

Chicken Filling

From Nelson's Kitchen
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This is a general-purpose chicken filling that can be used for many recipes including Pastelão, risolis, pastéis. It is also delicious in a simple pressed sandwich or as a topping for pizza. I got this recipe from my mother and I know that she uses it frequently.

Ingredients:

- 1 chicken
- 2 clove of garlic
- 1/2 Tablespoon of salt
- 1/4 tablespoon of freshly grounded black pepper
- 2 Tablespoon of flavourless cooking oil (such as canola or sunflower)
- 2 cup of water
- 1 medium onion
- 1 teaspoon of honey
- 1 16 oz can of Italian tomatoes
- 1 Tablespoon of corn starch
- 3 perfect hard-boiled eggs (see Julia Child's Master Recipe)
- Italian parsley

Procedure:

1. Season the Chicken

- Cut up the chicken (alternatively use chicken breasts only).
- Sprinkle chicken with salt.
- Place the chicken in a closed container and put it in the refrigerator for at least to 1 hour (up to 12 hours).

2. Brown the Chicken

- Heat up the cooking oil on a heavy-bottom sautee pan in moderately high heat.
- Lightly brown the chicken on all sides.
- Peel and split garlic cloves in half and add to the pot.
- Add 1 cup of water, bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer until the chicken is tender (remove the breast earlier so that they don't dry).
- After removing the breasts, keep cooking until all the water have evaporated. Only the fat and brown bits should be in the pan.
- Remove the remainder pieces of chicken to a platter to cool off.

3. Make the Tomato Sauce

- Drain all the fat to a small container and reserve.

- Add 1 cup of water to the solids in the pan, scrape and let it simmer until you have a rich broth in the pan scraping all the broth from the pan with a rubber spatula.
- Pour broth into a small container and reserve.
- Dice the onion in very small dice.
- Add 2 Tablespoon of the reserved fat to the pan and heat up in moderately high heat.
- Add the diced onion and sautee for 5 minutes until the onion start wilting.
- Add 1 teaspoon of honey to the onion and continue salteeing until golden brown.
- Add the can of tomatoes and the reserved chicken broth.
- Let simmer until most of the water has evaporated and the fat is separating from the tomato sauce.

4. Debone and dice the chicken

- In the meantime, remove the meat from the cooled chicken. Discard bones, skin, and veins.
- Dice the chicken meat in very small dice.

5. Finish the filling

- When the tomato sauce has reduced, add the diced chicken and cook for a few more minutes stirring.
- If the filling will be used inside a pastry, such as in pastelão, mix the one tablespoon of cornstarch in 1/4 cup of cold water and stir until dissolved. Add the cornstarch slurry to the hot filling and stir until it is thickened.
- Pour into a glass or metal bowl, let it cool completely (can be refrigerated for up to three days before use, it can also be frozen and thawed before using).
- The filling can be used as is for many applications. It may be also be flavoured with different fresh herbs for several variations. Suggestions include basil, sage, rosemary, oregano, chives. I suggest using only one herb each time and only in a moderate amount.

6. Add the eggs (right before assembly)

- Boil 3 eggs using Julia Child's Master Recipe for Perfect Hard-Boiled Eggs from "The Way to Cook".
- Dice the cooled boiled eggs into very small dice and add to the cooled filling (it is easier to dice if you separate the whites from the yolks first).
- Chop up some Italian parsley very finely and add to the filling.
- Freshly grind the black pepper into the filling. Stir well