

Rock Cornish Hens Broil- roasted in Wine^{2Tb}

^{1/2 Recipe}^{3/4 cup}
^{1 Tb}^{1/4 cup}

This is a fine recipe for any small young birds—like pigeon, quail, partridge—and is particularly good with fresh Rock Cornish game hens.

For 6 people

3 Rock Cornish hens (1 pound or 450 g each)

Ingredients for Brown Poultry Stock and Sauce:

1 medium carrot and onion, chopped

1 1/2 cups (3 1/2 dL) chicken stock or broth

1/2 cup (1 dL) dry white wine or dry white French vermouth

1 imported bay leaf

1 small stalk celery with leaves

Ingredients for Optional Marinade:

Salt and pepper

1 1/2 tsp fragrant dried tarragon

2 Tb finely minced shallots or scallions

About 1/2 cup (1 dL) dry white wine or dry white French vermouth

3 to 4 Tb light olive oil (optional)

Other Ingredients:

Salt and pepper

Melted butter, or clarified butter

1 or more heads garlic

About 1 cup (1/4 L) coarsely grated Swiss cheese

1/2 cup (1 dL) or so Port or Madeira wine, or dry white French vermouth

1 pound (450 g) fresh mushrooms, trimmed, washed, and quartered

2 Tb or more butter for sauce enrichment (optional)

Preparing the hens

(The birds are to be split down the back and spread out, browned under the broiler on both sides, then sprinkled with cheese, surrounded with wine and garlic cloves, and baked until done. The mushrooms are added during the last minutes of cooking.) With

*Cornish hens nesting on their straw
potato galette*



shears or a sharp knife, cut down each side of the backbone from neck to tail, and remove backbone. (Chop the backbone into 2 or 3 pieces and reserve for stock, later.) Turn the birds flesh side up and pound breast flat with your fist. To tuck drumsticks into slits in lower breast skin as shown, first bend knees and push up to shoulders, then tuck ends in. Fold wings akimbo behind backbone each side.

Brown Poultry Stock for Sauce:

For about 1 1/2 cups (3 1/2 dL)

Brown the reserved backbones, necks, and giblets (if any) and the chopped carrot and onion in a frying pan with a little oil or clarified butter (page 234). Scrape into a saucepan, discard browning oil, and rinse frying pan with the stock or broth to dislodge all flavorsome browning particles; pour liquid into saucepan. Add the wine or vermouth, ingredients from the optional marinade, bay leaf, and celery. Bring to the simmer, skim off surface scum for a few minutes, then cover pan loosely and simmer slowly for 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Strain, skim off surface fat, and stock is ready to use.

① May be prepared ahead; refrigerate in a covered jar when cold, or freeze.

Plain Poultry Stock—Chicken Stock:

To make a plain stock simply omit the browning of the ingredients. You may even omit the vegetables altogether, and simmer the carcass bones and scraps, raw or cooked, in lightly salted water.

Put legs through slits in lower edge of breast skin to make a neat shape.



Optional Marinade:

A simple wine marinade will give the usually mild Cornish hens more flavor. Salt and pepper them on both sides and sprinkle with tarragon. Arrange in a bowl, sprinkling each with shallots or scallions, wine, and optional olive oil (oil distributes the flavors of the marinade). Cover and, if kitchen is warm, refrigerate. Marinate for 3 to 4 hours (or longer), turning and basting the birds with the marinade several times. When you are ready to proceed, scrape off marinade and reserve in bowl; dry the birds with paper towels.

Browning under the broiler

Having dried the birds (salt and pepper them lightly if you did not marinate them), brush with melted butter and arrange in one layer skin side down in a broiling or roasting pan. Preheat broiler and set pan so surface of meat is about 3 inches (8 cm) from heat source; brown, basting several times with melted butter, for about 5 minutes on the flesh side; turn, and brown nicely on skin side.

① Recipe may be completed several hours in advance to this point. Although you can refrigerate them, it is best to leave the hens at room temperature if wait is not too long and kitchen not too warm.

After initial browning, sprinkle hens with grated cheese.

