

— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

Roast Chicken with Warm Bread Salad

SERVES Serves 4 to 6

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For our own take on Zuni Café's roast chicken with bread salad, we started by butterflying a whole chicken and salting it overnight so it would cook quickly and evenly and be juicy and well seasoned. Before roasting the chicken in a 475-degree oven, we covered the bottom of a skillet with bread cubes that we had moistened with oil and broth and then draped the chicken on top. The bread cubes toasted and browned beneath the bird while absorbing its juices to create a mix of moistened, crispy-fried, and chewy pieces all packed with savory flavor. To finish the dish, we built a vinaigrette of champagne vinegar, oil, currants, thinly sliced scallions, Dijon mustard, and chicken drippings that we tossed with peppery arugula, and the toasted bread. We served the salad alongside the carved chicken so the greens didn't wilt.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 (4-pound) whole chickens, giblets discarded
- Kosher salt and pepper
- 4 (1-inch-thick) slices country-style bread (8 ounces), bottom crust removed, cut into 3/4- to 1-inch pieces (5 cups)
- 1/4 cup chicken broth
- 6 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons champagne vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 3 scallions, sliced thin
- 2 tablespoons dried currants
- 5 ounces (5 cups) baby arugula

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

✳ Note that this recipe requires refrigerating the seasoned chicken for 24 hours. This recipe was developed and tested using Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt. If you have Morton Kosher Salt, which is denser than Diamond Crystal, put only 1/2 teaspoon of salt onto the cavity. Red wine or white wine vinegar may be substituted for champagne vinegar, if desired. For the bread, we prefer a round rustic loaf with a chewy, open crumb and a sturdy outer crust.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** Place chicken, breast side down, on cutting board. Using kitchen shears, cut through bones on either side of backbone; discard backbone. Do not trim off any excess fat or skin. Flip chicken over and press on breastbone to flatten.
- 2** Using your fingers, carefully loosen skin covering breast and legs. Rub 1/2 teaspoon salt under skin of each breast, 1/2 teaspoon under skin of each leg, and 1 teaspoon salt onto bird's cavity. Tuck wings behind back and turn legs so drumsticks face inward toward breasts. Place chicken on wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet or on large plate and refrigerate, uncovered, for 24 hours.
- 3** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 475 degrees. Spray 12-inch skillet with vegetable oil spray. Toss bread with broth and 2 tablespoons oil until pieces are evenly moistened. Arrange bread in skillet in single layer, with majority of crusted pieces near center, crust side up.

④ Pat chicken dry with paper towels and place, skin side up, on top of bread. Brush 2 teaspoons oil over chicken skin and sprinkle with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper. Roast chicken until skin is deep golden brown and thickest part of breast registers 160 degrees and thighs register 175 degrees, 45 to 50 minutes, rotating skillet halfway through roasting.

⑤ While chicken roasts, whisk vinegar, mustard, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper together in small bowl. Slowly whisk in remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil. Stir in scallions and currants and set aside. Place arugula in large bowl.

⑥ Transfer chicken to carving board and let rest, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Run thin metal spatula under bread to loosen from bottom of skillet. (Bread should be mix of softened, golden-brown, and crunchy pieces.) Carve chicken and whisk any accumulated juices into vinaigrette. Add bread and vinaigrette to arugula and toss to evenly coat. Transfer salad to serving platter and serve with chicken.