

RV GODDESS: Roast Chicken

If you are at our home (or motorhome!) on Friday night, most likely there will be a chicken roasting in the oven. A roast chicken is comfort food, and tradition at our house. There is nothing easier - two minutes of prep - so a roasted chicken is perfect for entertaining - especially if you have a guest who loves to carve. But if you are going to roast a chicken - roast a CHICKEN - not a puny little thing sitting around in a plastic bag at the supermarket. Go to a good butcher or organic grocer and find a bird in the 5-pound range. Naturally raised, no hormones, steroids, free-range... all this is a plus. You will want a big bird with lots of fatty yellow skin. You will also need a roasting pan fitted with a rack that rests at least one inch off the bottom of the pan, a bit of twine to tie the legs together and aluminum foil. (A self-cleaning oven is nice, too.)

One chicken, about 5 pounds
1 large handful fresh thyme/rosemary - stems and leaves
Olive oil
Salt
Pepper

Heat oven to 425°. Rinse the chicken. (Remove any giblets/neck from inside the cavity and discard or save for another use.) Pat the chicken dry with paper towels. Breast side down, pour a little olive oil over the bird and rub it in with your fingers. Salt and pepper the bird to taste.

Turn the chicken breast-side up and place the chicken centered on the rack in the roasting pan. Stuff the cavity of the bird with fresh thyme/rosemary. Gather any skin around the opening of the cavity and close-up the cavity and tie the end of the legs together with a bit of kitchen twine. Rub additional olive oil over the top side of the chicken and sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper. Any thyme/rosemary leaves left over can be "artistically sprinkled" over the top of the chicken or tucked under the legs.

Place roasting pan in center of the hot oven. Do not cover! Roast for 75-90 minutes, or until juices run clear. I hate to poke my pretty bird with a meat thermometer (internal temperature needs to be 165 degrees), so usually just give the leg a little shake at around 80 minutes to see how it is progressing. When the leg moves easily, the roasting is complete. Remove chicken from oven and immediately tent with foil and let the chicken rest for fifteen minutes. (This step is most important! Finish-up the rest of the meal during this time.) Carve and serve. A five-pound chicken will serve 4-6 persons.

Notes: This is the roast chicken I make most often. Different menus and seasons call for different ingredients, of course - so experiment. Stuff the cavity with sliced lemons or onions, experiment with different herbs... use an infused oil - there is no limit to the possibilities.