

Roast Tarragon-Cognac Chicken

Recipe from Christiane Baumgartner

Adapted by Melissa Clark

Updated Oct. 12, 2023



David Malosh for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Simon Andrews.

Total Time 2½ hours
Prep Time 5 minutes
Cook Time 2 hours 25 minutes
Rating ★★★★★ (1,251)

The sophisticated, French flavors of brandy, butter and tarragon season this golden-skinned roast chicken, adding panache to what is otherwise an easy and straightforward recipe, adapted from Christiane Baumgartner via her daughter, Florence Chapgier, a reader. Serve it with mashed potatoes or polenta, a soft bed to absorb all the heady, buttery juices. And if you're not a tarragon fan, fresh thyme makes an excellent, milder substitute. —**Melissa Clark**

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

- 1 (4-pound) whole chicken
- 2 teaspoons coarse gray sea salt or 2½ teaspoons kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 bunch fresh tarragon, leaves and tender stems coarsely chopped (about ¾ cup)
- 2 tablespoons Cognac
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper



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PREPARATION

Step 1

Pat the chicken dry and salt the bird inside and out. Transfer to a plate or baking dish, preferably on a rack, and refrigerate uncovered for at least 1 hour or overnight.

Step 2

When ready to cook the chicken, heat the oven to 400 degrees.

Step 3

In a small bowl, combine butter, tarragon, 1 tablespoon Cognac and the pepper. Rub mixture inside the chicken cavity and over and under the chicken skin.

Step 4

Place chicken on a rimmed sheet pan or in a large, ovenproof skillet. Roast, breast side up, until the skin is golden and crisp, and the juices run clear when you insert a fork in the thickest part of the thigh (165 degrees), about 1 hour.

Step 5

Turn off the oven — don't skip this step, or the Cognac may overheat and catch fire — and transfer the pan with the chicken to the stovetop. Pour the remaining 1 tablespoon Cognac over the bird and baste with some of the buttery pan juices. Immediately return the chicken to the turned-off oven and let rest there for 10 minutes before carving and serving.