

Chicken Rao

From Nelson's Kitchen
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Signature dish from New York's Rao restaurant. Adapted from *America's Test Kitchen*.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup salt
- 3 pounds bone-in chicken pieces (2 split breasts cut in half crosswise, 2 drumsticks, and 2 thighs), trimmed, or 3 pounds of chicken thighs.
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large shallot, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 4 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 4 teaspoons grated lemon zest plus 1/4 cup juice (2 lemons)
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley leaves
- 1 teaspoon fresh oregano leaves

Procedure:

Brine the Chicken

- Dissolve salt in 2 quarts cold water in large container.
- Submerge chicken in brine, cover, and refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour. You can brine for longer, if doing so, do the next step only in the last hour of brining.
- Mix the zest of one lemon into the brining liquid.
- Remove chicken from brine and pat dry with paper towels — alternatively, put chicken pieces over a rimmed baking sheet fitted with a rack and put in the refrigerator, uncovered, for several hours. Make sure to stretch the skin over the pieces of chicken so that skin covers each piece.

Brown Chicken on top of stove

- Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 475 degrees.
- Heat oil in oven-safe 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking.
- Place chicken skin side down in skillet and cook until skin is well browned and crisp, 8 to 10 minutes.
- Transfer breasts to large plate.
- Flip thighs and legs and continue to cook until browned on second side, 3 to 5 minutes longer.
- Transfer thighs and legs to plate with breasts.

Preparing the base and Oven-cooking chicken

- Pour off and discard fat in skillet.
- Return skillet to medium heat; add butter, shallot, and garlic and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds.
- Sprinkle flour evenly over shallot-garlic mixture and cook, stirring constantly, until flour is lightly browned, about 1 minute.
- Slowly stir in broth, scraping up any browned bits, and bring to simmer.
- Cook until sauce is slightly reduced and thickened, 2 to 3 minutes.
- Return chicken, skin side up (skin should be above surface of liquid), and any accumulated juices to skillet and transfer to oven.
- Cook, uncovered, until breasts register 160 degrees and thighs and legs register 175 degrees, 10 to 12 minutes.

Prepping finishing flavours

- While chicken cooks, chop parsley, oregano, and remaining 2 teaspoon zest together until finely minced and well combined. Squeeze one tablespoon of lemon into a small bowl.
- Remove skillet from oven and let chicken stand for 5 minutes.

Finishing Base and Serving

Transfer chicken to serving platter.

Whisk sauce, incorporating any browned bits from sides of pan, until smooth and homogeneous, about 30 seconds.

Whisk half of herb-zest mixture and the lemon juice into sauce.

Sprinkle remaining half of herb-zest mixture over chicken.

Pour some sauce around chicken. Serve, passing remaining sauce separately.