

Classic Braised Chicken Drumsticks with Pan Sauce

Ingredients

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| Chicken drumsticks | 12 (3-4 lbs.) | Canned mushroom slices | 12 oz. |
| Vegetable oil | 2 Tbsp. | Dried thyme | 2 tsp. |
| Butter | 6 Tbsp. | Dried rosemary | 1½ tsp. |
| Onions, large | 2 | Dried sage | 1 tsp. |
| Carrots, large | 3-4 | Bay leaves | 3 |
| Celery stalks | 3-4 | Dijon mustard | 2 Tbsp. |
| Garlic cloves | 10-12 (1 head) | MSG | ½ tsp. |
| Tomato paste | 2 Tbsp. | Lemon, zested | 1 |
| White wine (optional) | ½ cup | All-purpose flour | 3 Tbsp. |
| Chicken stock | 5-6 cups | Kosher salt | 2 tsp. |
| | | Black pepper | 1 tsp. |

Directions

Preheat oven to 275°F — Peel **garlic cloves**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Cut **onions** into 8 wedges each; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Cut **carrots** into 2 inch pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Cut **celery** into 2 inch pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #3* — Drain **mushrooms**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #4* — Zest **lemon**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Pat dry **drumsticks** — Season **drumsticks** generously with 2 tsp. **salt** and 1 tsp. **pepper**

1. Heat **vegetable oil** in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Working in batches, sear **drumsticks** until golden brown on all sides, about 3-4 *minutes* per side. Transfer to a plate and set aside.
2. Reduce heat to medium. Add 4 Tbsp. **butter** to the Dutch oven. Once melted, add **onion** wedges (*Medium Bowl #1*), **carrot** pieces (*Medium Bowl #2*), and **celery** pieces (*Medium Bowl #3*). Sauté until vegetables begin to soften and develop color, about 8-10 *minutes*. Add **garlic cloves** (*Small Bowl #1*) and cook for 2 *minutes* more.
3. Add 2 Tbsp. **tomato paste** and cook, stirring constantly, until it darkens and becomes fragrant, about 2-3 *minutes*.
4. If using **white wine**, add ½ cup now and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Cook until wine is nearly evaporated, about 3-4 *minutes*. If not using wine, proceed to next step.

5. Add **chicken stock**, **drained mushrooms** (*Medium Bowl #4*), 2 tsp. **dried thyme**, 1½ tsp. **dried rosemary**, 1 tsp. **dried sage**, **bay leaves**, 2 Tbsp. **Dijon mustard**, and ½ tsp. **MSG**. Stir to combine and bring to a simmer.
6. Return **drumsticks** to the pot, nestling them into the liquid (liquid should come halfway up the drumsticks). Cover with lid and transfer to oven. Braise for 1½-2 *hours*, until **chicken** is very tender and nearly falling off the bone.
7. Remove pot from oven. Using tongs, carefully transfer **drumsticks** to a plate. Stir **lemon zest** (*Small Bowl #2*) into the braising liquid and taste for seasoning, adjusting **salt** and **pepper** as needed.
8. To thicken sauce, knead together remaining 2 Tbsp. **butter** and 3 Tbsp. **flour** to form a smooth paste (*beurre manié*). Return pot to stovetop over medium heat. Whisk in *beurre manié*, a little at a time, until sauce reaches desired consistency. Simmer for 3-5 *minutes* to cook out flour taste.
9. For crispy skin: Pat **drumsticks** dry and air fry at 400°F for 5-7 *minutes* until skin is crispy and caramelized. For freezing: skip this step and proceed directly to storage.
10. Return **drumsticks** to sauce, or transfer to containers for freezing. Serve hot over rice or with crusty bread.

Equipment Required

- Large Dutch oven (6-7 quart capacity)
- Large plate or rimmed baking sheet
- Tongs
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Whisk
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Microplane or zester
- Small bowl (for beurre manié)
- Ladle
- Air fryer (optional, for finishing)
- Freezer-safe containers (if freezing)

Mise en Place

- Remove **drumsticks** from refrigerator *30 minutes* before cooking for even searing
- Prep all vegetables before starting - large uniform pieces ensure even cooking
- Have **stock** measured and nearby for quick addition
- Separate 2 Tbsp. **butter** for beurre manié from the 4 Tbsp. used for sautéing
- Zest **lemon** before cooking; reserve zest in small bowl

Ingredient Tips

- Choose **drumsticks** of similar size for even cooking
- Whole **garlic cloves** become sweet and tender when braised - they're delicious eaten whole
- Quality **chicken stock** makes a significant difference; low-sodium preferred for seasoning control
- If omitting **wine**, add 1-2 Tbsp. additional **lemon juice** at the end for brightness

- Canned **mushrooms** work well here; if using fresh, add them later to prevent overcooking
- **MSG** amplifies savory notes; omit if preferred without other adjustments

Preparation Tips

- Don't crowd **drumsticks** when searing - work in batches for proper browning
- Fond development is crucial - those browned bits add deep flavor
- Blooming **tomato paste** until it darkens intensifies umami
- Large vegetable pieces stay intact during long braise and provide textural contrast
- Check liquid level during braising - add more **stock** if needed
- Beurre manié should be added gradually while whisking to prevent lumps
- For stovetop braising: use lowest heat setting, check frequently to maintain bare simmer
- Pat **drumsticks** very dry before air frying for maximum crispness

Make Ahead & Storage

- Can be made up to *2 days* ahead and refrigerated
- Flavors improve overnight as they meld
- To freeze: cool completely, portion into freezer-safe containers with sauce, freeze up to *3 months*
- Freeze flat in zip-top bags for space efficiency
- Thaw overnight in refrigerator before reheating
- Reheat gently on stovetop or in *325°F* oven until warmed through, about *25-30 minutes*
- If reheating from frozen, add *15-20 minutes* to heating time
- Air fry for crispy skin after reheating if desired
- Sauce may separate when frozen; whisk while reheating to re-emulsify

Serving Suggestions

- Serve over jasmine rice cooked in **chicken stock** with dried soup vegetables and **bay leaf**
- Excellent with mashed potatoes, egg noodles, or crusty bread for sopping up sauce
- Garnish with fresh parsley, thyme, or chives if available
- Vegetables from the braise are delicious served alongside
- Pairs well with simple green salad or roasted green beans
- For a complete meal: add roasted root vegetables or sautéed greens
- Leftovers make excellent chicken and rice soup - add extra **stock** and shred **chicken**