

COOKING SKILLS

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2

8 Chapters

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COOKING SKILLS: CHICKEN 2

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Cooking Skills: Chicken 2

Chapter 1 · Spatchcocking and Jointing

SKILL GOAL

Break a whole chicken into the cuts that suit each cooking method, and cook each cut at its own pace.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Buying a whole chicken is cheaper than buying pieces, and learning to break it down means you can cook each part at the right time: breast cooks fast, legs take longer. **Spatchcocking** (removing the backbone and flattening the bird) cuts roasting time to about 40 minutes and gives crisper skin all over. **Jointing into eight** (two drumsticks, two thighs, two breasts, two wings) gives even portions. **Boning a thigh** opens it flat for quick cooking, and a **supreme** is a breast with the first wing bone attached.

Use a sharp, flexible knife and poultry shears, and work on a steady board. Cooking Skills: Knife Skills 1, chapter 7 shows the basic cutting of chicken; here you go further and apply it to cooking. Safety first: chicken must reach 75°C in the thickest part (see Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 1), and every piece, board and tool that touched raw chicken is washed in hot soapy water. Keep the backbone and wing tips for stock (Cooking Skills: Soups and Stocks 1, chapter 1).



Figure 1. Backbone out, flatten, season and roast: spatchcocking in four steps.

The method

- **Wash your hands and use a clean board;** keep raw chicken separate from everything else.
- **Cut out the backbone** with shears along both sides of the spine, then open the bird flat.
- **Flip the bird and press down firmly** on the breastbone until it cracks and the bird lies flat.
- **Joint into eight:** cut between thigh and drumstick, then remove the breasts and wings.
- **Cook breast and leg pieces separately,** since breast needs less time than leg.

CUT	METHOD	TIME AT 200°C (APPROXIMATE)	DONE WHEN
Spatchcocked whole bird	Roast at 220°C	40 to 45 minutes	75°C in thigh
Thigh, bone-in	Roast or pan-roast	35 to 40 minutes	75°C, juices clear
Breast / supreme	Pan then oven	12 to 15 minutes in oven	75°C, no pink
Boned thigh	Pan-fry or grill	12 to 15 minutes	75°C, golden

RAW CHICKEN, SHARP TOOLS, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Poultry shears and sharp knives: poultry shears and boning knives are very sharp and chicken skin is slippery. Work on a board steadied with a damp cloth, cut away from your hands, keep fingers clear of the blade and the cut edges of bone, and never try to catch a falling knife. Wash shears and board in hot soapy water straight afterwards.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A spatchcocked roast chicken

1 hour 15 minutes | 4 portions | removing a backbone and flattening a bird

The fastest and crispiest way to roast a whole chicken. Cut out the backbone with shears, press the bird flat, rub with butter and salt, and roast hot. Every part of the skin is exposed to the heat, and the bird cooks in about 40 minutes. Keep the backbone for stock.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1.6 kg	whole chicken
40 g	soft butter
2	garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp	chopped thyme
1	lemon, zest and juice
2 tsp	flaked sea salt
1 tsp	black pepper

1. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Place the chicken breast-side down and cut along both sides of the backbone with shears; remove it. Turn the bird over and press hard on the breastbone to flatten it.
2. Mash the butter with the garlic, thyme, lemon zest, salt and pepper. Loosen the skin and rub the butter underneath and over the skin. Lay the bird on a lined tray.
3. Roast for **40 to 45 minutes** until golden, the thigh reads 75°C and the juices run clear. Rest for 15 minutes, drizzle with lemon juice and carve.

RAW CHICKEN, SHEARS AND HOT OVEN

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Poultry shears and sharp knives: poultry shears and boning knives are very sharp and chicken skin is slippery. Work on a board steadied with a damp cloth, cut away from your hands, keep

fingers clear of the blade and the cut edges of bone, and never try to catch a falling knife. Wash shears and board in hot soapy water straight afterwards.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 2 · JOINT

A chicken jointed into eight and roasted

1 hour 10 minutes | 4 portions | jointing and cooking pieces in stages

Cut the chicken into eight pieces: two drumsticks, two thighs, two breasts and two wings. Roast legs first and add the breasts later, so everything finishes together. Use the carcass for stock. This is the way to feed a crowd with neat portions.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1.6 kg	whole chicken
3 tbsp	olive oil
1	lemon, in wedges
4	garlic cloves, left in their skins
6	sprigs thyme
1 tsp	smoked paprika
2 tsp	flaked sea salt

1. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6). Remove the legs by cutting the skin between thigh and body, bending the legs back until the joint pops, and cutting through. Split each into thigh and drumstick. Cut each breast off the bone with its wing, and halve if large.
2. Toss the pieces with the oil, paprika and salt. Roast thighs and drumsticks skin-side up for **20 minutes,** then add the breasts and wings, lemon, garlic and thyme.
3. Roast for **20 to 25 minutes** more until every piece reaches 75°C. Rest for 5 minutes.

RAW CHICKEN, SHARP KNIVES AND HOT OVEN

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Poultry shears and sharp knives: poultry shears and boning knives are very sharp and chicken skin is slippery. Work on a board steadied with a damp cloth, cut away from your hands, keep

fingers clear of the blade and the cut edges of bone, and never try to catch a falling knife. Wash shears and board in hot soapy water straight afterwards.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 2 · BONE

Boning a chicken thigh

35 minutes | 4 portions | opening a thigh flat for quick cooking

A boned thigh opens flat and cooks in about 12 minutes. Slit along the bone, cut round it with the tip of a small knife, and lift it out. The meat is easier to marinate and to stuff. Fry skin-side down with herbs and mustard.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

8	skin-on chicken thighs, boned (or buy bone-in and bone them yourself)
1 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1 tbsp	wholegrain mustard
1 tbsp	chopped parsley
2	garlic cloves, grated
1	lemon, juice

1. Lay a thigh skin-side down. Cut along the bone from end to end, scrape the meat away from the bone with the tip of the knife, and cut round the joint. Lift out the bone. Mix the mustard, garlic and parsley and rub over the meat.
2. Fry skin-side down in the hot oil over a medium heat for **7 to 8 minutes** without moving until crisp, then turn for 4 to 5 minutes.
3. Check 75°C, squeeze over the lemon and rest for 5 minutes.

RAW CHICKEN, SHARP KNIVES AND HOT PAN

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Poultry shears and sharp knives: poultry shears and boning knives are very sharp and chicken skin is slippery. Work on a board steadied with a damp cloth, cut away from your hands, keep fingers clear of the blade and the cut edges of bone, and never try to catch a falling knife. Wash shears and board in hot soapy water straight afterwards.

Hot pan and hot oil: roasting tins and frying pans for browning are very hot and fat spits. Use dry oven gloves, pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 3 · RESTAURANT

A pan-roasted chicken supreme

40 minutes | 2 portions | searing skin and finishing in the oven

A supreme is a breast with the first wing bone left attached, and the skin on. Sear it skin-side down until deep golden, flip, and finish in the oven so the meat stays moist. Make a pan sauce with stock and lemon (see Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 3).

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

2	chicken supremes (breast with wing bone, skin on)
1 tbsp	rapeseed oil
20 g	butter
2	sprigs thyme
150 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
1	lemon, juice

1. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6). Season the supremes with salt and pepper. Sear skin-side down in an ovenproof pan with the oil for **6 to 7 minutes** until deep golden. Turn, add the butter and thyme.
2. Put the pan in the oven for **12 to 15 minutes** until the thickest part reads 75°C. Lift the chicken onto a plate and rest it.
3. Put the pan on the hob (the handle is hot), add the stock and lemon, boil for 3 minutes, and spoon over the chicken.

RAW CHICKEN, HOT PAN HANDLE AND TEMPERATURE

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Chicken with the bone in and the pan hot: a chicken supreme has the wing bone left on and thick skin, so the pan is hot and the oven finishes it. Use an ovenproof pan, oven gloves for the handle (it gets very hot), and rest it on a heatproof surface.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Spatchcocked or whole

Time and crispness.

1. Roast a whole chicken and a spatchcocked one at the same oven temperature.

Look for: The spatchcocked bird is done in about 40 minutes with crisp skin all over; the whole bird takes 1 hour 20 minutes and the underside is paler.

EXPERIMENT

Joints cooked together or in stages

Evenness.

1. Roast all eight pieces together and another batch with the legs started first.

Look for: Together, the breasts are dry by the time the legs are done; staged, everything is juicy at the same time.

EXPERIMENT

Boned or bone-in thigh

Speed and juiciness.

1. Pan-fry a boned and a bone-in thigh.

Look for: The boned thigh cooks in 12 minutes and is easy to slice; the bone-in thigh is juicier but takes 35 minutes.

EXPERIMENT

Skin on or off a supreme

Moisture.

1. Cook a supreme with the skin on and another with it removed.

Look for: The skin-on breast is juicier and crisp; the skinless one is paler and drier.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Spatchcocked roast chicken				
Chicken jointed into eight				
Boning a thigh				
Pan-roasted chicken supreme				
Spatchcocked or whole				
Joints cooked together or in stages				
Boned or bone-in thigh				
Skin on or off a supreme				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Hard to cut out the backbone	Dull shears	Use sharp poultry shears and cut close to the spine
Spatchcocked chicken won't stay flat	Breastbone not cracked	Press down firmly until it flattens
Breast dry, leg raw	Cooked together	Cook legs first and add the breasts later
Jagged joints	Cutting through bone	Find the joint, bend back and cut through the gap
Skin stuck to the pan	Pan not hot or moved too early	Leave it until it releases
Burnt wing tips	Oven too hot for the wings	Tuck the tips under or add them later

RAW CHICKEN, SHARP TOOLS AND LEFTOVERS

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Poultry shears and sharp knives: poultry shears and boning knives are very sharp and chicken skin is slippery. Work on a board steadied with a damp cloth, cut away from your hands, keep fingers clear of the blade and the cut edges of bone, and never try to catch a falling knife. Wash shears and board in hot soapy water straight afterwards.

Leftover chicken: cool cooked chicken quickly (within about 1 to 2 hours), cover and refrigerate, and eat within 2 days. Reheat only once, until steaming hot all the way through. Never leave chicken on the table for more than 2 hours. Cooked chicken can be frozen for up to about 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can spatchcock a chicken.
- ☐ I can joint a chicken into eight.
- ☐ I can bone a thigh.
- ☐ I cook breast and leg at different times.
- ☐ I keep the bones for stock.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 2 is Fried Chicken: coating, frying and keeping the oil at the right temperature.

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2

Chapter 2 · Fried Chicken

SKILL GOAL

Coat and fry chicken until crisp outside and cooked through, at a safe oil temperature.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Fried chicken is a coating of seasoned flour, a hot pan and a lot of patience. A **buttermilk soak** tenderises the meat and helps the coating stick; a **rest** after coating lets it hydrate so the crust doesn't fall off; and **oil at the right temperature** (160 to 175°C) cooks the chicken through while the outside turns golden. Too cool and it goes greasy; too hot and the outside burns before the middle is cooked.

This course teaches **shallow-frying** in a heavy pan with oil about 3 cm deep (never more than a third full), and oven-frying, which gives a crunchy result with far less oil and no risk of a fat fire. Drain on a rack, not paper, so the underside stays crisp. For the simpler coated fillets see Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 3 (the schnitzel), and for marinades Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 7. The usual safety rule is 75°C in the thickest part.



Figure 2. Soak, coat, fry, rest: the four stages of fried chicken.

The method

- **Soak bone-in pieces** in buttermilk and salt in the fridge for 2 to 12 hours.

- **Coat in seasoned flour,** pressing it on, and rest on a rack for 15 minutes.
- **Heat the oil to 165 to 170°C** and fry in small batches so the temperature doesn't drop.
- **Turn once, fry until deep golden,** then check 75°C in the thickest part.
- **Rest on a rack** for 5 to 10 minutes and serve while crisp.

DISH	CUT	METHOD	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Buttermilk fried chicken	Bone-in thighs, drumsticks	Shallow-fry at 165°C	12 to 15 minutes per batch
Oven-fried chicken	Bone-in or boneless	Bake at 220°C	30 to 35 minutes
Popcorn chicken	Breast cubes	Shallow-fry at 175°C	3 to 4 minutes
Crispy baked wings	Wings	Bake at 220°C	40 to 45 minutes

HOT OIL, RAW CHICKEN, DISPOSAL AND ALLERGENS

Shallow-frying and hot oil: hot oil causes serious burns and can catch fire. Use a heavy, deep pan filled no more than a third with oil, heat it to 160 to 175°C and check with a thermometer, dry the chicken well, lower it in away from you, and never leave the pan. If oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover the pan with a lid; never use water. Keep children out of the kitchen.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Draining and disposing of hot oil: hot oil stays dangerous long after cooking. Leave it to cool completely in the pan, then pour it into a sealable container and put it in the bin (never down the sink). Drain fried chicken on a rack over a tray, not in a pile, so it stays crisp.

Allergens: chicken itself is not a major allergen, but the dishes around it often contain milk, gluten, egg, mustard, celery, soya and sesame. Check stock cubes and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate tools for anyone with an allergy.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Oven-fried crunchy chicken

55 minutes plus soaking | 4 portions | getting a crunchy coating with no frying

The safest way to get fried chicken at home: a buttermilk soak, a cornflake and spice coating, and a hot oven on a rack. The crust is crisp and the chicken is juicy. No hot oil and no splashes.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

8	chicken thighs or drumsticks, skinless or skin-on
300 ml	buttermilk
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
100 g	cornflakes, crushed
50 g	panko breadcrumbs
1 tsp	smoked paprika
1 tsp	garlic powder
3 tbsp	rapeseed oil

1. Soak the chicken in the buttermilk and salt for **2 to 12 hours** in the fridge, covered.
2. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Mix the cornflakes, panko, paprika and garlic powder. Lift the chicken from the buttermilk, let the excess drip off, and press it into the crumbs. Lay on a rack over a tray and drizzle with the oil.
3. Bake for **30 to 35 minutes** until deep golden and the thickest part reads 75°C.

RAW CHICKEN, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

Allergens: contains milk and gluten.

LEVEL 2 · WINGS

Crispy baked wings

1 hour | 4 portions | crisping skin with baking powder

Wings need to lose their skin's moisture to crisp. A coating of salt and a little aluminium-free baking powder dries the skin and helps it blister, so baked wings come out as crisp as fried ones. Toss in a sauce after baking.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1 kg	chicken wings, tips removed and split at the joint
2 tsp	aluminium-free baking powder
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
1 tsp	smoked paprika
2 tbsp	runny honey
1 tbsp	soy sauce
1	lemon, juice

1. Pat the wings very dry. Toss with the baking powder, salt and paprika. Lay on a rack over a lined tray and chill uncovered for **1 hour** if you have time.
2. Bake at 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7) for **40 to 45 minutes,** turning once, until deep golden, crisp and 75°C.
3. Heat the honey, soy sauce and lemon juice in a small pan for 2 minutes and toss the wings in it.

RAW CHICKEN, HOT OVEN AND BAKING POWDER

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Baking powder and wings: a little aluminium-free baking powder dries the skin of baked wings so it crisps. Use only the amount given, because too much tastes bitter and metallic, and check labels if you avoid gluten.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 2 · FRY

Popcorn chicken

30 minutes | 4 portions | shallow-frying small pieces in batches

Bite-sized cubes of breast in spiced flour, fried in hot oil for three or four minutes. They cook fast, so the oil temperature matters: 175°C. Fry small batches so they don't stick together, and drain on a rack.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

500 g	skinless chicken breast, cut into 2 cm cubes
100 g	plain flour
50 g	cornflour
1 tsp	smoked paprika
1 tsp	garlic powder
1 tsp	flaked sea salt
2	eggs, beaten
500 ml	rapeseed or sunflower oil, for frying

1. Mix the flours, paprika, garlic powder and salt. Dip the cubes in the egg, then toss in the flour mix, pressing it on.
2. Heat the oil in a heavy pan (no more than a third full) to **175°C.** Fry in 3 or 4 batches for **3 to 4 minutes** each until golden.
3. Drain on a rack, cut one open to check it is white all through and 75°C, and serve with a dip.

HOT OIL, RAW CHICKEN AND EGG

Shallow-frying and hot oil: hot oil causes serious burns and can catch fire. Use a heavy, deep pan filled no more than a third with oil, heat it to 160 to 175°C and check with a thermometer, dry the chicken well, lower it in away from you, and never leave the pan. If oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover the pan with a lid; never use water. Keep children out of the kitchen.

Draining and disposing of hot oil: hot oil stays dangerous long after cooking. Leave it to cool completely in the pan, then pour it into a sealable container and put it in the bin (never down the sink). Drain fried chicken on a rack over a tray, not in a pile, so it stays crisp.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Allergens: contains egg and gluten.

LEVEL 3 · CLASSIC

Buttermilk fried chicken

1 hour 15 minutes plus soaking | 4 portions | frying bone-in chicken safely

The real thing: bone-in thighs and drumsticks soaked in buttermilk, coated in seasoned flour, rested, and shallow-fried in oil at 165°C. The bones make the cooking time long, so fry gently for 12 to 15 minutes a batch, and finish in the oven if in doubt.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

8	bone-in chicken thighs and drumsticks
400 ml	buttermilk
1 tsp	flaked sea salt, for the soak
200 g	plain flour
2 tbsp	cornflour
2 tsp	smoked paprika
1 tsp	garlic powder
1 tsp	onion powder
1 tsp	flaked sea salt, for the flour
1 litre	rapeseed or sunflower oil, for frying

1. Soak the chicken in the buttermilk and salt in the fridge for **4 to 12 hours.** Mix the flour, cornflour and spices. Dredge each piece in the flour, press it on, and rest on a rack for 15 minutes.
2. Heat the oil in a heavy pan (never more than a third full) to **165°C.** Fry 3 or 4 pieces at a time for **12 to 15 minutes,** turning once, until deep golden.
3. Check 75°C in the thickest part (finish in a 180°C oven for 10 minutes if needed), drain on a rack for 5 minutes and cool the oil before disposing of it.

HOT OIL, RAW CHICKEN, DISPOSAL AND ALLERGENS

Shallow-frying and hot oil: hot oil causes serious burns and can catch fire. Use a heavy, deep pan filled no more than a third with oil, heat it to 160 to 175°C and check with a thermometer, dry the chicken well, lower it in away from you, and never leave the pan. If oil catches fire, turn

off the heat and cover the pan with a lid; never use water. Keep children out of the kitchen.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Draining and disposing of hot oil: hot oil stays dangerous long after cooking. Leave it to cool completely in the pan, then pour it into a sealable container and put it in the bin (never down the sink). Drain fried chicken on a rack over a tray, not in a pile, so it stays crisp.

Allergens: contains milk and gluten.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Buttermilk or milk soak

Tenderness.

1. Soak two pieces, one in buttermilk and one in plain milk with a little lemon juice.

Look for: Buttermilk gives a slightly tangier, more tender meat; milk with lemon juice is a close substitute.

EXPERIMENT

Flour only or flour-egg-crumb

Texture.

1. Fry one piece in seasoned flour only and another with the full flour-egg-crumb coating.

Look for: Flour alone is thin and shattering; the full coating is thicker and crunchier.

EXPERIMENT

Oil at 160°C or 190°C

Crust and cooking.

1. Fry two pieces, one at 160°C and one at 190°C.

Look for: At 160°C the crust is pale and soft but the inside cooks; at 190°C the crust burns before the middle is done.

EXPERIMENT

Resting on a rack or on paper

Crispness.

1. Drain one piece on a rack and another on kitchen paper.

Look for: The rack-drained piece stays crisp underneath; the paper traps steam and makes the underside soft.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Oven-fried crunchy chicken				
Crispy baked wings				
Popcorn chicken				
Buttermilk fried chicken				
Buttermilk or milk soak				
Flour only or flour-egg-crumb				
Oil at 160°C or 190°C				

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Resting on a rack or on paper				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Coating falls off	Chicken wet or not rested	Rest after coating; dry the skin
Greasy chicken	Oil too cool or pan crowded	Fry in small batches at 165 to 175°C
Burnt outside, raw inside	Oil too hot	Lower the heat; finish thick pieces in the oven
Soggy crust	Drained on paper or stacked	Rest on a rack
Bitter wings	Too much baking powder	Use 2 tsp per kilo
Pale baked chicken	Oven too cool	Use 220°C and a rack

HOT OIL, RAW CHICKEN AND LEFTOVERS

Shallow-frying and hot oil: hot oil causes serious burns and can catch fire. Use a heavy, deep pan filled no more than a third with oil, heat it to 160 to 175°C and check with a thermometer, dry the chicken well, lower it in away from you, and never leave the pan. If oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover the pan with a lid; never use water. Keep children out of the kitchen.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Leftover chicken: cool cooked chicken quickly (within about 1 to 2 hours), cover and refrigerate, and eat within 2 days. Reheat only once, until steaming hot all the way through. Never leave chicken on the table for more than 2 hours. Cooked chicken can be frozen for up to about 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can fry chicken in oil at a safe temperature.
- ☐ I can coat chicken so the crust sticks.
- ☐ I can get a crisp crust in the oven.
- ☐ I check chicken is 75°C all through.
- ☐ I dispose of hot oil safely.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 3 is Chicken Curries from Scratch: whole spices, a slow base and bone-in chicken.

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2

Chapter 3 · Chicken Curries from Scratch

SKILL GOAL

Build a curry from whole spices and a slow base, and cook bone-in chicken in it until tender.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A curry made from scratch starts with **whole spices** fried briefly in oil (this is called blooming), then **onion, garlic and ginger** cooked slowly until sweet, then **tomato** or coconut milk, and finally the **chicken,** simmered until tender. Bone-in thighs and drumsticks give the best flavour and stay juicy; breast dries out. Brown the chicken first for depth, and don't skimp on the onion, which is the body of the sauce. Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 3 covers curry bases to prepare ahead; here the chicken and the base are cooked together.

Three styles here: a **North Indian home curry** (tomato and onion), a **karahi** (a quick, dry, tomato-and-ginger curry cooked at high heat) and a **Thai red curry** (paste fried first, then coconut milk). The last recipe is the Japanese-style **katsu curry,** a mild, sweet, thick sauce over a crumbed chicken cutlet. Serve all with rice: see Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 3 for the absorption method. Adjust the chilli to taste; leave it out for children.

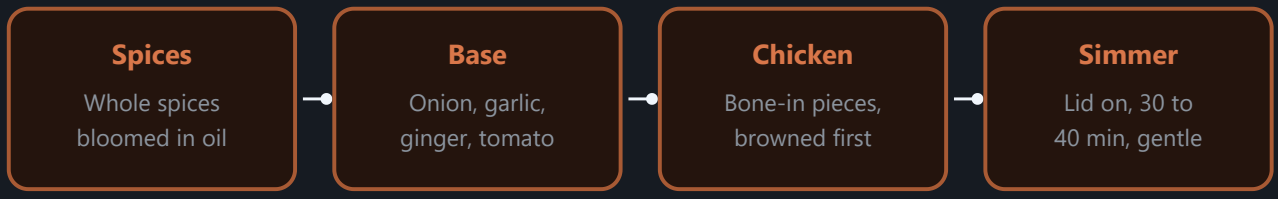


Figure 3. Spices, base, chicken, simmer: the four stages of a chicken curry.

The method

- **Bloom whole spices** in hot oil for 30 to 60 seconds until they pop and smell fragrant.
- **Cook the onions slowly** until deep golden, then add garlic, ginger and ground spices.
- **Brown the chicken** separately for flavour, or add it straight to the base for a gentler curry.
- **Add tomatoes or coconut milk,** simmer gently with the lid on for 30 to 40 minutes.
- **Finish with garam masala, lemon or lime and fresh coriander,** and check the chicken is past 75°C.

CURRY	BASE	CHICKEN CUT	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Home-style chicken curry	Onion and tomato	Bone-in thighs	1 hour
Tomato and ginger karahi	Tomato, ginger, little water	Bone-in or boneless	45 minutes
Thai red chicken curry	Curry paste and coconut milk	Boneless thighs	35 minutes
Katsu curry	Flour roux with curry powder	Breast cutlet	50 minutes

RAW CHICKEN, HOT OIL AND SPICES, CHILLI AND ALLERGENS

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot oil and spices: a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Allergens: chicken itself is not a major allergen, but the dishes around it often contain milk, gluten, egg, mustard, celery, soya and sesame. Check stock cubes and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate tools for anyone with an allergy.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A home-style chicken curry

1 hour 10 minutes | 4 portions | building a curry base and cooking chicken in it

The foundation. Cook onions until they are deep golden, add the aromatics and spices, then tomatoes, and finally the chicken, which simmers until it falls off the bone. Skin-off thighs avoid a greasy sauce. Serve with basmati rice.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1 tsp	cumin seeds
2	onions, finely chopped
4	garlic cloves, grated
2 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
2 tsp	ground coriander
1 tsp	turmeric
½ tsp	mild chilli powder
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
8	bone-in, skin-off chicken thighs
250 ml	water
1 tsp	garam masala
2 tbsp	chopped coriander

1. Heat the oil, fry the cumin seeds for 30 seconds, add the onions and cook for **12 to 15 minutes** until deep golden. Add the garlic, ginger and ground spices for 1 minute.
2. Add the tomatoes and cook for 8 minutes. Add the chicken and water, cover and simmer gently for **35 to 40 minutes** until the chicken is very tender and well past 75°C.
3. Stir in the garam masala and coriander and season. Serve with rice.

> **RAW CHICKEN, HOT OIL AND SPICES**

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot oil and spices: a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Hot casserole: a covered dish or pot of casserole is heavy, with scalding steam under the lid. Use dry oven gloves, lift the lid away from you, rest the dish on a heatproof surface, and use a ladle to serve.

LEVEL 2 · QUICK

A tomato and ginger karahi

50 minutes | 4 portions | a fast, dry, high-heat curry

The karahi (also called kadai) is a quick curry cooked in a wok-like pan with little liquid. Fry the chicken hard, add fresh tomatoes that break down into a thick sauce, and finish with a handful of julienned fresh ginger and green chilli. Simple and punchy.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	rapeseed oil
800 g	bone-in or boneless chicken thighs, in 4 cm pieces
4	garlic cloves, grated
1 tsp	cumin seeds
500 g	ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 tsp	ground coriander
½ tsp	mild chilli powder
2 tbsp	fresh ginger, cut into matchsticks
2	green chillies, sliced (deseed for mild)
2 tbsp	chopped coriander

1. Heat the oil in a wide pan over a high heat. Brown the chicken for **6 to 8 minutes,** then add the cumin seeds and garlic for 1 minute.
2. Add the tomatoes, coriander and chilli powder, cover and cook for **25 to 30 minutes** over a medium heat until the tomatoes collapse and the chicken is tender (past 75°C).
3. Uncover, boil off excess liquid, then stir in the ginger, green chilli and coriander and serve at once.

RAW CHICKEN, HOT PAN AND CHILLI

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw

chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot oil and spices: a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 2 · THAI

A Thai red chicken curry

40 minutes | 4 portions | frying a curry paste and building a coconut sauce

Fry the red curry paste in a spoon of oil for a minute to release its aroma, then add coconut milk and stock and simmer. Boneless thighs stay tender in the sauce. Lime juice and basil finish it. Check the paste for shrimp paste if anyone has a shellfish allergy.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2 tbsp	rapeseed oil
3 tbsp	red Thai curry paste
400 ml	tinned coconut milk
200 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
600 g	boneless chicken thighs, in 3 cm pieces
1	red pepper, sliced
100 g	green beans, trimmed
1 tbsp	fish sauce or soy sauce
1	lime, juice
1 handful	Thai basil or basil leaves

1. Fry the paste in the oil for **1 minute** until fragrant. Add the coconut milk and stock, bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 5 minutes.
2. Add the chicken, pepper and beans and simmer for **15 to 20 minutes** until the chicken reads 75°C or more and is tender.
3. Stir in the fish sauce and lime juice, and scatter with basil. Serve with rice.

> **RAW CHICKEN, COCONUT MILK, PASTE AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Raw chicken: the safety rules:** raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot coconut milk: coconut milk spits when it first hits a hot pan and boils over easily. Add it slowly, stir, and keep the heat at a gentle simmer, never a hard boil, or it splits and turns oily.

Fish sauce, shrimp paste and allergens: Thai curry pastes often contain shrimp paste and fish sauce, so they are not suitable for anyone with a fish or shellfish allergy. Check the label, tell guests what is in the dish, and use a vegan paste if you need to avoid them.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

LEVEL 3 · JAPANESE

A katsu-style curry

55 minutes | 4 portions | a mild curry roux and a crumbed cutlet

Japanese curry is thick, mild and slightly sweet, made with a roux of flour and curry powder, and served with a crumbed cutlet and rice. Grate an apple into the sauce for sweetness. Make the cutlets as in Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 3 (schnitzel).

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1	onion, finely chopped
2	carrots, diced
1	potato, diced
2 tbsp	plain flour
1 tbsp	mild curry powder
600 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
1	small apple, grated
1 tbsp	soy sauce
2	chicken breasts, halved and pounded
3 tbsp	plain flour, for coating
1	egg, beaten
60 g	panko breadcrumbs
4 tbsp	rapeseed oil, for frying

1. Soften the onion, carrot and potato in the oil for 8 minutes. Stir in the flour and curry powder for 1 minute, add the stock, apple and soy sauce, and simmer for **20 minutes** until thick. Blend half if you like it smooth.
2. Coat the pounded chicken in flour, egg and panko. Shallow-fry in the oil over a medium heat for **3 to 4 minutes a side** until golden and 75°C. Drain on a rack.
3. Slice the cutlets, serve over rice with the sauce spooned around.

RAW CHICKEN, HOT OIL, EGG AND ALLERGENS

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Shallow-frying and hot oil: hot oil causes serious burns and can catch fire. Use a heavy, deep pan filled no more than a third with oil, heat it to 160 to 175°C and check with a thermometer, dry the chicken well, lower it in away from you, and never leave the pan. If oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover the pan with a lid; never use water. Keep children out of the kitchen.

Egg white in a marinade: velveting uses raw egg white in the marinade. It is safe because the chicken is cooked to 75°C, but wash your hands, board and bowl after handling it, and never taste the raw marinade.

Allergens: contains gluten, egg, soya and celery.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Bone-in or boneless

Flavour.

1. Cook the same curry with bone-in thighs and with boneless thighs.

Look for: The bone-in curry is richer and the meat juicier; the boneless one is quicker and easier to eat but less flavourful.

EXPERIMENT

Spices toasted or not

Aroma.

1. Make two bases, one with whole spices bloomed in oil and one with ground spices only.

Look for: Blooming whole spices gives a fuller, rounder aroma; ground-only is flatter and burns more easily.

EXPERIMENT

Yogurt marinade or none

Tenderness.

1. Marinate half the chicken in yogurt and spice for 2 hours.

Look for: The marinated chicken is more tender and flavoured through; the plain chicken is fine but plainer.

EXPERIMENT

Curry paste fried or stirred in

Depth.

1. Fry the Thai paste in oil in one pot, and stir it into coconut milk in another.

Look for: Frying releases the aroma and darkens the sauce; stirred in raw, the curry tastes harsh and raw.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Home-style chicken curry				
Tomato and ginger karahi				

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Thai red chicken curry				
Katsu-style curry				
Bone-in or boneless				
Spices toasted or not				
Yogurt marinade or none				
Curry paste fried or stirred in				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Bitter curry	Spices burnt	Fry spices for under a minute and add the onion at once
Thin sauce	Too much water or lid on	Remove the lid and simmer to reduce
Greasy curry	Skin left on	Remove the skin and skim the oil
Split coconut sauce	Boiled hard	Keep to a gentle simmer
Tough chicken	Breast or fast boil	Use thighs and simmer gently
Raw-tasting spices	Not cooked enough	Cook the base until the oil separates

HOT OIL, SPICES AND LEFTOVERS

Hot oil and spices: a tarka (tempering) heats oil until spices pop and sizzle in seconds. Have everything ready, keep a lid to hand, stand back when you pour it onto the dal, because it spits and steams, and don't let the spices go black, which makes them bitter.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Leftover chicken: cool cooked chicken quickly (within about 1 to 2 hours), cover and refrigerate, and eat within 2 days. Reheat only once, until steaming hot all the way through. Never leave chicken on the table for more than 2 hours. Cooked chicken can be frozen for up to about 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can bloom whole spices without burning them.
- ☐ I can cook onions until deeply golden.
- ☐ I can simmer bone-in chicken until tender.
- ☐ I can fry a curry paste.
- ☐ I check chicken is past 75°C.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 4 is Chicken Stir-Fries: high heat, velveting and sauce order.

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2

Chapter 4 · Chicken Stir-Fries

SKILL GOAL

Stir-fry chicken at high heat so it stays tender, with sauces balanced and vegetables crisp.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A stir-fry is a few minutes of intense heat, and its success depends on preparation. **Everything is cut and measured before the wok is lit,** because there's no time to chop mid-cook. Chicken breast is lean and dries out easily, so cooks **velvet** it: a marinade of egg white, cornflour and a little oil (and a pinch of salt) that coats the meat and keeps it silky. Cooking Skills: Vegetables 1, chapter 4 teaches the stir-fry method for vegetables; here the chicken leads.

The order matters: **sear the chicken in batches** and set it aside, then cook the aromatics and vegetables, then return the chicken with the **sauce** for the last minute. A crowded wok steams instead of fries. No rice wine is used here; stock and rice vinegar give depth and sourness. For stir-fry sauces in more detail see Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 4, and for rice Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 3.

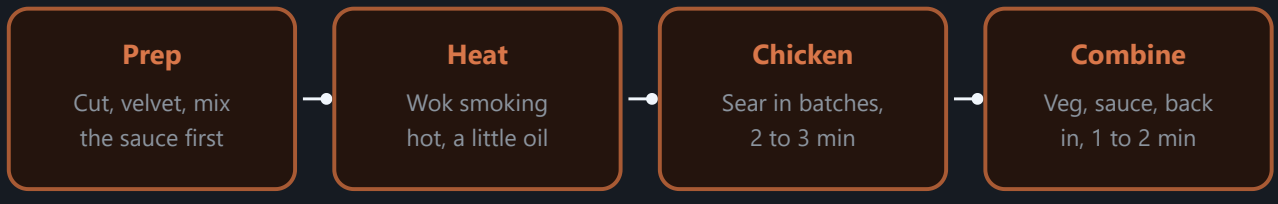


Figure 4. Prep, heat, chicken, combine: the order of a stir-fry.

The method

- **Cut everything small and even,** mix the sauce and have it by the stove.

- **Velvet the chicken** with egg white, cornflour and a little oil, 15 to 30 minutes ahead.
- **Heat the wok until it smokes** lightly, add oil, and sear the chicken in small batches.
- **Stir-fry aromatics and vegetables** for 2 to 3 minutes, keeping them crisp.
- **Return the chicken, add the sauce,** toss for 1 to 2 minutes until glossy, and check it is cooked through.

DISH	CHICKEN	SAUCE	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Velveted stir-fry	Breast, velveted	Soy, oyster, stock	25 minutes
Kung pao-style	Thigh or breast	Soy, vinegar, sugar, chilli	30 minutes
Cashew chicken	Breast, velveted	Oyster sauce, soy	25 minutes
Sticky orange chicken	Thigh strips, coated	Orange, soy, honey	35 minutes

HOT WOK, RAW CHICKEN, EGG WHITE, NUTS AND ALLERGENS

Hot wok and flames: a wok over a high heat is extremely hot, and oil smokes quickly. Have every ingredient cut and ready before you start, use a long spoon, keep a lid within reach (never use water on an oil fire), turn on the extractor, and keep children away. Don't leave a hot wok unattended.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Egg white in a marinade: velveting uses raw egg white in the marinade. It is safe because the chicken is cooked to 75°C, but wash your hands, board and bowl after handling it, and never taste the raw marinade.

Peanuts, cashews and nut allergies: peanuts and cashews are major allergens and can cause severe reactions. Keep them off the table for anyone who is allergic, check sauce labels (oyster sauce, hoisin, chilli oil), and use separate pans and spoons. Whole nuts are a choking risk for small children.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A velveted chicken and vegetable stir-fry

35 minutes | 4 portions | velveting and cooking in the right order

The foundation. Slice breast thinly against the grain, velvet it, and sear it in a smoking wok in two batches. Stir-fry broccoli, pepper and carrot, add the sauce and the chicken, and finish in under two minutes. Serve with rice.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

500 g	skinless chicken breast, thinly sliced
1	egg white
2 tsp	cornflour
1 tsp	rapeseed oil, for the marinade
3 tbsp	rapeseed oil, for frying
2	garlic cloves, sliced
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
1	red pepper, sliced
150 g	broccoli florets
1	carrot, thinly sliced
3 tbsp	soy sauce
1 tbsp	oyster sauce
100 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
1 tsp	cornflour mixed with 1 tbsp cold water

1. Mix the chicken with the egg white, 2 tsp cornflour, 1 tsp oil and a pinch of salt and leave for **15 to 30 minutes.** Mix the soy, oyster sauce and stock.
2. Heat a wok until smoking, add 1 tbsp oil and sear the chicken in 2 batches for **2 to 3 minutes** each. Set aside.
3. Add the remaining oil, garlic, ginger and vegetables and stir-fry for 3 minutes. Return the chicken, add the sauce and cornflour mixture, toss for **1 to 2 minutes** until glossy,

and check a piece is white all through.

HOT WOK, RAW CHICKEN AND EGG WHITE

Hot wok and flames: a wok over a high heat is extremely hot, and oil smokes quickly. Have every ingredient cut and ready before you start, use a long spoon, keep a lid within reach (never use water on an oil fire), turn on the extractor, and keep children away. Don't leave a hot wok unattended.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Egg white in a marinade: velveting uses raw egg white in the marinade. It is safe because the chicken is cooked to 75°C, but wash your hands, board and bowl after handling it, and never taste the raw marinade.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 2 · SPICY

A kung pao-style chicken (no rice wine)

35 minutes | 4 portions | balancing sweet, sour, salty and hot

Cubes of chicken with peanuts and dried chillies in a glossy sweet-sour sauce. The traditional recipe uses Shaoxing rice wine; here stock and a little rice vinegar replace it. Keep the chillies whole to flavour the oil rather than burn your mouth.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

600 g	boneless chicken thighs, in 2 cm cubes
1 tbsp	cornflour
3 tbsp	rapeseed oil
6	dried red chillies
3	garlic cloves, sliced
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
4	spring onions, cut in 3 cm lengths
3 tbsp	soy sauce
2 tbsp	rice vinegar
1 tbsp	caster sugar
3 tbsp	chicken stock, unsalted
60 g	roasted peanuts

1. Toss the chicken with the cornflour and a pinch of salt. Mix the soy sauce, vinegar, sugar and stock.
2. Heat the oil in a wok and fry the chillies for 20 seconds. Add the chicken and stir-fry for **5 to 6 minutes** until golden and cooked through (75°C).
3. Add the garlic, ginger and spring onions for 1 minute, pour in the sauce and toss for **1 minute** until glossy. Stir in the peanuts.

> **HOT WOK, CHILLI FUMES, RAW CHICKEN AND PEANUTS**

Hot wok and flames: a wok over a high heat is extremely hot, and oil smokes quickly. Have every ingredient cut and ready before you start, use a long spoon, keep a lid within reach (never use water on an oil fire), turn on the extractor, and keep children away. Don't leave a hot wok unattended.

Chilli fumes: frying dried chillies and chilli paste in a hot wok releases fumes that sting the eyes and throat. Open a window, turn on the extractor, avoid leaning over the pan, and wash your hands well after handling chillies.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Peanuts, cashews and nut allergies: peanuts and cashews are major allergens and can cause severe reactions. Keep them off the table for anyone who is allergic, check sauce labels (oyster sauce, hoisin, chilli oil), and use separate pans and spoons. Whole nuts are a choking risk for small children.

LEVEL 2 · NUTTY

Cashew chicken

30 minutes | 4 portions | a quick, mild stir-fry with toasted nuts

A mild, family-friendly stir-fry with velveted chicken, crisp peppers and toasted cashews in an oyster and soy sauce. Toast the cashews in a dry pan first for deeper flavour, and add them at the end so they stay crunchy.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

500 g	skinless chicken breast, sliced
1	egg white
2 tsp	cornflour
3 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1	red pepper, diced
1	green pepper, diced
4	spring onions, sliced
2	garlic cloves, sliced
3 tbsp	oyster sauce
1 tbsp	soy sauce
80 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
80 g	cashew nuts, toasted

1. Velvet the chicken with the egg white, cornflour and a pinch of salt for 15 minutes. Mix the oyster sauce, soy and stock.
2. Sear the chicken in a hot wok with 1 tbsp oil in two batches for **2 to 3 minutes** each. Set aside.
3. Stir-fry the peppers, spring onions and garlic in the remaining oil for 3 minutes. Return the chicken, add the sauce, toss for **1 to 2 minutes,** and stir in the cashews.

> **HOT WOK, NUTS, EGG WHITE AND RAW CHICKEN**

Hot wok and flames: a wok over a high heat is extremely hot, and oil smokes quickly. Have every ingredient cut and ready before you start, use a long spoon, keep a lid within reach (never use water on an oil fire), turn on the extractor, and keep children away. Don't leave a hot wok unattended.

Peanuts, cashews and nut allergies: peanuts and cashews are major allergens and can cause severe reactions. Keep them off the table for anyone who is allergic, check sauce labels (oyster sauce, hoisin, chilli oil), and use separate pans and spoons. Whole nuts are a choking risk for small children.

Egg white in a marinade: velveting uses raw egg white in the marinade. It is safe because the chicken is cooked to 75°C, but wash your hands, board and bowl after handling it, and never taste the raw marinade.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

LEVEL 3 · STICKY

Sticky orange chicken

45 minutes | 4 portions | crisp coated chicken tossed in a reduced sauce

Bite-sized chicken, coated in cornflour and shallow-fried until crisp, tossed in a sticky orange, soy and ginger sauce. The sauce is reduced separately so the chicken stays crisp, and the two are combined only at the last moment. Serve at once.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

600 g	boneless chicken thighs, in 3 cm pieces
3 tbsp	cornflour
1	egg, beaten
4 tbsp	rapeseed oil
200 ml	orange juice
2 tbsp	soy sauce
2 tbsp	honey
1 tbsp	rice vinegar
1 tbsp	grated fresh ginger
2	garlic cloves, grated
1 tsp	cornflour mixed with 1 tbsp cold water
1	orange, zest

1. Toss the chicken in the egg, then the cornflour. Shallow-fry in the hot oil in two batches for **5 to 6 minutes** each until crisp and golden (75°C). Drain on a rack.
2. Simmer the orange juice, zest, soy sauce, honey, vinegar, ginger and garlic for **5 to 6 minutes,** stir in the cornflour mixture and cook for 1 minute until sticky.
3. Toss the chicken in the sauce for 30 seconds and serve at once with rice.

> **HOT OIL, RAW CHICKEN, EGG AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Shallow-frying and hot oil:** hot oil causes serious burns and can catch fire. Use a heavy, deep pan filled no more than a third with oil, heat it to 160 to 175°C and check with a thermometer,

dry the chicken well, lower it in away from you, and never leave the pan. If oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover the pan with a lid; never use water. Keep children out of the kitchen.

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Egg white in a marinade: velveting uses raw egg white in the marinade. It is safe because the chicken is cooked to 75°C, but wash your hands, board and bowl after handling it, and never taste the raw marinade.

Allergens: contains egg, soya and sulphites (vinegar).

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Velveted or plain

Tenderness.

1. Stir-fry two batches of breast, one velveted and one plain.

Look for: The velveted chicken is silky and moist; the plain chicken is firmer and drier.

EXPERIMENT

Wok or frying pan

Heat.

1. Make the same stir-fry in a wok and a flat frying pan.

Look for: The wok's high sides concentrate heat and give a slight char; in a flat pan, work in smaller batches or the food steams.

EXPERIMENT

Sauce added early or late

Texture.

1. Add the sauce at the start in one pan and at the end in another.

Look for: Early sauce boils away and the chicken stews; late sauce coats it in a glossy glaze.

EXPERIMENT

Cornflour slurry or reduction

Glaze.

1. Thicken one sauce with a cornflour slurry and reduce another by boiling.

Look for: The slurry makes a glossy, clingy glaze; the reduction is more intense but thinner and stickier.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Velveted chicken stir-fry				
Kung pao-style chicken				
Cashew chicken				
Sticky orange chicken				
Velveted or plain				
Wok or frying pan				
Sauce added early or late				
Cornflour slurry or reduction				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Tough chicken	Overcooked or sliced thick	Slice thin, velvet and cook for 2 to 3 minutes
Soggy vegetables	Wok crowded	Cook in small batches over high heat
Watery stir-fry	Wet chicken or low heat	Pat dry; heat the wok until smoking
Burnt garlic	Added too early	Add aromatics after the first vegetables
Sauce too salty	Too much soy	Add stock or a pinch of sugar
Coating falls off orange chicken	Wet chicken	Pat dry and coat just before frying

HOT WOK, NUTS AND LEFTOVERS

Hot wok and flames: a wok over a high heat is extremely hot, and oil smokes quickly. Have every ingredient cut and ready before you start, use a long spoon, keep a lid within reach (never use water on an oil fire), turn on the extractor, and keep children away. Don't leave a hot wok unattended.

Peanuts, cashews and nut allergies: peanuts and cashews are major allergens and can cause severe reactions. Keep them off the table for anyone who is allergic, check sauce labels (oyster sauce, hoisin, chilli oil), and use separate pans and spoons. Whole nuts are a choking risk for small children.

Leftover chicken: cool cooked chicken quickly (within about 1 to 2 hours), cover and refrigerate, and eat within 2 days. Reheat only once, until steaming hot all the way through. Never leave chicken on the table for more than 2 hours. Cooked chicken can be frozen for up to about 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can velvet chicken.
- ☐ I can cut and prepare before I light the wok.
- ☐ I can stir-fry in batches.
- ☐ I can balance a stir-fry sauce.
- ☐ I check chicken is cooked through.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 5 is Chicken Around the Mediterranean: slow, aromatic dishes with herbs, lemon and spice.

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2

Chapter 5 · Chicken Around the Mediterranean

SKILL GOAL

Cook slow, aromatic chicken dishes in which herbs, lemon, paprika and spice build the sauce.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

The Mediterranean kitchen cooks chicken **with the bone in, slowly,** in a sauce made from what grows nearby: lemon and oregano in Greece, tomato and mushroom in Italy, paprika and onion in Hungary, and sweet spice and dried fruit in Morocco. The method is shared: brown the skin, soften the aromatics, add liquid, and cook gently until the meat is tender and the sauce is reduced. Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 6 teaches the stew method; these four dishes each change the flavour, not the technique.

Use **thighs and drumsticks.** They have more fat and connective tissue than breast, so they stay moist through a long cook. Taste at the end and adjust: lemon for freshness, a pinch of sugar if the tomato is sharp, salt last. There is no wine in any of these; stock, lemon and a little vinegar provide the depth that wine usually does. Serve with rice (Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 3) or crusty bread.



Figure 5. Brown, aromatics, liquid, slow cook: the shape of a Mediterranean chicken dish.

The method

- **Brown the chicken** skin-side down over a medium heat for 6 to 8 minutes until golden, then set it aside.
- **Soften the aromatics** in the fat that's left: onion first, then garlic, herbs and spices for the last minute.
- **Add the liquid** (stock, tomatoes or lemon juice) and scrape up the browned bits.
- **Return the chicken,** cover and cook gently for 40 to 50 minutes until tender and past 75°C.
- **Finish the sauce:** uncover and reduce, then add fresh herbs, lemon or soured cream.

DISH	FLAVOUR	COOKING LIQUID	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Greek lemon chicken	Lemon, oregano, garlic	Lemon juice and stock	1 hour 15 minutes
Chicken cacciatore	Tomato, mushroom, herbs	Tomato and stock	1 hour
Chicken paprikash	Sweet paprika, onion, cream	Stock and soured cream	1 hour
Moroccan tagine	Cumin, ginger, cinnamon, apricot	Stock and onion juices	1 hour 15 minutes

RAW CHICKEN, HOT POTS AND SPICES

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot casserole: a covered dish or pot of casserole is heavy, with scalding steam under the lid. Use dry oven gloves, lift the lid away from you, rest the dish on a heatproof surface, and use a ladle to serve.

Paprika and spice in hot oil: paprika burns in seconds in hot oil and turns bitter. Take the pan off the heat before you stir it in, then return it, and add liquid straight away.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A Greek lemon chicken with potatoes

1 hour 20 minutes | 4 portions | roasting chicken and potatoes together in a lemony liquid

One tray, almost no work. Chicken and potato wedges roast in olive oil, lemon juice, garlic and oregano, and the potatoes soak up the juices. The result is golden on top and tender underneath. Serve with a green salad.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

8	bone-in chicken thighs or drumsticks
800 g	waxy potatoes, cut into wedges
4 tbsp	olive oil
3	lemons, juice
4	garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsp	dried oregano
300 ml	chicken stock, unsalted

1. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6). Toss the chicken, potatoes, oil, lemon juice, garlic and oregano in a large roasting tin with the stock, skin-side up. Season.
2. Roast for **1 hour to 1 hour 10 minutes,** turning the potatoes once, until the chicken is golden and reads 75°C or more.
3. Rest for 5 minutes, spoon over the pan juices, and serve.

RAW CHICKEN AND A HOT OVEN

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

Resting: resting lets the juices settle, but it is not a safety step: the chicken must already have reached its safe temperature. Rest it on a warm plate, loosely covered with foil, and keep it out of the 'danger zone' for no more than about 30 minutes before carving and serving.

LEVEL 2 · ITALIAN

A chicken cacciatore (no wine)

1 hour 10 minutes | 4 portions | browning chicken and building a tomato and mushroom sauce

Cacciatore means hunter's style. Brown the chicken, soften onion, pepper and mushrooms, add tomatoes and stock, and simmer until tender. Traditionally made with wine; stock and a splash of vinegar give a similar depth. Serve with pasta or crusty bread.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	olive oil
8	bone-in chicken thighs
1	onion, sliced
1	red pepper, sliced
200 g	mushrooms, quartered
3	garlic cloves, sliced
1 tbsp	tomato purée
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
200 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
1 tbsp	red wine vinegar
1 tsp	dried oregano
1 handful	fresh parsley

1. Brown the chicken in the oil over a medium heat for **6 to 8 minutes,** skin-side down first. Set aside.
2. In the same pan soften the onion, pepper and mushrooms for 8 minutes. Add the garlic and purée for 1 minute, then the tomatoes, stock, vinegar and oregano.
3. Return the chicken, cover and simmer gently for **35 to 40 minutes** until tender and past 75°C. Reduce the sauce if thin, and add parsley.

> **RAW CHICKEN AND A HOT POT**

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot casserole: a covered dish or pot of casserole is heavy, with scalding steam under the lid. Use dry oven gloves, lift the lid away from you, rest the dish on a heatproof surface, and use a ladle to serve.

No alcohol: this book uses no beer, wine or brandy. Stock, vinegar, mustard and tomato give the same depth, so the dish is fine for children and anyone avoiding alcohol.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 2 · HUNGARIAN

A Hungarian-style chicken paprikash

1 hour 15 minutes | 4 portions | cooking paprika without burning it and finishing with soured cream

Paprikash is chicken cooked in a sauce of sweet paprika, soft onions and soured cream. The trick is to take the pan off the heat before you add the paprika, because it turns bitter in seconds. Serve with rice, buttered noodles or dumplings.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

2 tbsp	rapeseed oil
8	bone-in chicken thighs
2	onions, finely chopped
2 tbsp	sweet paprika
1	red pepper, sliced
1	tomato, chopped
350 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
150 ml	soured cream
1 tbsp	plain flour

1. Brown the chicken for 6 to 8 minutes and set aside. Cook the onions in the same pan for **10 minutes** until soft and golden.
2. Take the pan off the heat, stir in the paprika, then add the pepper, tomato and stock. Return the chicken, cover, and simmer for **35 to 40 minutes** until past 75°C.
3. Whisk the flour into the soured cream, stir it into the sauce off the heat, and warm gently without boiling. Serve.

> **RAW CHICKEN, PAPRIKA AND DAIRY**
>
> **Raw chicken: the safety rules:** raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Paprika and spice in hot oil: paprika burns in seconds in hot oil and turns bitter. Take the pan off the heat before you stir it in, then return it, and add liquid straight away.

Hot milk and cream: milk and cream boil over in seconds and burn worse than water. Keep the heat low, stay at the pan, and add dairy at the end. Never boil a soup once it has cream, or it may split.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 3 · MOROCCAN

A Moroccan chicken tagine with apricots

1 hour 25 minutes | 4 portions | layering sweet spices and fruit into a slow braise

A tagine is both the pot and the stew. A heavy casserole works well. Cumin, ginger, cinnamon and turmeric flavour the chicken, onions cook down to a thick sauce, and dried apricots and almonds add sweetness and crunch. Serve with couscous.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	olive oil
8	bone-in chicken thighs
2	onions, sliced
3	garlic cloves, grated
1 tsp	ground cumin
1 tsp	ground ginger
1 tsp	ground cinnamon
½ tsp	turmeric
400 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
100 g	dried apricots, halved
50 g	green olives
30 g	flaked almonds, toasted
2 tbsp	chopped coriander

1. Brown the chicken in the oil, set aside, and cook the onions for **12 minutes** until soft. Add the garlic and spices for 1 minute.
2. Add the stock, return the chicken, cover, and cook gently for **40 minutes.** Add the apricots and olives and cook for 15 minutes more, until past 75°C.
3. Scatter with almonds and coriander. Serve with couscous.

> **RAW CHICKEN, NUTS AND SPICES**

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot casserole: a covered dish or pot of casserole is heavy, with scalding steam under the lid. Use dry oven gloves, lift the lid away from you, rest the dish on a heatproof surface, and use a ladle to serve.

Peanuts, cashews and nut allergies: peanuts and cashews are major allergens and can cause severe reactions. Keep them off the table for anyone who is allergic, check sauce labels (oyster sauce, hoisin, chilli oil), and use separate pans and spoons. Whole nuts are a choking risk for small children.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Lemon early or late

Brightness.

1. Cook one lemon chicken with the juice added at the start and one with the juice added at the end.

Look for: Early lemon mellows and flavours the potatoes; late lemon is sharper and fresher.

EXPERIMENT

Paprika fried or stirred in

Colour and bitterness.

1. Fry the paprika in hot oil for 30 seconds in one pot, and stir it in off the heat in another.

Look for: Fried paprika turns bitter and brown; off-heat paprika stays sweet and red.

EXPERIMENT

Apricots or none

Sweetness.

1. Cook two tagines, one with apricots and one without.

Look for: The apricots add sweetness and thicken the sauce; without them the dish is savoury and plainer.

EXPERIMENT

Lid on or off

Sauce texture.

1. Finish one casserole with the lid on and one with it off for the last 20 minutes.

Look for: Lid on keeps the chicken moist and the sauce thin; lid off reduces and thickens the sauce.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Greek lemon chicken				
Chicken cacciatore				
Chicken paprikash				

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Moroccan chicken tagine				
Lemon early or late				
Paprika fried or stirred in				
Apricots or none				
Lid on or off				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Bitter paprika sauce	Paprika burnt	Take the pan off the heat before stirring it in
Curdled soured cream	Boiled after adding	Add off the heat and warm gently
Thin, watery sauce	Lid on throughout	Uncover and simmer to reduce
Pale chicken skin	Pan too cool or crowded	Brown in batches over a medium heat
Sauce too sharp	Tomato or lemon acidity	Add a pinch of sugar and a little more cooking
Dry chicken	Breast or too hot	Use thighs and keep to a gentle simmer

HOT POT, NUTS AND LEFTOVERS

Hot casserole: a covered dish or pot of casserole is heavy, with scalding steam under the lid. Use dry oven gloves, lift the lid away from you, rest the dish on a heatproof surface, and use a ladle to serve.

Peanuts, cashews and nut allergies: peanuts and cashews are major allergens and can cause severe reactions. Keep them off the table for anyone who is allergic, check sauce labels (oyster sauce, hoisin, chilli oil), and use separate pans and spoons. Whole nuts are a choking risk for small children.

Leftover chicken: cool cooked chicken quickly (within about 1 to 2 hours), cover and refrigerate, and eat within 2 days. Reheat only once, until steaming hot all the way through. Never leave chicken on the table for more than 2 hours. Cooked chicken can be frozen for up to about 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can brown chicken without burning it.
- ☐ I can build a sauce from aromatics and stock.
- ☐ I can add paprika off the heat.
- ☐ I can finish a sauce with cream without curdling it.
- ☐ I check chicken is past 75°C.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 6 is Chicken Around the World: marinades, heat and smoke from other traditions.

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2

Chapter 6 · Chicken Around the World

SKILL GOAL

Marinate, char and glaze chicken in the styles of the Caribbean, Portugal and Africa, Mexico and Japan.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Every cuisine has a way to flavour chicken before the heat: **a wet or dry marinade** that carries salt, acid, spice and sugar into the surface. Jerk uses allspice, thyme and scotch bonnet; peri-peri uses chilli, garlic, lemon and paprika; tinga uses chipotle and tomato; yakitori uses soy and a sweet glaze. Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 7 covers marinades in general; here each one is a complete dish. Chicken in a marinade must stay in the fridge, and any marinade used on raw chicken must be boiled before it becomes a sauce.

Char and glaze matter as much as the marinade. **Char** comes from a hot grill, a barbecue or the top of the oven, and gives bitter-sweet edges and smoke. A **glaze** with sugar or honey goes on only in the last few minutes or it burns. For salsas to serve alongside see Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 5. The grilling basics are in Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 4.

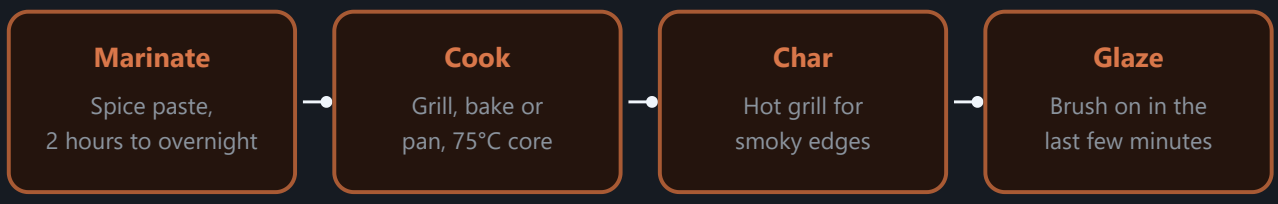


Figure 6. Marinate, cook, char, glaze: the order of world-style chicken.

The method

- **Blend the marinade,** coat the chicken, and chill it for 2 hours to overnight in a covered dish.
- **Shake off the excess,** especially sugary marinade, which burns.
- **Cook to 75°C** at the thickest point using the oven, grill or barbecue.
- **Char at the end** under a hot grill or on the barbecue for colour and smoke.
- **Brush on the glaze in the last 3 to 5 minutes,** then rest the chicken.

DISH	KEY FLAVOURS	COOKED	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Jerk chicken	Allspice, thyme, scotch bonnet	Oven then grill	1 hour 15 minutes
Peri-peri chicken	Chilli, lemon, garlic, paprika	Oven then grill	50 minutes
Chicken tinga	Chipotle, tomato, onion	Simmered then shredded	50 minutes
Yakitori-style skewers	Soy, mirin, ginger, honey	Grill or pan	35 minutes

RAW CHICKEN, MARINADES AND VERY HOT CHILLIES

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Marinade that touched raw chicken: never serve a marinade that has had raw chicken in it as a sauce or dip. Boil it hard for at least 2 minutes first, or set aside a clean portion before the chicken goes in.

Scotch bonnet and very hot chillies: scotch bonnet and bird's-eye chillies are extremely hot. Wear gloves or wash your hands several times after handling them, never touch your eyes or face, and keep the seeds out for a milder dish. Blend the marinade with the lid on and the window open, as the fumes sting.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Jerk chicken

1 hour 25 minutes + marinating | 4 portions | a wet spice marinade and a hot finish

Blend allspice, thyme, spring onions, ginger, garlic, soy sauce and scotch bonnet into a paste and rub it into scored chicken. Roast hot then char under the grill. Use one chilli (deseeded) for a medium heat, or half for mild. Serve with rice and peas.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

8	bone-in chicken thighs or drumsticks
4	spring onions, chopped
3	garlic cloves
3 cm	fresh ginger, peeled
1 tbsp	ground allspice
1 tbsp	fresh thyme leaves
2 tbsp	soy sauce
1 tbsp	brown sugar
1 tbsp	lime juice
1	scotch bonnet chilli, deseeded
2 tbsp	rapeseed oil

1. Blend everything except the chicken into a paste. Slash the chicken skin and rub the paste in. Cover and chill for **2 hours to overnight.**
2. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6). Roast on a rack over a tray for **40 to 45 minutes** until the thickest part is 75°C or more.
3. Finish under a hot grill for 3 to 5 minutes until charred at the edges. Rest for 5 minutes and serve.

> **RAW CHICKEN, SCOTCH BONNET AND A HOT GRILL**
>
> **Raw chicken: the safety rules:** raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot

soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Scotch bonnet and very hot chillies: scotch bonnet and bird's-eye chillies are extremely hot. Wear gloves or wash your hands several times after handling them, never touch your eyes or face, and keep the seeds out for a milder dish. Blend the marinade with the lid on and the window open, as the fumes sting.

Hot grill: a grill is extremely hot and food under it burns in a minute. Stay at the cooker, use oven gloves and keep the grill pan clear of loose items. Cheese bubbles and drips, so use a tray.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 2 · PORTUGUESE

Peri-peri chicken

1 hour + marinating | 4 portions | a chilli and lemon marinade and a basting sauce

Peri-peri is a Portuguese-African mix of red chilli, garlic, lemon, paprika and oil. Blend it, keep a portion aside for basting, and marinate the chicken in the rest. A spatchcocked chicken (Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 1) is ideal; thighs work too.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

8	bone-in chicken thighs
3	red chillies, deseeded
4	garlic cloves
2	lemons, juice
2 tsp	smoked paprika
1 tsp	dried oregano
3 tbsp	olive oil
1 tbsp	red wine vinegar
1 tsp	flaked sea salt

1. Blend the marinade ingredients until smooth. Set aside a third in a clean bowl for basting. Coat the chicken in the rest and chill for **2 hours to overnight.**
2. Roast at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for **35 to 40 minutes,** brushing with the clean sauce in the last 10 minutes, until the thickest part reads 75°C.
3. Char under a hot grill for 3 minutes and serve with the rest of the clean sauce on the side.

> **RAW CHICKEN, CHILLI AND A HOT OVEN**
>
> **Raw chicken: the safety rules:** raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Marinade that touched raw chicken: never serve a marinade that has had raw chicken in it as a sauce or dip. Boil it hard for at least 2 minutes first, or set aside a clean portion before the chicken goes in.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 2 · MEXICAN

Chicken tinga

55 minutes | 4 portions | simmering and shredding chicken in a smoky tomato sauce

Tinga is shredded chicken in a sauce of tomato, onion and chipotle. Poach the chicken, shred it, then simmer it in the sauce. Serve in tortillas with avocado, soured cream and lime. Chipotle paste is smoky and hot; add a little at a time.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

600 g	boneless chicken thighs
500 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
2 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1	onion, sliced
3	garlic cloves
400 g	tin of chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp	chipotle paste
1 tsp	dried oregano
1 tsp	ground cumin
8	small tortillas

1. Simmer the chicken in the stock for **15 to 20 minutes** until 75°C or more in the centre. Lift it out, cool slightly, and shred.
2. Soften the onion in the oil for 8 minutes with the garlic. Add the tomatoes, chipotle, oregano, cumin and a ladle of the poaching stock, and simmer for **10 minutes.**
3. Stir in the shredded chicken, cook for 5 minutes, and serve in warmed tortillas.

RAW CHICKEN, CHIPOTLE AND A HOT PAN

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Chilli and spices: chilli can sting skin and eyes, so wash your hands well after chopping it and don't touch your face. Add heat in small steps and keep portions for children mild.

Poaching is gentle, not raw: poaching uses water at a bare simmer (about 80 to 90°C), not a boil. The chicken must still reach 75°C in the thickest part, so check with a thermometer, not just the clock. Keep the lid on, never leave a pan of hot liquid unattended, and lift the chicken out with a slotted spoon, not by pouring.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 3 · JAPANESE

Yakitori-style skewers

45 minutes + marinating | 4 portions | threading, grilling and glazing small pieces

Small pieces of chicken thigh on skewers, grilled over a high heat and brushed with a sweet soy glaze (tare). Mirin, the usual sweet seasoning, contains a little alcohol, so this version uses honey, sugar and rice vinegar instead. Serve with rice and cucumber.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

700 g	boneless chicken thighs, in 3 cm pieces
6 tbsp	soy sauce
3 tbsp	honey
1 tbsp	rice vinegar
1 tbsp	caster sugar
2 tsp	grated fresh ginger
1	garlic clove, grated
8	wooden skewers

1. Simmer the soy, honey, vinegar, sugar, ginger and garlic for **5 minutes** until syrupy. Set half aside as a clean glaze.
2. Soak the skewers for 30 minutes, thread the chicken, and marinate in the other half of the sauce for 30 minutes.
3. Grill or pan-fry for **10 to 12 minutes,** turning often, brushing with the clean glaze for the last 3 minutes, until the centre is 75°C or more.

RAW CHICKEN, SKEWERS AND SUGARY GLAZES

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Skewers and the grill: metal skewers get very hot and wooden ones burn, so soak wooden skewers in water for 30 minutes first. Turn them with tongs, keep the grill pan and tray steady,

and check the thickest piece of chicken is 75°C before serving.

Hot sugary glazes: glazes with sugar or honey burn quickly and stick like hot toffee. Brush them on in the last few minutes, watch the pan, and don't taste a hot glaze straight from the spoon.

No alcohol: this book uses no beer, wine or brandy. Stock, vinegar, mustard and tomato give the same depth, so the dish is fine for children and anyone avoiding alcohol.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Marinade 2 hours or overnight

Depth.

1. Marinate two batches of the same chicken, one for 2 hours and one overnight.

Look for: Overnight chicken is deeper in flavour all through; 2 hours flavours only the surface.

EXPERIMENT

Charred or not

Smoke.

1. Cook two portions, one finished under the grill and one not.

Look for: The charred portion has smoky, slightly bitter edges; the other is paler and milder.

EXPERIMENT

Chilli heat

Spice.

1. Make jerk paste with half a chilli and with a whole one.

Look for: A whole scotch bonnet is much hotter and fruitier; half is warm and lets the allspice show.

EXPERIMENT

Sauce brushed on early or late

Burning.

1. Brush the glaze on at the start for one skewer and at the end for another.

Look for: Early glaze blackens and tastes bitter; late glaze is glossy and sweet.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Jerk chicken				
Peri-peri chicken				
Chicken tinga				
Yakitori-style skewers				
Marinade 2 hours or overnight				
Charred or not				
Chilli heat				
Sauce brushed on early or late				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Burnt, bitter outside	Sugary marinade on too long	Shake off excess; glaze in the last 5 minutes
Raw centre	Pieces too thick or heat too fierce	Cook to 75°C and use a lower heat to finish
Dry skewers	Breast or overcooked	Use thighs and cook until just done

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Marinade too hot	Seeds left in chillies	Deseed and add the chilli in steps
Skewers burnt	Not soaked	Soak for 30 minutes first
Tinga too thin	Not reduced	Simmer uncovered until thick

RAW MARINADE, CHILLIES AND LEFTOVERS

Marinade that touched raw chicken: never serve a marinade that has had raw chicken in it as a sauce or dip. Boil it hard for at least 2 minutes first, or set aside a clean portion before the chicken goes in.

Scotch bonnet and very hot chillies: scotch bonnet and bird's-eye chillies are extremely hot. Wear gloves or wash your hands several times after handling them, never touch your eyes or face, and keep the seeds out for a milder dish. Blend the marinade with the lid on and the window open, as the fumes sting.

Leftover chicken: cool cooked chicken quickly (within about 1 to 2 hours), cover and refrigerate, and eat within 2 days. Reheat only once, until steaming hot all the way through. Never leave chicken on the table for more than 2 hours. Cooked chicken can be frozen for up to about 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can blend and use a spice marinade.
- ☐ I can char chicken without burning it.
- ☐ I time a glaze for the end.
- ☐ I never serve a raw marinade as a sauce.
- ☐ I check chicken is past 75°C.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 7 is Livers, Skin and Giblets: using the whole bird and its offcuts.

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2

Chapter 7 · Livers, Skin and Giblets

SKILL GOAL

Use the livers, skin, fat and giblets of a chicken so that none of the bird is wasted.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A chicken gives more than meat. **Livers** are rich and soft and cook in minutes; **skin and fat** crisp into crackling or render into schmaltz, a flavoursome cooking fat; and the **neck, heart and gizzard** (the giblets) make a deep stock for gravy. Cooking Skills: Soups and Stocks 1, chapter 1 teaches stock in detail; here the giblets are a quick stock for one gravy. Offcuts are cheap, but they need care: liver must be fresh, cooked through, and kept away from anyone it isn't suitable for.

Liver tastes strong when overcooked and sweet when cooked briefly and gently. It should be **firm with no pink** inside, which is safest, but never grey and dry. Soaking in milk for an hour softens the flavour. See Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 7 for using up the cooked meat. There is no brandy or sherry in the pâté here; a little lemon juice and thyme give lift instead.



Figure 7. Livers, skin, giblets and bones: four uses of the offcuts.

The method

- **Trim the livers** of sinew and green-tinged parts (bile tastes bitter), then pat dry.

- **Soak in milk** for up to an hour if you want a milder flavour.
- **Cook hot and brief:** a few minutes a side in butter until firm with no pink inside.
- **Render skin slowly** in a cold pan so the fat melts and the skin crisps.
- **Simmer giblets** in water for at least 30 minutes to make stock for gravy.

OFFCUT	BECOMES	METHOD	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Livers	On toast or pâté	Pan-fry briefly or blend	15 to 30 minutes
Skin	Crackling	Dry, season, roast hot	35 minutes
Fat	Schmaltz	Render slowly, strain	30 minutes
Giblets	Stock and gravy	Simmer, strain, thicken	45 minutes

RAW CHICKEN, LIVER AND PÂTÉ

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Chicken liver: cook it through, and who should avoid it: chicken liver must be cooked until there is no pink inside, because raw or pink liver can carry campylobacter and salmonella. It is very high in vitamin A, so it is not recommended for pregnant women, and pâté carries a listeria risk. Buy it fresh, keep it cold, and use it within a day.

Liver and fat spit: liver and chicken fat spit hard in a hot pan. Pat the livers dry, use a splash guard or a lid held at an angle, stand back, and add them to the pan away from you.

Pâté, listeria and keeping: pâté is a chilled, moist food that can grow listeria, which is a particular risk in pregnancy and for older or unwell people. Chill it quickly, keep it below 5°C, eat it within 2 days, and don't serve it to anyone in those groups.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Chicken livers on toast

20 minutes | 2 portions | cooking liver quickly so it is firm but still soft

A classic quick supper. Pat the livers dry, fry them hot in butter with onion and thyme until firm with no pink, and spoon them over buttery toast. Finish with lemon and parsley. Don't walk away: liver goes from soft to dry in a minute.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

250 g	chicken livers, trimmed
30 g	butter
1	small onion, finely sliced
1	garlic clove, crushed
1 tsp	fresh thyme leaves
1 tbsp	lemon juice
2	thick slices of bread, toasted
1 tbsp	chopped parsley

1. Soften the onion in half the butter over a medium heat for **6 minutes.** Add the garlic and thyme for 1 minute and push to one side.
2. Add the remaining butter, raise the heat, and cook the dried livers for **3 to 4 minutes,** turning once, until firm with no pink when cut.
3. Stir in the lemon juice, spoon over hot buttered toast and scatter with parsley.

RAW CHICKEN, LIVER AND HOT FAT

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Chicken liver: cook it through, and who should avoid it: chicken liver must be cooked until there is no pink inside, because raw or pink liver can carry campylobacter and salmonella. It is very high in vitamin A, so it is not recommended for pregnant women, and pâté carries a listeria

risk. Buy it fresh, keep it cold, and use it within a day.

Liver and fat spit: liver and chicken fat spit hard in a hot pan. Pat the livers dry, use a splash guard or a lid held at an angle, stand back, and add them to the pan away from you.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

LEVEL 2 · SMOOTH

A smooth chicken liver pâté (alcohol-free)

45 minutes + chilling | 6 portions | blending cooked liver with butter and chilling it safely

Cook the livers fully, blend with butter and cream, and chill in a ramekin under a thin layer of melted butter. No brandy, just thyme and lemon. Chill for at least 4 hours and eat within 2 days. Not suitable in pregnancy.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

300 g	chicken livers, trimmed
100 g	butter, softened
1	small onion, finely chopped
2	garlic cloves
1 tsp	thyme leaves
2 tbsp	double cream
1 tbsp	lemon juice
30 g	clarified butter or melted butter, to seal

1. Soften the onion and garlic in a third of the butter for 6 minutes. Add the livers and thyme and cook for **5 to 6 minutes** until firm with no pink inside.
2. Blend while warm with the rest of the soft butter, cream, lemon and seasoning until very smooth. Press through a sieve if you like.
3. Pack into ramekins, seal with a thin layer of melted butter, and chill for **at least 4 hours.** Eat within 2 days.

LIVER, PÂTÉ AND HOT BLENDING

Chicken liver: cook it through, and who should avoid it: chicken liver must be cooked until there is no pink inside, because raw or pink liver can carry campylobacter and salmonella. It is very high in vitamin A, so it is not recommended for pregnant women, and pâté carries a listeria risk. Buy it fresh, keep it cold, and use it within a day.

Pâté, listeria and keeping: pâté is a chilled, moist food that can grow listeria, which is a particular risk in pregnancy and for older or unwell people. Chill it quickly, keep it below 5°C, eat it within 2 days, and don't serve it to anyone in those groups.

Blending hot soup: hot liquid expands in a sealed blender and can blow the lid off and scald you badly. The safest choice is a stick blender in a deep pan, held low with the head fully under the surface. With a jug blender, cool the soup for a few minutes, fill it no more than half, take out the small centre cap of the lid, cover it with a folded cloth, hold it down and start on the lowest speed.

No alcohol: this book uses no beer, wine or brandy. Stock, vinegar, mustard and tomato give the same depth, so the dish is fine for children and anyone avoiding alcohol.

LEVEL 2 · CRISP

Crackling and schmaltz

50 minutes | 4 portions | rendering chicken fat and crisping skin

Cut the skin from raw thighs (or save it from a jointed chicken), lay it in a cold pan, and heat slowly. The fat melts out as schmaltz and the skin turns into thin crackling. Strain the fat into a jar; the crackling is a snack or a topping for soup and salad.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

300 g	raw chicken skin and fat
1 pinch	flaked sea salt
1 tsp	smoked paprika, optional

1. Pat the skin dry and lay it flat in a cold, wide pan in a single layer. Heat over a low-medium heat for **20 to 25 minutes,** pouring off fat now and then, until the skin is golden and crisp.
2. Lift the crackling onto kitchen paper and season while hot. Let the fat cool slightly, then strain it into a clean jar.
3. Cool, cover and chill. Use the schmaltz for frying onions, roasting potatoes or as a base for matzo balls.

RAW CHICKEN SKIN AND HOT FAT

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Liver and fat spit: liver and chicken fat spit hard in a hot pan. Pat the livers dry, use a splash guard or a lid held at an angle, stand back, and add them to the pan away from you.

Straining and keeping fat: strain hot fat through a sieve into a heatproof jar only once it has cooled a little, and never pour it into a plastic container while hot. Keep schmaltz chilled for up to a week or freeze it, and use a clean spoon each time.

Shallow-frying and hot oil: hot oil causes serious burns and can catch fire. Use a heavy, deep

> pan filled no more than a third with oil, heat it to 160 to 175°C and check with a thermometer, dry the chicken well, lower it in away from you, and never leave the pan. If oil catches fire, turn off the heat and cover the pan with a lid; never use water. Keep children out of the kitchen.

LEVEL 3 · ROAST

A roast with giblet gravy

1 hour 45 minutes | 4 portions | using the giblets to make a deep gravy

Put the neck, heart and gizzard on to simmer while the chicken roasts, then use that stock to make gravy in the roasting tin. Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 2 covers roasting; Cooking Skills: Sauces 1, chapter 4 covers gravy.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

1.6 kg	whole chicken with giblets, if supplied
1	onion, halved
1	carrot, chopped
1	celery stick
1	bay leaf
1 litre	water
2 tbsp	plain flour
1 tbsp	butter

1. Roast the chicken as in Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 2. Meanwhile simmer the giblets (not the liver) with the vegetables, bay leaf and water for **45 minutes,** then strain.
2. When the thigh reads 75°C or more, rest the chicken for 20 minutes. Pour off excess fat from the tin, stir in the flour and butter over a low heat for 2 minutes.
3. Gradually whisk in 500 ml of the giblet stock and simmer for **5 to 8 minutes** until thickened. Strain and serve with the carved chicken.

> **RAW GIBLETS, HOT OVEN AND GRAVY**
>
> **Raw chicken: the safety rules:** raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Giblets: use fresh and cook thoroughly: giblets (neck, heart, gizzard) should be used within a day of buying and cooked through. Boil them for at least 30 minutes for stock, discard the liver (it makes the stock bitter), and never serve undercooked giblets.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Hot sauce: a thickening sauce bubbles and spits, and hot sauce sticks to skin and burns worse than water. Stir with a long spoon, keep your face back and turn the handle of the pan inwards.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Livers cooked 2 or 4 minutes

Texture.

1. Pan-fry two batches, one for 2 minutes and one for 4 minutes.

Look for: Two minutes leaves a pink, unsafe centre and is not recommended; four minutes is firm and cooked through but still tender.

EXPERIMENT

Milk soak or none

Flavour.

1. Soak half the livers in milk for an hour and cook both.

Look for: The milk-soaked livers are milder and sweeter; the unsoaked ones taste stronger and a little bitter.

EXPERIMENT

Schmaltz or oil for roasting

Richness.

1. Roast two trays of potatoes, one in schmaltz and one in rapeseed oil.

Look for: Schmaltz gives a golden crust and savoury flavour; oil is lighter and cleaner.

EXPERIMENT

Gravy from giblets or stock

Depth.

1. Make gravy with giblet stock in one pan and a stock cube in another.

Look for: The giblet gravy tastes deeper and more like chicken; the cube version is saltier and flatter.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Chicken livers on toast				
Chicken liver pâté				
Crackling and schmaltz				
Roast with giblet gravy				
Livers cooked 2 or 4 minutes				
Milk soak or none				
Schmaltz or oil for roasting				
Gravy from giblets or stock				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Bitter liver	Green bile left on or overcooked	Trim carefully and cook for under 5 minutes
Grey, grainy pâté	Overcooked or not blended while warm	Cook just through and blend warm
Chewy crackling	Pan too hot or skin wet	Dry the skin and render slowly
Cloudy gravy	Boiled hard	Simmer gently and strain
Livers spit	Wet livers	Pat dry and use a lid or splash guard
Schmaltz tastes burnt	Heat too high	Render over a low heat

LIVER, PÂTÉ AND HOT FAT

Chicken liver: cook it through, and who should avoid it: chicken liver must be cooked until there is no pink inside, because raw or pink liver can carry campylobacter and salmonella. It is very high in vitamin A, so it is not recommended for pregnant women, and pâté carries a listeria risk. Buy it fresh, keep it cold, and use it within a day.

Pâté, listeria and keeping: pâté is a chilled, moist food that can grow listeria, which is a particular risk in pregnancy and for older or unwell people. Chill it quickly, keep it below 5°C, eat it within 2 days, and don't serve it to anyone in those groups.

Straining and keeping fat: strain hot fat through a sieve into a heatproof jar only once it has cooled a little, and never pour it into a plastic container while hot. Keep schmaltz chilled for up to a week or freeze it, and use a clean spoon each time.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can trim and cook livers through.
- ☐ I know who should avoid liver and pâté.
- ☐ I can render fat and crisp skin.
- ☐ I can make a stock from giblets.
- ☐ I store fat and pâté safely.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 8 is A Chicken Feast: planning a multi-dish meal for six.

Cooking Skills: Chicken 2

Chapter 8 · A Chicken Feast

SKILL GOAL

Plan, time and serve a multi-dish chicken meal for six, and write your own signature menu.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A feast is a **planning exercise** more than a cooking one. Choose dishes that use different equipment (oven, hob, fridge), so nothing competes, and make as much as possible the day before. Work backwards from the moment people sit down, give each task a start time, and write it on a sheet by the cooker. Cooking Skills: Chicken 1, chapter 8 did this for a simple dinner; this one has four dishes.

The menu here combines the course: a **mezze-style starter** (using the hummus method in Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 4), a **spatchcocked main** (Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 1), a **tagine** (Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 5) and a **sweet finish.** At the end you write a signature menu of your own. Serve with rice or couscous (see Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 3).

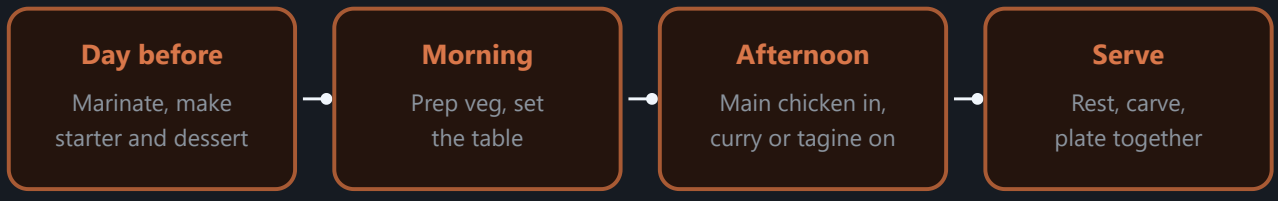


Figure 8. A feast is planned backwards, with as much done the day before as possible.

The method

- **Choose dishes that use different equipment** so nothing clashes.

- **Write the timeline backwards** from the serving time, with a start time for each task.
- **Prepare the day before:** marinade the chicken, make the starter and the dessert.
- **Put the longest-cooking dish in first,** and keep a thermometer handy for each chicken.
- **Rest, carve and serve** everything within 2 hours of cooking, and chill leftovers.

COURSE	DISH	BASED ON	WHEN
Starter	Mezze plate	Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 4	The day before
Main	Spatchcocked roast chicken	Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 1	1 hour before serving
Side main	Chicken and apricot tagine	Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 5	Started 2 hours before
Sweet	Honey and orange pudding	This chapter	The day before

RAW CHICKEN, HOT FOOD FOR A CROWD AND TIMING

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Feasts and food safety: a feast puts several dishes on the table at once, so keep hot food above 63°C or serve it within 2 hours, and chill cold dishes below 5°C. Use separate boards and tongs for raw and cooked food, and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Hot food for a crowd: cooking for more people means bigger pans, heavier trays and more people in a small kitchen. Clear the floor, use oven gloves, take only one hot dish out at a time, and keep children and guests out of the cooking area.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear (general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A mezze-style starter

35 minutes | 6 portions | assembling several simple dishes that need no cooking on the day

Smooth hummus, a chopped cucumber and tomato salad with mint and yogurt, and warm flatbread with olive oil and paprika. Everything can be made the day before and chilled. Cooking Skills: Pulses and Beans 1, chapter 4 gives the hummus method in detail.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

400 g	tin of chickpeas, drained
3 tbsp	tahini
1	lemon, juice
1	garlic clove
4 tbsp	olive oil
1	cucumber, diced
3	tomatoes, diced
150 g	plain yogurt
1 tbsp	chopped mint
6	flatbreads

1. Blend the chickpeas, tahini, lemon, garlic and 3 tablespoons of oil with a splash of cold water for **3 to 4 minutes** until smooth. Season and chill.
2. Mix the cucumber and tomato with the yogurt, mint and salt, and chill.
3. Warm the flatbreads under the grill for 1 minute a side, brush with oil and serve with the dips.

> **RAW GARLIC AND COLD DISHES**
>
> **Blenders and food processors:** the blade of a food processor is extremely sharp. Unplug it before you take the bowl apart, never put your fingers near the blade, and use a spatula to scrape, not a spoon while it runs.
>
> **Raw onion and fresh herbs:** raw onion and herbs go into salads that sit, so wash herbs well,

use clean boards, and keep dressed salads covered and cold. Eat bean salads within about 2 days, and don't leave them out for more than 2 hours.

Allergens in pulses: soya, peanuts and lupin are legumes and major allergens, and sesame (in tahini) is one too. Check labels on tinned pulses, flours and sauces, tell guests what is in a dish, and use separate pans and spoons if someone is allergic. Celery is in many stock cubes.

Feasts and food safety: a feast puts several dishes on the table at once, so keep hot food above 63°C or serve it within 2 hours, and chill cold dishes below 5°C. Use separate boards and tongs for raw and cooked food, and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

LEVEL 2 · MAIN

A spatchcocked roast chicken for six

1 hour 15 minutes | 6 portions | roasting a flat bird to a deadline

Spatchcock a large chicken (Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 1), rub with olive oil, lemon, garlic and smoked paprika, and roast on a tray. Flat birds cook evenly in about 45 minutes, so it is the quickest main. Rest for 15 minutes while the tagine finishes.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

1.8 kg	whole chicken, spatchcocked
3 tbsp	olive oil
1	lemon, juice and zest
3	garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsp	smoked paprika
1 tsp	flaked sea salt

1. Rub the chicken all over with the oil, lemon, garlic, paprika and salt. Chill it for up to a day.
2. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Roast flat for **40 to 50 minutes** until the thigh reads 75°C or more and the skin is golden.
3. Rest under foil for **15 minutes,** then carve and serve.

RAW CHICKEN AND A HOT OVEN

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away.

Is it cooked? Use a thermometer: chicken is safe when the thickest part reaches 75°C (or 70°C held for 2 minutes), the meat is white all the way through with no pink, and the juices run clear

(general guidance, in line with current FSA advice). Push a probe thermometer into the thickest part without touching bone, and for a whole bird check the thickest part of the thigh. If in doubt, cook it longer.

Resting: resting lets the juices settle, but it is not a safety step: the chicken must already have reached its safe temperature. Rest it on a warm plate, loosely covered with foil, and keep it out of the 'danger zone' for no more than about 30 minutes before carving and serving.

LEVEL 2 · SECOND MAIN

A chicken and apricot tagine

1 hour 25 minutes | 6 portions | holding a slow dish while the main finishes

The tagine from Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 5, scaled up for six. It cooks gently on the hob, can be made ahead and reheated, and improves if left to stand. Serve with couscous.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

3 tbsp	olive oil
12	bone-in chicken thighs
3	onions, sliced
4	garlic cloves
1 tsp	ground cumin
1 tsp	ground ginger
1 tsp	ground cinnamon
600 ml	chicken stock, unsalted
150 g	dried apricots
50 g	green olives
40 g	flaked almonds
250 g	couscous

1. Brown the chicken in batches, soften the onions for 12 minutes, add the garlic and spices, then the stock. Return the chicken.
2. Cook gently, covered, for **45 minutes.** Add the apricots and olives and cook for 15 minutes more, until the chicken is past 75°C.
3. Pour boiling water over the couscous, cover for 5 minutes, fluff, and serve with the tagine and almonds.

> **RAW CHICKEN, A BIG HOT POT AND NUTS**

Raw chicken: the safety rules: raw chicken often carries campylobacter and salmonella. Never wash it (the splashes spread bacteria around the kitchen), keep it covered on the bottom shelf of the fridge, use its own board, knife and tongs, wash your hands, boards and tools in hot soapy water afterwards, and never put cooked food back on a plate or board that held raw chicken. Use it by the use-by date, or freeze it on the day you buy it.

Hot casserole: a covered dish or pot of casserole is heavy, with scalding steam under the lid. Use dry oven gloves, lift the lid away from you, rest the dish on a heatproof surface, and use a ladle to serve.

Peanuts, cashews and nut allergies: peanuts and cashews are major allergens and can cause severe reactions. Keep them off the table for anyone who is allergic, check sauce labels (oyster sauce, hoisin, chilli oil), and use separate pans and spoons. Whole nuts are a choking risk for small children.

Hot food for a crowd: cooking for more people means bigger pans, heavier trays and more people in a small kitchen. Clear the floor, use oven gloves, take only one hot dish out at a time, and keep children and guests out of the cooking area.

LEVEL 3 · SWEET

A honey and orange pudding

30 minutes + chilling | 6 portions | finishing a feast with a simple make-ahead dessert

Segments of orange in a honey and cinnamon syrup, scattered with pistachios and served with yogurt. It needs no oven and is made the day before, leaving you free on the day.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

6	oranges
4 tbsp	honey
1 tsp	ground cinnamon
50 g	pistachios, chopped
300 g	thick plain yogurt

1. Peel the oranges and cut into segments over a bowl to catch the juice. Add the honey and cinnamon to the juice and stir.
2. Pour the syrup over the segments and chill for **at least 2 hours** or overnight.
3. Serve with the yogurt and a scatter of pistachios.

> **NUTS AND COLD DESSERTS**
>
> **Peanuts, cashews and nut allergies:** peanuts and cashews are major allergens and can cause severe reactions. Keep them off the table for anyone who is allergic, check sauce labels (oyster sauce, hoisin, chilli oil), and use separate pans and spoons. Whole nuts are a choking risk for small children.
>
> **Feasts and food safety:** a feast puts several dishes on the table at once, so keep hot food above 63°C or serve it within 2 hours, and chill cold dishes below 5°C. Use separate boards and tongs for raw and cooked food, and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.
>
> **Raw onion and fresh herbs:** raw onion and herbs go into salads that sit, so wash herbs well, use clean boards, and keep dressed salads covered and cold. Eat bean salads within about 2 days, and don't leave them out for more than 2 hours.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

A timed feast

Planning.

1. Cook the whole menu with a written backwards timeline and note where you ran late.

Look for: A written timeline makes the day calm; the tasks you underestimated show where to start earlier.

EXPERIMENT

Swapping one dish

Flexibility.

1. Replace the tagine with a curry from Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 3 or the jerk chicken from Cooking Skills: Chicken 2, chapter 6.

Look for: Any slow dish works; the timing shifts but the plan holds.

EXPERIMENT

Scaling to eight

Quantities.

1. Multiply the main and the side dish by one-third and note the changes.

Look for: Spices scale less than the meat, and the cooking time rises with the weight.

EXPERIMENT

Your own menu

Design.

1. Choose a starter, a main, a side and a sweet from the course and write the timeline.

Look for: A balanced menu uses different methods and is mostly prepared ahead.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Mezze-style starter				
Spatchcocked roast for six				
Chicken and apricot tagine				
Honey and orange pudding				
A timed feast				
Swapping one dish				
Scaling to eight				
Your own menu				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Everything ready at different times	No written timeline	Plan backwards and write start times
Oven too crowded	Two dishes need the oven	Put one dish on the hob or cook it ahead
Cold food at the table	Plates not warmed	Warm plates and serve quickly
Dry chicken from holding	Held too long	Rest, cover loosely and serve within 30 minutes
Too much washing up	Pans not cleaned as you go	Wash up while things simmer
Running late	Underestimated prep	Do more the day before

FEAST FOOD SAFETY AND LEFTOVERS

Feasts and food safety: a feast puts several dishes on the table at once, so keep hot food above 63°C or serve it within 2 hours, and chill cold dishes below 5°C. Use separate boards and tongs for raw and cooked food, and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Leftover chicken: cool cooked chicken quickly (within about 1 to 2 hours), cover and refrigerate, and eat within 2 days. Reheat only once, until steaming hot all the way through. Never leave chicken on the table for more than 2 hours. Cooked chicken can be frozen for up to about 3 months.

Reheat once, steaming hot: reheat cooked chicken only once, and until it is steaming hot all the way through (at least 75°C), not just warm. Don't reheat chicken that has been left out for more than 2 hours, and don't reheat rice or sauces more than once.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can plan a menu with different equipment.
- ☐ I can write a timeline backwards.
- ☐ I can prepare dishes the day before.
- ☐ I check every chicken dish to 75°C.
- ☐ I can write my own signature menu.

NEXT CHAPTER

That's the end of **Cooking Skills: Chicken 2.** Try your signature menu on friends, then look at the other Cooking Skills courses for more techniques.