

Popo's Roast Chicken

BY FRANKIE GAW | @LITTLEFATBOYFRANKIE

When I was growing up, my family never used the oven. The oven mostly served as a glorified pot holder, its real function a complete mystery to me and my grandma. It wasn't until we watched Ina Garten pull a golden-brown roast chicken out of her pot holder that we understood an oven's true purpose. Watching Ina's Food Network show Barefoot Contessa was our ritual. Her otherworldly cooking in the fairy-tale setting of the Hamptons was a fantasy my grandma and I could bond over. This recipe invokes another fantasy—a world where Ina Garten and my grandma get to cook together. A whole roasted chicken stuffed with aromatics absorbs my grandma's flavors of chili crisp, scallion, and ginger through a rich glaze poured over its crisp skin.

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INGREDIENTS

Chicken

2 tbsp kosher salt, plus more for sprinkling
1, 4-5 pound chicken
14 scallions, with ends trimmed
1 tbsp ground ginger
1 tbsp granulated sugar
4 tsp rice vinegar or lemon juice
2 cups water
1 garlic head, halved
1 thumb-sized slice ginger
2 tbsp unsalted butter

Sauce

4 tbsp unsalted butter
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon honey
3 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp chili crisp
1½ tsp chopped fresh rosemary (from 1 sprig)

Toppings

Chopped scallions
Chopped cilantro

INSTRUCTIONS

01 Brine the chicken

Very generously sprinkle kosher salt (about 1-2 teaspoons per pound) on the whole chicken from front to back and inside the cavity. Let it rest at room temperature for 30 minutes. While the chicken rests, place 10 of the scallions, 2 tablespoons salt, ground ginger, sugar, rice vinegar, and water in a blender and blend until smooth. Once the chicken is ready, place it in a gallon-size zip-top bag. Pour the blended scallion brine into the bag and seal. Refrigerate for 24 hours, flipping it around the halfway mark so the chicken brines evenly.

02 Stuff the chicken

The next day, preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Remove the chicken from the plastic bag and gently wipe off the excess brine. Tuck the garlic, fresh ginger, and remaining 4 scallions into the cavity. Place the chicken on the prepared baking sheet, breast side up. Tie the legs together with kitchen string and tuck the wing tips under the body of the chicken. Melt the 2 tablespoons butter and brush an even layer all over the chicken. Roast at 425°F for 30 minutes. Reduce the heat to 400°F and roast for another 35 to 40 minutes, until the internal temperature reaches 165°F or the juices run clear.

03 Make the sauce

While the chicken roasts, in a small pot over medium heat, melt the 4 tablespoons butter. Add the vinegar, honey, soy sauce, chili crisp, and rosemary, and stir until incorporated and smooth. Bring to a simmer, then pour into a container and set aside.

04 Carve & serve the chicken

When the chicken is done, remove it from the oven, cover it with foil, and let rest for 15 to 20 minutes. Uncover and carve into breasts (slice breasts into 4 or 5 pieces for easier sharing), thighs, drumsticks, and wings, and place onto a platter. Pour the sauce over the chicken and top with scallions and cilantro to serve.