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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Thursday, August 24, 1944

QUESTION BOX:

How freeze chicken?
About chicken dinner dishes?
How flavor chicken soup?

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists of the U.S. Department
of Agriculture

It's chicken every Sunday and every day in the week perhaps...judging from the questions in today's mail. Three questions are about chicken. One homemaker writes in wanting to know how to freeze chicken. Another inquires about chicken dinner dishes, and the third asks about flavoring chicken soup.

Roasters, broilers, fryers and stewing chickens are plentiful in the markets during August and September, because farmers normally cull their flocks to avoid boarding chickens that are poor layers over the winter. And this year especially the short feed supplies and egg marketing difficulties have caused farmers to cull their flocks more closely than usual. This plentiful supply leads up to the first question on the freezing of chicken. Freezing is an excellent way to preserve some of these surplus birds now on the market for use next winter or at a time, when the market supplies may not be quite so abundant. However, remember freezing is practical only if you live near a freezer-locker plant or have your own quick freezing cabinet.

In answering the question, how to freeze chicken, home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture emphasize these points. They say to use whatever freezer-locker space you have to store the younger chickens...the fryers, broilers and roosters and to can the older, less tender, stewing fowls.

The process for freezing chicken is simple. First, clean, draw, chill and prepare the bird as you would for immediate use. Second, tie compactly the chickens you plan to roast...unjoint or cut up fryers and fowls and split broilers down the back. Next, wrap each chilled piece in moisture-vapor-resistant paper...heavy waxed paper

works very well...and freeze promptly at zero Fahrenheit. Then store the frozen chicken at a uniform temperature very near to zero. It usually requires from 8 to 12 hours to freeze chicken thoroughly, but may take as long as 24 hours in a home cabinet. Upon removing chicken from the freezer compartment, cook it promptly after you thaw it out. Prepare it just as you would any fresh fried, broiled or roasted chickens. You can obtain more detailed directions on the freezing of chickens from a folder published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. This folder is available, free of charge, by writing for it. It is entitled "Freezing Meat and Poultry Products for Home Use".

There are many ways for cooking chicken, depending chiefly on the age, size and fatness of the birds. For the young, tender, plump chickens, broil, fry or cook them by open pan roasting. Braise in a covered roaster or casserole, the young, lean birds or those that are a little too old for roasting, but are not yet in the stewing class. But stew until tender in water or steam, the very old birds and plump hens. And here, with the question on chicken dinner dishes, is where the older, stewing chickens come into their own. From them you may make fricasseed, curried or creamed chicken into a number of delicious dishes. The meat of an older bird, whether it be freshly stewed or canned, is the start for a variety of tempting chicken dishes, both hot and cold. And by the way, if you do not have a pressure canner for canning some of the plentiful supplies of stewing chickens on the market, you might arrange to use the equipment of your community cannery. A pressure canner is necessary you know for the safe canning of all meats.

But to return to the topic of chicken dinner dishes, the variety of possible combinations are not only favorite at the dinner table, but they also go 'round the clock from breakfast to midnight snack or supper. You can serve creamed chicken hot in a rice or noodle ring for dinner...in patty shells for lunch and on waffles, crisp toast or in toasted bread baskets for either Sunday morning breakfast or a Sunday night supper. Chicken pie, too, made with creamed chicken under a lid of biscuit

rounds or mashed potatoes is another appealing chicken dinner dish. To make creamed chicken, use 3 cups of diced cooked chicken, 3 cups of chicken broth and 4 table-
spoons of fat. You'll need some vegetables, too. One cup chopped celery. One
tablespoon chopped onion and 1/4 green pepper chopped. Cook the celery, onion, and
peppers in the fat for a few minutes. Then stir in a half cup flour and blend
thoroughly. Next, add the 3 cups of cool or lukewarm broth and 1/2 to 1 cup of
cream. Cook the sauce until smooth and thickened, and season to taste with salt.
Add the 3 cups of chicken, heat thoroughly and serve in one of the ways we just men-
tioned.

Casserole fowl with vegetables is another very appetizing chicken dinner dish.

And now for the question on how to flavor chicken soup. You not only get good
meat, from an old laying hen, but also soup stock or broth. The bony pieces, necks and
wings, especially are good for making soup. Cook them until the meat drops off.

And the flavoring of chicken soup introduces a variety of delicious dinner
soups. You may have your choice of consomme served piping hot or ice-cold jellied
consomme. Or you may have chicken noodle soup or cream of chicken soup. All are
easy to make. Use several stalks of celery with the leaves, one to two bay leaves
or an onion as seasonings for the broth. Then in making a clear consomme, strain
the broth after you've added the seasonings and chill it. Skim off all the fat.
Clarify it by adding the crushed shell or beaten white of an egg, bringing it to a
boil and straining. You don't need to clarify chicken noodle soup, but cook noodles
and chopped vegetables in the broth until tender. In making cream of chicken soup,
cook such vegetables as green peas, shredded carrots, onion and celery in the broth
until done, add cream or white sauce.

And just a word of caution on cooking chicken. In the cooking of all kinds of
poultry home economists remind us to always use moderate heat. Even though it takes
longer, you'll be repaid by the more meat you'll have to serve and by it's rich
tender, juicy quality.

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