Happy Little Roasted Chicken

There’s nothing as satisfying as a simple happy little roast chicken dinner. And the best part of this recipe is that by cooking the chicken and vegetables together, their flavors, like all good friends, blend together to make something even more delicious! This is one of those dishes for which all the ingredients could be found at your favorite local farmers’ market. It’s a meal that supports local farmers and, if bought the same day as you’re cooking it, will taste as fresh as possible.

SERVES 4

1 (4- to 5-pound/1.8 to 2.3 kg) chicken
1 pound/460 g of your favorite root vegetables (I like carrots or sweet potatoes, but this is your dinner—you can use whatever you like!)
1 large onion, cubed
Drizzle of olive oil
4 tablespoons/60 g unsalted butter, at room temperature

Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons/5 g fresh thyme, finely chopped
2 tablespoons/3 g fresh rosemary, finely chopped
1 garlic head, sliced in half lengthwise
1 medium onion, quartered
Preheat the oven to 425°F/220°C.

If needed, clean the chicken inside, removing the giblets. But don’t throw them away—they can be frozen and, when you’re ready, used with other leftover chicken pieces and bones to make a great stock. Isn’t that great?

Peel and roughly chop the root vegetables into bite-size pieces, then toss them and the cubed onion into a roasting pan large enough to also fit the chicken and coat them with a light drizzle of olive oil. Once they’re evenly coated, spread them out into a single flat layer. Set aside.

In a small bowl, mix together the butter, a pinch each of salt and pepper, and the thyme and rosemary. You should end up with a lovely yellow paste with bright and deep green sparks of happiness. Divide in two and set aside.

Insert the head of garlic and the quartered onion into the cavity of the chicken. Sprinkle the outside of the chicken with a little salt and pepper. Why not?

Use your hands to spread half of the butter mixture under the skin. Don’t forget the bottom! Be careful not to tear the skin, but if you do, just use the tear as a little flap to help you get further underneath. Use a basting brush to spread the rest of the butter on the top and all around the bird.

Place the chicken directly on top of the vegetables in the pan. They’ll create a nice lift so the chicken won’t get stuck to the bottom, and will let the juices flow up and down and all around like a babbling brook.

Roast in the oven for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, until the juices run clear between the thigh and body of chicken, or the internal temperature of the chicken is 165°F/74°C. The chicken should be golden brown; and the vegetables, fork-tender.

Cover with foil and roast for another 15 minutes to seal in the juices. Remove from the oven and let stand for about 10 minutes before carving.

Serve the chicken on the same plate as the roasted vegetables. The different colors and textures will form a beautiful palette!

It’s just that easy!

Add 1 1/2 teaspoons of paprika and/or cayenne pepper to the butter mixture to give your meal a spicy kick.