



CARVING / JOINTING POULTRY / BONING POULTRY



CARVING AND BONING

So, you've cooked the bird, now you have to carve it... read below to learn how.

You should never carve the meat as soon as it comes out of the oven, but let the bird stand and rest for at least 15 minutes on a carving board, so that the juices are reabsorbed into the meat and distributed evenly. Covering the bird with a tent of aluminum foil whilst it is resting will help keep the heat in at the same time.

Allowing the meat to stand will also make carving easier.

In order to carve the bird easily you will need a very sharp knife, preferably with a thin blade and a fork to hold the bird in place.

The first step is to remove any trussing skewers or string if you trussed the bird before roasting.

Now for the carving. The simplest way is to first remove the legs, thighs and wings from the main part of the body. This can easily be done by separating the leg pieces at the joints, which connect the various pieces together. You can do this by gently pulling away and twisting the leg portions so that the joints snap free, or you may have to use your knife to sever the connecting joint to separate the pieces.

Not only is it less complicated to start with the leg portions, but the darker meat areas of the bird should be cut first as they will stay moister for slightly longer than the white drier meat.

So, with one hand, take hold of the end of the drumstick and gently pull the drumstick away from the body. At the same time, cut downwards between the leg and the body of the bird until you come to the joint that connects the leg to the body. By wiggling the leg, it may separate from the body without having to cut through the joint. Otherwise, just cut through the joint to separate the two pieces. Do not cut through the bone, as it is not necessary. It will only make things more difficult and time consuming and will possibly ruin your knife.

Do the same on the other side of the body.

With the leg piece in your hand, the next step is to separate the upper part of the leg, the thigh from the lower part of the leg, the drumstick.

This is simply done by cutting through the joint that connects the two pieces.

Many people like to eat the drumsticks whole and so there is no need to slice this part of the poultry meat. The same can be said for the thigh meat.

Even so, if you do wish to carve the meat from the drumstick and thigh, it can also be carried out very easily.

To carve the drumstick, hold the drumstick vertically, grasping the top end with your hand and the fleshy part resting on the carving board. Carve small and thin slices of meat until you reach the bone.

Likewise, to carve the thigh meat, rest the thigh piece on the carving board and hold in place with a fork, whilst you carve thin slices of meat parallel to the bone.

The final stage before reaching the breast meat is to remove the wing. Hold the free part of the wing with one hand, gently pulling it away from the body of the bird. As you do so, cut down into the area that lies between the wing and the breast until you reach the shoulder joint. Then, simply cut through the joint, not the bone, and pull the wing away from the bird. Do the same on the other side of the bird.

The wing piece may be further cut into two pieces at the elbow joint in the middle.

Now that the bottom leg pieces and wings have been removed from the bird, you will be able to reach the breast meat and carve it away easily.

Make a big cut horizontally, as far as you can, in the area underneath the breast meat, from the wing area inside towards the ribs.

Then, whilst steadying the bird, and holding it in place with the fork, slice downwards with the knife, through the breast meat, cutting thin slices until you come to the horizontal cut made previously. The breast meat should simply fall away in nice, even, similarly cut slices.

If you stuffed the bird before cooking, make sure you remove portions of stuffing to accompany the meat, by cutting into the side of the bird, where the leg portion used to be and making an opening from which the stuffing can be removed.

The meat should then be ready to serve and each guest will be able to enjoy pieces of meat from their favorite part of the bird.

Don't forget that a delicious stock or soup can be made from the carcass and unwanted meat pieces, so not one part of the bird need go to waste.

JOINTING POULTRY

At least if you joint the bird yourself, you will know exactly how much you are getting and that due care has been taken in ensuring that all surfaces and utensils are clean, which is also extremely important. Don't forget either that you will be saving yourself some money.

It is not difficult to joint a bird yourself, as the bones will all separate easily once the tendons and gristly parts that connect them have been cut at the joint. There is nothing worse than a piece of chicken or turkey that contains splinters of bones in the meat or bones that have been cut at different angles.

All you will need to joint the poultry is a strong sharp knife, sturdy kitchen scissors or poultry shears and a chopping board that can be washed at a high temperature if possible, in order to kill the bacteria that may be harbouring in the raw meat. It is also a good idea to reserve one chopping board purely for preparing raw meat so that germs and bacteria do not spread to other foods.

Due to the way that poultry is reared and slaughtered for commercial consumption, the meat readily becomes contaminated by bacteria, in particular salmonella.

Instructions

The following instructions will guide you through how to joint poultry into 8 portions: 2 breast, 2 wings, 2 thighs and 2 drumsticks. Wash your hands, all utensils and surfaces. Remove the bird from its packaging. Take out the giblets and clean the bird thoroughly with water from a running tap. Pat dry with paper towels. Place the bird on a clean surface breast side up. To remove the leg portion away from the breast, cut through the skin only, on one side of the body of the bird, between the breast and the leg to where the thigh joins the body. Bend the leg back until the ball and socket joint cracks and pops out. Cut through the joint in order to detach the leg portion from the breast, whilst holding the leg out at an angle away from the body. Some of the meat from the back will also be removed with the leg. Repeat on the other side. The following step is to remove the breast from the back. Cut along the rib cage, through the flap of skin found there, cutting towards the neck and starting from the tail end. Turn the bird over and cut in the same way on the other side, cutting through any connecting joints on both sides. Pull the breast meat away and separate it from the back. The back can be reserved to make a stock later on. Turn the breast over so that the skin is face down on the surface and bend each side back firmly to crack the breastbone. It should detach itself and easily pop out. Carefully remove the bone with scissors or a sharp knife. At this stage you should end up with two leg portions and two breasts with wings. If you wish to divide the meat into 8 pieces, separate the wings from the breast piece. Hold one wing out away from the body and bend it back. Cut between the joint of the wing and the breast, trying to include some of the breast meat with the wing, to make a meatier portion. Repeat with the other wing. To separate the thigh from the drumstick, bend each leg to crack the ball and socket joint and then cut through the joint with a knife.

BONING POULTRY

The following steps will guide you through how to bone a whole bird.

Some techniques ask you to make a cut along the back of the bird, however, the following technique shows you how to bone a bird without breaking the skin, therefore making it easier to stuff and roast.

By boning the bird, carving is also made simpler once the bird has been cooked, as you won't have any bones to contend with.

To de-bone a bird all you will need is a sharp knife, one sharp enough to cut through joints, and a cutting board.

- To start, clean and wash the bird. If you are boning a whole turkey, remove the neck and giblets.
- Next, remove the wingtips and set them aside to make a stock later on.
- Set the bird down on the cutting board and begin by pulling back the skin from the neck and the breast, so that you are turning the bird inside out, until you find the wishbone. The wishbone is the first bone that you will come across.
- Pull the skin back fully over the breast in order to fully expose the wishbone. You may need a knife to cut into the surrounding flesh in order to do this.
- Cut the wishbone free and remove it, scraping off any breast meat as you do so. Add the bone to the stock pile.
- The next step is to free the wings from the body. The main bones in the wings and the legs are not removed (although you can if you wish). This way the bird will keep a natural appearance once it has been stuffed, trussed and cooked.
- Hold up one wing and gently pull the flesh away from the shoulder. Cut through the joint, thus freeing the wing from the carcass. Keep the bone in place. Repeat this procedure in order to free the other wing.
- To remove the shoulder blades, snap the end of the collarbone that is attached to each shoulder blade and snap it at the other end where it is attached to the breastbone.
- Pull away any meat from the bones with your fingers and cut the bones at the joints.
- Remove the shoulder blades by carefully pulling the bones out of the bird.
- Pull the skin further back around the shoulders and you will come to the structure of the rib cage, back and breastbone, which is the main bulk of the body.
- Scrape the meat away from the carcass with a sharp knife, working your way towards the legs of the bird. Slice through any cartilage and continue to separate the meat from the skeleton.
- Once you reach the legs, free the thighbone from the carcass by popping the ball

- and socket hip joints that join the back and cut through the cartilage and hip joints, leaving the leg bones in place if you so wish.
- Peel back more skin until you arrive at the tail end and bone. The final stage is to cut the tailbone.
- The bird will now be almost turned completely inside out. Remove any bones that may still be lodged in the flesh and then turn the bird back the right way out, so that the skin is on the outside again.
- You should then end up with a flat boneless bird, with the skin still intact, that is ready to stuff and cook. With the bones and the carcass a tasty stock can be made.

When stuffing the hollow boned bird, fill the cavity with your chosen flavor of stuffing until

its normal shape is regained. Do not over stuff the bird, as during cooking the stuffing will swell and the bird will shrink slightly.

The following steps will show you how to obtain two boned poultry breasts from a whole bone-in breast.

- Peel the skin from the breast away if you so wish, although this is optional.
- Take the breast halves and bend them forwards and backwards until the kneel bone that separates the two halves, pops out.
- Hold the bone and try to loosen it gently.
- Remove the kneel bone with the breastbone and cartilage. It should come out in one or two pieces.
- Take hold of one side of the breast and with a sharp knife cut and scrape the meat away from the rib cage, keeping the knife close to the bones, pulling the bones away from the meat as you go.
- To entirely free the breast from the rib cage you must cut through the shoulder joint. Repeat on the other side.
- Turn the breast over and cut the wishbone away from the breast.
- You will be able to see two white tendons on the underside of the breast, which can be removed by pulling them out.
- The whole boned breast can now either be cut into two halves or kept whole.