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## Weeknight Roast Chicken

From *America's Test Kitchen* Season 12: Simply Chicken

### WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

Roast chicken is often described as a simple dish, and it is, at least in terms of flavor—when the dish is made properly, the rich flavor and juicy meat of the chicken need little adornment. But the actual process of preparing and roasting chicken is anything but simple; recipes often call for complicated trussing techniques and for rotating the bird multiple times during cooking. And the most time-consuming part is salting or brining the bird, a step that ensures juiciness and well-seasoned meat. After systematically testing the various components and steps of a typical recipe, we found we could just tie the legs together and tuck the wings underneath. We also discovered we could skip both the V-rack and flipping the chicken by using a preheated skillet and placing the chicken breast side up; this method gave the thighs a jump-start on cooking. Starting the chicken in a 450-degree oven and then turning the oven off while the chicken finished cooking slowed the evaporation of juices, ensuring moist, tender meat.

### Serves 4

We prefer to use a 3 1/2- to 4-pound chicken for this recipe. If roasting a larger bird, increase the time when the oven is on in step 2 to 35 to 40 minutes. Cooking the chicken in a preheated skillet will ensure that the breast and thigh meat finish cooking at the same time.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1    tablespoon kosher salt
- 1/2    teaspoon pepper
- 1    (3 1/2- to 4-pound) whole chicken, giblets discarded
- 1    tablespoon olive oil
- 1    recipe pan sauce (optional) (see related recipes)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position, place 12-inch ovensafe skillet on rack, and heat oven to 450 degrees. Combine salt and pepper in bowl. Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Rub entire surface with oil. Sprinkle evenly all over with salt mixture and rub in mixture with hands to coat evenly. Tie legs together with twine and tuck wing tips behind back.
2. Transfer chicken, breast side up, to preheated skillet in oven. Roast chicken until breasts register 120 degrees and thighs register 135 degrees, 25 to 35 minutes. Turn off oven and leave chicken in oven until breasts register 160 degrees and thighs register 175 degrees, 25 to 35 minutes.
3. Transfer chicken to carving board and let rest, uncovered, for 20 minutes. While chicken rests, prepare pan sauce, if using. Carve chicken and serve.

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### TECHNIQUE

HOW TO GET GREAT ROAST CHICKEN IN ONE HOUR. TRULY.

**CRANK THE HEAT** Turning the oven up to 450 degrees, instead of roasting at a more typical 350 to 375 degrees, ensures nicely browned, well-rendered skin.



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**USE A SKILLET** Swapping a roasting pan for a skillet

allows the juices to pool deeper in its smaller surface area, so less evaporates and more is left over for pan sauce.



**"SEAR" the THIGHS** Placing the bird breast side up onto the preheated skillet sears the thighs, giving them a head start so that they cook in sync with the delicate breast meat.



**TURN OFF THE HEAT** Turning off the oven when the meat is halfway done allows the chicken to finish cooking very gently (it will rise 40 degrees) and not dry out.



## TECHNIQUE

### PROPER TEMPING

#### WHITE MEAT

Insert probe low into thickest part of breast, just above bone (typically the coolest spot, as the bone conducts heat poorly). Withdraw probe slowly, checking for lowest registered temperature.



#### DARK MEAT

Insert probe down into space between tip of breast and thigh. Angle probe outward ever so slightly so it pierces meat in lower part of thigh.



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