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## CRISP ROAST CHICKEN

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*Serves 2 to 3. Published March 1, 2008. From Cook's Illustrated.*

For best flavor, use a high-quality chicken, such as one from Bell & Evans. Do not brine the bird; it will prohibit the skin from becoming crisp. The sheet of foil between the roasting pan and V-rack will keep drippings from burning and smoking.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1** whole chicken (3 1/2 to 4 1/2 pounds), giblets removed and discarded (see note)
- 1** tablespoon kosher salt or 1 1/2 teaspoons table salt
- 1** teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2** teaspoon ground black pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Place chicken breast-side down on work surface. Following photos above, use tip of sharp knife to make four 1-inch incisions along back of chicken. Using fingers or handle of wooden spoon, carefully separate skin from thighs and breast. Using metal skewer, poke 15 to 20 holes in fat deposits on top of breast halves and thighs. Tuck wing tips underneath chicken.
- 2.** Combine salt, baking powder, and pepper in small bowl. Pat chicken dry with paper towels and sprinkle all over with salt mixture. Rub in mixture with hands, coating entire surface evenly. Set chicken, breast-side up, in V-rack set on rimmed baking sheet and refrigerate, uncovered, for 12 to 24 hours.
- 3.** Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Using paring knife, poke 20 holes about 1 1/2 inches apart in 16- by 12-inch piece of foil. Place foil loosely in large roasting pan. Flip chicken so breast side faces down, and set V-rack in roasting pan on top of foil. Roast chicken 25 minutes.
- 4.** Remove roasting pan from oven. Using 2 large wads of paper towels, rotate chicken breast-side up. Continue to roast until instant-read thermometer inserted in thickest part of breast registers 135 degrees, 15 to 25 minutes.
- 5.** Increase oven temperature to 500 degrees. Continue to roast until skin is golden brown, crisp, and instant-read thermometer inserted in thickest part of breast registers 160 degrees and 175 degrees in thickest part of thigh, 10 to 20 minutes.
- 6.** Transfer chicken to cutting board and let rest, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Carve and serve immediately.

**STEP-BY-STEP**

**Crisp-Skin Makeover** A little advance prep and a high-heat roast make our chicken skin so crisp it crackles.



**1. CUT CHANNELS FOR FAT**  
Cutting incisions in the skin along the chicken's back creates the opening for fat to escape.



**2. LOOSEN SKIN**  
Loosening the skin from the thighs and breast allows rendering fat to trickle out the openings.



**3. POKE HOLES**  
Poking holes in the skin of the breast and thighs creates additional channels for fat and juices to escape.



**4. RUB AND CHILL-OUT**  
Rubbing baking powder and salt into the skin and air-drying the chicken in the refrigerator helps the skin crisp and brown.



**5. ROAST AT HIGH HEAT**  
Roasting at 450 degrees (with a final blast at 500 degrees) speeds browning.

**RECIPE TESTING**

**Skin Conditioning** Two pieces of skin removed from two chickens received different treatment before being roasted. One piece was left au naturel; the other was conditioned with a rub of baking powder and salt and allowed to dry out overnight.



**AU NATUREL:  
SOFT AND SOGGY**



**RUBBED AND AIR-DRIED:  
ULTRACRISP**



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