends on the breed and on the diet. Most poultry skin is naturally white, but some growers feed their chicken marigold petals, for example, which give the skin a yellow tint that appeals to many consumers.

Raw poultry labeled “fresh” has never been chilled below 26°F, the temperature at which flesh freezes solid. Poultry stored at 0°F or less is labeled “frozen” or “previously frozen.” No labeling is required for poultry held at temperatures between these two extremes. So if unfrozen poultry is important to you, make sure it says “fresh” on its label. Any liquid you see in the package is usually water that was absorbed by the bird when it was chilled during processing.

Poultry with fatty skin, such as chicken and duck, freezes well because the fat keeps the flesh moist when the poultry is later cooked. But thawed lean birds or skinless cuts, such as whole turkeys and boneless chicken breasts, can taste dry when cooked, a result that processors try to counteract by injecting the poultry with salty liquids. These moisturizing agents can alter the flavor of the poultry and the recipe seasoning, especially when poultry is brined. For this reason, avoid packages labeled “self-basting” or “treated with saline solution.”

Package labels sometimes announce that no hormones have been used in the raising of chickens, though the USDA has actually outlawed their use. Many markets include a sell-by or use-before date on the poultry label. Regardless of that date, use fresh poultry within two days of purchase.



Flavors for Chicken

Mild chicken marries with a multitude of flavors, from herbs to spices, from sweet to savory. Here are a handful of healthy flavor choices, inspired by cuisines from around the world.

Greek: garlic, oregano and lemon

Chinese: ginger, garlic and soy

Latin: cumin, lime and chilies

Caribbean: chilies, lime and allspice

Southern Italian: tomatoes, red wine and rosemary

Provençal: tomatoes, garlic and black olives

Spanish: bell peppers, smoked paprika and sherry

Moroccan: green olives, lemon and cumin

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Chicken for Dinner* (Weldon Owen, 2009).

Storing Chicken

Refrigerate fresh chicken in the coolest part of the refrigerator for up to 48 hours after purchase. If the poultry has an unpleasant odor when the package is opened, don’t panic, as it may be a result of oxygen depletion during packaging. Rinse the bird under cold water and pat dry with paper towels. If the odor is still unpleasant after the bird has been exposed to air for 5 minutes, return the chicken to the market.

Wrapped in freezer-weight plastic or a zippered freezer bag, chicken can be kept frozen for up to 6 months. Defrost chicken in the refrigerator, never at room temperature, allowing a full 24 hours for every 5 pounds of poultry (so a large roasting chicken can take a full day and night to defrost). Only as a last resort should wrapped poultry be thawed in a bowl of cool (never warm) water. This quick-thawing technique damages the chicken’s texture and will cause it to be drier when cooked. Do not thaw and refreeze chicken for the same reason.

Checking for Doneness

Chicken should be cooked to a minimum temperature of 160°F to kill food-borne bacteria such as salmonella. However, it should not be overcooked. To test for doneness, use a thermometer for absolute certainty, but use your senses of touch and sight as well.

To test whole birds for doneness, insert an instant-read thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh, not touching any bones. It should register 170°F. To test boneless cuts for doneness, press in the center of the cut. Perfectly cooked chicken breast should feel firm and spring back. To test bone-in cuts for doneness, make an incision near the bone. The meat should look opaque with no sign of pink.

Using Leftovers

A roasted chicken just out of the oven is delicious, but there are also any number of ways to turn leftover chicken into an equally satisfying dish the next day. Try our favorite Asian Chicken Salad recipe in this brochure or one of the following ideas:

Curried Chicken Salad: Combine diced chicken, diced celery, golden raisins, light mayonnaise and curry powder to taste. Serve on a bed of red-leaf lettuce.

Cobb Salad: Arrange chicken breast slices on a bed of lettuce leaves with avocado cubes and wedges of tomato and hard-cooked egg. Garnish with crumbled blue cheese and bacon. Drizzle with your favorite dressing.

Savory Chicken Pasta: Cook wide wheat pasta strands until al dente. While the pasta is draining, cut chicken into pieces and warm with leftover pan sauce over low heat. Toss with the pasta and serve with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

Risotto with Chicken and Peas: Prepare your favorite risotto recipe. During the last three minutes of cooking, stir in 2 cups diced roasted chicken meat and 1 cup cooked fresh or frozen peas. Sprinkle with freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Chicken for Dinner* (Weldon Owen, 2009).

Classic Roast Chicken

Roast chicken is a wonderful supper centerpiece, and it is also great the next day. Here, you roast 2 birds so that you will have dinner for one night plus leftovers for making other delicious meals.

To store the second chicken, let it cool, then remove the meat from the bones, discarding the skin and carcass. If you have pieces left from the first chicken, remove the meat from it as well. Shred the meat and store in an airtight container or resealable plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Preheat an oven to 450°F.

Place the chickens, breast side up, on a rack in a large roasting pan (or use 2 pans). Pat the chickens dry with paper towels. Rub the outside of each chicken with 2 Tbs. rosemary and a generous amount of salt and pepper.

Roast the chickens for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 400°F and continue to roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of a thigh, away from the bone, registers 170°F, about 40 minutes more.

Transfer 1 chicken to a carving board and let rest for 10 minutes. Set the second chicken aside to cool before shredding the meat and storing (see note above).

Discard all but about 1 Tbs. of the fat from the roasting pan. Place the pan over medium-high heat and add the broth and wine. Bring to a boil and stir, scraping up the browned bits from the pan bottom. Cook until slightly reduced, about 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper.

Carve one of the chickens into serving pieces and divide among 4 plates. Top with the sauce and serve. Serves 4; makes about 8 cups cooked chicken total.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, *Weeknight*, by Melanie Barnard (Oxmoor House, 2006).

Asian Chicken Salad

This colorful salad comes together in no time, particularly if you roasted a second chicken in advance for this recipe. To poach chicken for the salad, bring a large saucepan of water to a boil over high heat. Add ½ tsp. salt and boneless, skinless chicken breasts. Reduce the heat until the water is barely simmering and cook until the chicken is opaque throughout, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand until the chicken is cool enough to handle, then shred the meat. You can also add other great vegetables to this salad, such as shredded cabbage.

To make the dressing, in a blender, combine the chopped onion, ginger, miso, vinegar, honey, canola oil and sesame oil and pulse until smooth.

In a large bowl, combine the onion slices, bell pepper, bean sprouts, chicken and cilantro. Add the dressing and toss to coat evenly. Arrange the salad on a plate and serve immediately. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, *Salad*, by Brigit L. Binns (Oxmoor House, 2007).

Ingredients for Classic Roast Chicken

2 chickens, each about 3½ lb.

4 Tbs. minced fresh rosemary or tarragon

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

¾ cup chicken broth

¼ cup dry white wine or chicken broth

Ingredients for Asian Chicken Salad

½ small red onion, thinly sliced, plus 2 Tbs. finely chopped onion

1 tsp. finely grated fresh ginger

1½ Tbs. white miso

3 Tbs. rice vinegar

1 Tbs. honey

5 Tbs. canola oil

2 Tbs. Asian sesame oil

1 red or yellow bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced

⅔ cup bean sprouts

4 cups shredded cooked chicken breasts, poached or roasted

¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro