

Flat-Roast Chicken

SERVES 3-4

4 lbs kosher or free-range roasting chicken such as Bell & Evans

4 Tbs kosher salt

3 Tbs butter

1 Tbs herbes de Provence

to taste AURAS Spice Mix (see box)

Prepare chicken by removing any packed organs, rinsing thoroughly, and patting dry. Generously sprinkle kosher salt on bird, rubbing into cavity and skin. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

After bird has rested, rinse away the salt mixture and pat dry. Position the chicken with the cavity facing you and use a pair of kitchen shears to cut horizontally through the rib bones below the breasts, from the cavity toward the front on both sides. Do not cut all the way through; the breasts should still be attached by cartilage and skin at the front. Swing the entire breast section up from the rear to the front, like opening the hood of a car, exposing the ribcage and backbone of the bird. Sprinkle generously with kosher salt and pepper, or use spice mix. Flip the bird over and flatten with the heel of your hand at the top of the breasts. The meat and skin will now all be on the top, and the bird will be flattened. Tuck wings under body.

Combine the herbes de Provence and the butter to make an herb-butter mixture. Using your fingers to work the skin loose from the meat, spread half the butter under the skin of the breast. Work the rest into the skin of the bird, then apply spice mix generously over the entire skin.

Preheat oven to 400°, or prepare a Weber grill for indirect heat (bank coals to one side of grill). If roasting, place flattened chicken on a rack in a rimmed baking sheet lined with heavy-duty foil curled at the edges to contain juices. If grilling, form foil into a container shape or use an aluminum tray placed under the grill rack beside banked coals to catch the drippings. Place chicken on rack above foil.

Cook until temperature at the thigh reads 170° and juices are clear, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Let bird rest for 10 minutes. Serve on large platter, pouring accumulated juices over bird.



THIS IS AN EASY, ALMOST FOOL-PROOF WAY TO ROAST A CHICKEN, with many of the benefits of butterflying or spatchcock but almost none of the work. The skin protects the delicate flesh from the high temperature, and the bones on the bottom keep the meat from drying out. This technique is a joy for people who love the skin, which is entirely exposed and crisps perfectly. It is nearly impossible to overcook the bird in this manner, but if the skin becomes too dark, place some foil loosely over the bird.

BEFORE FLATTENING, DRY-SALT FOR AN HOUR by spreading a generous amount of salt on and in the bird. This helps the meat stay moist and doesn't lend much saltiness. The herb butter also helps the flesh stay moist, so it's important to get it under the skin of the breast and work it around.

Serving the roasted chicken family style allows people to pick at the carcass to find the small morsels of meat in the back of the bird that are usually missed, a messy experience that adds to the tasty fun of serving this flattened chicken.

AURAS Spice Mix

MAKES 24 OZ
(FITS CONVENIENTLY IN
COMMERCIAL BOTTLES)

This all-purpose seasoning works with just about anything. It works with firm-fleshed fish like salmon as well as with beef. With the addition of brown sugar in one-to-one proportions, it also makes a great dry rub on pork.

- 5 oz** table salt, pulsed in spice mill
- 1 oz** pepper
- 4 oz** garlic powder
- 4 oz** onion powder
- 3 oz** paprika
- 3 oz** chile powder
- 2 oz** dried lemon peel
- 1 oz** cumin
- 3 Tbs** allspice
- 3 Tbs** cayenne pepper

Using a coffee grinder to pulverize the table salt into a finer grind will make the mixture more evenly textured, but it isn't necessary. Still, having a dedicated grinder for spices is an inexpensive addition to your kitchen tools.