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PREFACE

The Perdue Chicken Cookbook by Mitzi Perdue

WHY I CHICKENED OUT

Want to know a high stress situation? Try being a food writer and cookbook author, and then marry Frank Perdue. You come home from the honeymoon, everything has been wonderful and then...it's time to Cook the First Meal! Frank wants to eat chicken and you're supposed to be a good cook.

I remember that afternoon so vividly. I knew he'd be coming home around six and that he'd be hungry. Now up until that day, I had always felt fairly confident in the kitchen. After all, I love cooking and trying new recipes is my favorite pastime. But cooking chicken for Frank Perdue? I began to get stage fright. As I was trying to find where the pots and pans were in his kitchen, I started calculating that there were probably few people in the world who've eaten chicken more times than my husband. "He's been eating chicken almost daily for his entire life" I thought, "he likes it, he cares about it, and my cooking is about to be judged by a world class expert."

As I rummaged around looking for the right herbs and spices-and couldn't find the ones I liked - my stage fright grew worse. "This man must be one of the world's greatest experts on cooked chicken," I thought to myself. "He's attended dozens and dozens of chicken cooking contests, he's been part of hundreds and hundreds of taste testings for Perdue products. Everywhere he goes, people know he likes chicken and the best chefs and hostesses in the world have served it to him." In my mind I ran through some of the times when together we'd driven an hour out of the way to go to a restaurant that cooked chicken particularly well, and how he always seemed to have lists of the restaurants he wanted to visit.

Help! My stage fright was getting still worse. The thirty year old oven didn't seem to be heating right, but I couldn't be sure because there wasn't any oven thermometer. The "elbow test," which our grandmothers used to use before the days of thermometers (you stick your elbow in the oven and feel

how hot it is), told me that things weren't right, but I didn't know how far off the oven was so I didn't know how to compensate. As I rubbed my elbow with my other hand, I thought of Frank's reputation for being demanding. If you've seen the ad that we call "Boot Camp," you know what I mean. (He plays the part of a drill sergeant in this ad and teaches the new Perdue recruits the 57 quality points that they have to inspect -- and then he's all over one recruit for missing what seems like an invisibly small hair.)

It's a funny thing, but when you start losing your confidence, you start asking some basic questions about what you're doing. Part of me was saying that cooking chicken is pretty simple; after all, I'd been doing it for most of my life. But another part of me realized when attempting to cook chicken for Frank the first time, that I knew very little of the basics of cooking chicken. Like, for example, what makes a chicken tender? How do you really know when it's done-and not over done? How do you get the best flavor? Should you salt before or after cooking?

In desperation, I made a two-part promise to myself. First, I'd let myself take the easy way out that first meal, and not even try to cook the chicken myself. Instead, dinner would be a never-fail salad, pasta (Frank loves pasta), plus store-bought fully-cooked Perdue Tenders. In return for letting myself off so easily, I'd make it my business from then on to learn how to make the best chicken every time. That meant asking Frank every question that popped into my head; checking with the food technologists who work for Perdue; getting tips from the farmers who grew the Perdue chickens; and systematically going through the thousands of recipes that Frank has in his files, trying a different one each night.

Dinner that night wasn't the show piece I would have liked to create, but it was good enough and Frank happens to love his own Tenders so the chicken part of the meal was a success. In the time since, I've tried to live up to the second part of the promise, the one about learning how to serve the best chicken every time.

In this book, I'd like to share with you the most useful cooking tips and the most appealing, most successful recipes developed by Perdue Farms over the last twenty years. The first chapter contains the kinds of information I wished I'd known from the beginning. You don't need to read this chapter, because chicken isn't that hard to cook; but there are tips in it that can save you time and money and that can enable you to cook with greater confidence. This chapter also has the latest tips on food safety.

The remaining chapters are organized, not by method of cooking or whether

the food is an appetizer or salad or whatnot; but rather by the kind of occasion you're facing. You want to put some spark and variety into every day meals? You want to make the most of your microwave? Or you're in a hurry today? Maybe you need something that will please kids? Or you're dieting? You've got a bunch of leftovers? You have to cook for a hundred people tomorrow night? I tried to think of the kinds of situations in which you could need recipes and then I organized Frank's recipes around them. Jean Brillat-Savarin, the famous French gourmet, once said, "A chicken to a cook is like a canvas to a painter." Enjoy the recipes and tips that follow, and may they help you to feel the creativity and confidence that make cooking fun and eating a joy!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WING IT!

LET FRANK TAKE YOU UNDER HIS.

Everything You Wanted or Needed to Know about Cooking Chicken

Frank gets roughly 40,000 consumer letters a year. Half of these are requests for pamphlets, but many of the others are requests for information on selecting, storing, serving, or cooking his products.

These letters are tremendously important to Frank. Often I've been with him when he has a few extra minutes, such as waiting for an airplane, and he'll dash to a pay phone to answer one of the letters with a phone call. He also likes to attend store openings or conventions or other public places because he genuinely wants to hear what people are thinking. One of the marketing men once told me that he was embarrassed about a day he had planned for Frank because it included meetings with people who owned just a few stores. When I passed this on to Frank, he answered that these were some of the best meetings because the owners of the smaller stores were so close to their customers. He went on to say that the reason he likes to visit butchers (and in New York, he's called on as many as 30 in two days) is that these men are close to the needs and wants of their customers and he can learn things from them that he'd learn in no other way.

I've heard that there's almost no other head of a Fortune 500-size company who would spend as much time with the people who buy his products. People are often surprised that a man with his responsibilities would take the time for this much face to face contact. But the fact is, learning what people care about is almost a religion to him.

Here are some of the questions that people either write to Frank or ask him in person. In answering the questions, I've either used the information I've heard Frank give, or else I've checked with the Perdue food scientists or home economists.

What should I look for when I shop for chicken?

Whatever city we're in, whether it's on the East Coast, or Puerto Rico, or even London or Moscow or Tokyo, Frank visits supermarkets the way other people visit museums or monuments. He notices the following kinds of things himself and would recommend that you do also when selecting chicken.

Give the package a little squeeze. Are there signs of ice along wings, backs or edges? Frank explained to me that some chicken producers blast their birds with air as cold as -40o F, but he never does. Freezing causes a breakdown in protein, loss of natural juices, and reduced tenderness. Also, when you cook a frozen bird, the bones and nearby meat may turn an unappetizing dark color.

Look at the thickness of the meat in proportion to the bone. If, for example, the breast looks scrawny, you're paying a lot for bone rather than meat.

Read the labels so you know what you are getting. Many different parts and combinations are available, and some look surprisingly alike even to Frank's trained eye. The label tells exactly what is inside.

Ask questions. If any meat or poultry product doesn't look, feel, or smell just right, check with the professionals behind the counter.

Notice the pull date. Most stores are scrupulous about removing chicken before the pull date expires-but sometimes there's a slip-up.

Was the chicken well-cleaned? Or are there little traces of feathers or hairs? These can look really unattractive when the bird is cooked.

Is the chicken stored correctly on the chilling shelf, or are the trays of chicken stacked so high that the top ones aren't kept cold? When that happens, the shelf life of the top ones is seriously shortened.

Is the meat case kept so cold that the fresh chicken is frozen and ends up with ice crystals on the tray? If so, complain to the manager.

Look at the ends of the bones. Are they pink or are they turning gray? Generally, the more pink the bone ends are, the fresher the chicken. How should I store chicken at home?

Chicken, like all meat, is perishable. It should be stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator (40F or below), sealed as it comes from the market, and used within two or three days of purchase.

Should I freeze chickens?

Frank doesn't recommend freezing poultry. However, if a bird must be held beyond three days, freezing will keep it wholesome.

How do I freeze poultry?

When freezing is necessary, seal chicken or other poultry in an airtight container, heavy plastic bag, plastic wrap, foil or freezer paper.

Try to have the wrapping tight against the chicken because any place where it isn't, small ice crystals will form. That means moisture has been drawn from the meat, and where that's happened, the meat will be tough and breading won't stick.

Frozen uncooked chicken can be stored up to six months; frozen cooked chicken should be used within three months. (Personally I try to avoid freezing chicken since I know that freezing makes the chicken less tender and less juicy. Still, in spite of good intentions, I sometimes end up doing it. I've learned to make it a point to have a wax marking pencil and freezer tape handy, so I can label the package with the date and contents. I wonder if you've found, as I have, that it's unbelievably easy to lose track of how long things have been in there.)

Do not stuff poultry before freezing, and freeze cooked birds and stuffing separately.

Can frozen chicken be thawed and frozen again?

Each time you freeze chicken, you sacrifice quality. If carefully handled, however, it is safe to defrost uncooked chicken and to freeze it again after cooking. If frozen after cooking, do not thaw and freeze again.

Why is chicken sometimes implicated in illness?

In a warm, moist environment, illness-causing bacteria can grow in

high-protein, low-acid foods such as meat, fish, poultry, eggs and milk. But there is no reason to become ill from eating or serving these foods, if they are cooked thoroughly and served or refrigerated immediately. To prevent transferring bacteria from one food to another, use warm water and soap to wash hands, utensils and work surfaces before and after use. What makes chicken tender -- or tough?

Frank does his best to make Perdue chickens as tender as possible, but there's also a lot you can do.

Don't let chicken dry out in the refrigerator; dry chicken is tough chicken. Keep it wrapped in the package it comes in until you use it.

Avoid freezing it. When the juices inside the cells freeze, they act like little spears and they'll rupture some of the cell walls. When you defrost the chicken, you'll lose some of the juice and the chicken will be less tender.

Cook chicken to the proper temperature, using a meat thermometer or pop-up guide. Cook bone-in chicken to 180 degrees and boneless chicken to 170 degrees. Undercooked chicken will be tough and rubbery because it takes a fairly high internal temperature to soften the proteins in the muscles and make them tender. But don't overcook chicken either, because moisture will start to steam off, and the more chicken dries out, the tougher it gets.

Keep the skin on chicken during cooking. The skin helps keep juices in, and tenderness and juiciness go hand in hand. I've tried this both ways, and the difference is significant. (When you cook chicken with the skin on, approximately half the fat from the skin is absorbed into the meat; if calories and cholesterol are very important to you, you might want to remove the skin before cooking even if it means a less tender result.)

When microwaving any chicken product, cover with a loose tent of waxed paper to prevent drying.

Some authorities feel strongly that you should not salt the chicken before cooking because salt draws the juices out during cooking and toughens the meat. In my experience, there is a detectable difference in tenderness between salting before cooking and salting afterwards; the chicken that I

salted afterwards was slightly more tender. Still, I would guess that most people, myself included, wouldn't notice a big difference unless they were specifically paying attention to it. The difference doesn't jump out at you as it does with overcooking or freezer burn.

Fry or roast breast pieces rather than microwaving them if tenderness is a top priority for you. Microwaving is significantly faster, but there's a greater risk of toughness when you microwave breast meat. Breast meat is fairly dry to begin with, and you don't have a whole lot of latitude between overcooking and undercooking. With breast meat, there's a trade-off between the speed of microwaving and the reliability of frying or roasting.

Why are some chickens yellow skinned and some white?

A chicken's skin color comes from the diet it was fed and the same bird could have a white skin or a yellow skin, depending on what it ate. The diet that produces a yellow skin is more expensive than the usual diet, but the people at Perdue Farms feel it's worth it because a yellow skin color is one of the fastest ways Frank's inspectors have of finding and disqualifying an inferior bird. If a bird is sick or off its feed, it doesn't absorb nutrients well and won't develop the rich golden color that is characteristic of Perdue birds. Also, if part of a bird's outer skin is "barked", that is, rubbed off due to rough handling during processing, the Perdue inspectors can detect it more easily than with a white-skinned bird. Detecting and removing a chicken with a barked skin is important because damaged skin shortens the shelf life and dries out and toughens the meat. No white colored chickens get by the inspectors.

Sometimes when I open a package of chicken, there's a pungent odor that doesn't smell spoiled, but it's definitely unpleasant. Should I throw the chicken out?

If the odor lasts only a matter of seconds, your chicken is probably fine. Meat is chemically active, and as it ages, it releases sulfur. When you open a bag that doesn't have air holes, you may notice the accumulated sulfur, but it will quickly disperse into the air. In fact, I've heard of cases where a wife will lean over to her husband and say, "Smell this, I think it's gone bad." He'll take a deep whiff and find nothing wrong with it. She'll take another sniff and then wonder if it was her imagination. It wasn't. It's just that once the package was opened, the sulfur smell faded into the air like smoke rings.

If the chicken still smells bad after a couple of minutes, that's an entirely different story. The problem is bacterial spoilage or rancidity or both. Return the chicken to the store where you bought it and write to Frank. If a chicken's been around too long you can smell it, and if you can't detect it at room temperature, you probably can as it cooks, since rancidity is more obvious at higher temperatures. Rancidity can occur without bacteria if the freezer where the meat was stored wasn't cold enough or if the product was kept there for a very long time, such as more than six months for uncooked chicken, or more than three months for cooked chicken. (By the way, I don't like to focus on this unpleasant stuff, but I do want you to get your money's worth when you're buying chicken.)
Are chickens given hormones?

Never. I remember when I lived on the West Coast, there was a small company that advertised that its chickens were grown without hormones. I thought this was unethical, because it implied that other chickens were grown with hormones. The fact is none are.
Can I cook frozen chicken, or do I have to let it defrost first?

In a pinch, go ahead, but allow extra cooking time. For the best texture and tenderness, however, you're better off starting from refrigerator temperatures; you can be more sure of getting an evenly cooked product.
How long can I keep chicken at room temperature?

From the point of view of food safety, you're taking a risk if you leave it outside the refrigerator for more than two hours. Unfortunately, bacteria grow and multiply at temperatures between 40 degrees and 140 degrees, and they flourish at room temperature. To avoid food borne illness, all foods of animal origin should be kept either hotter than 140 degrees or colder than 40 degrees. If you know you won't be returning home directly after shopping, bring along an insulated bag or box to keep cold foods cold until you can get them into the refrigerator.

Do I need to rinse chicken before cooking?

Advice on this has varied over the years, including the advice Frank gives. The latest research shows that from a health point of view, washing is not necessary. Any microbes that you'd wash off will be entirely destroyed by heat when you cook the meat. It's actually far more important to wash your hands, your cutting board, and your utensils since they won't be sterilized by cooking.

How do I get the best flavor?

That depends on whether you're after a mild and delicate flavor, or a strong and robust flavor. The younger the bird, the milder the flavor. A game hen, which is five weeks old, will have the mildest flavor of all. A broiler, at seven weeks, will still have a quite mild and delicate flavor; a roaster, on the other hand, is usually about five weeks older than a broiler and it will have a much more pronounced "chickeny" flavor. (Frank and I enjoy chicken at all ages, but if we had to choose on flavor alone, we'd most often go for the roasters.) For a really strong, chickeny flavor, see if you can find fowl or spent hens or stewing hens. These birds are around 18 months old, which means they're going to be quite tough, but if you use them in soups or stews, they'll add an excellent flavor.

I've had chicken in the freezer for a year. Is it still edible?

From a health point of view it would be ok, but the flavor and texture will have deteriorated and it just won't be particularly tasty. I stored chicken in the freezer for a year once as an experiment, just to see what it would be like. It wasn't awful, but it was kind of flat and tasteless. I remember wondering if this was what cotton tasted like -- although to be fair, it wasn't really that bad.

Why are bones sometimes dark?

Darkened bones occur when the product has been frozen. Freezing causes the blood cells in the bone marrow to rupture and then when the chicken is thawed, these ruptured cells leak out and cause visible reddish splotches on the bones. When cooked, these discolorations will turn from red to almost black.

Is it true that breast meat is the least fattening part of a chicken?

Yes. Breast meat has about half the fat of thigh meat. If calories or cholesterol are important to you, choose the breast meat. Frank watches his cholesterol and I've never seen him go for anything but breast meat. Is it better to cook a chicken quickly at a high temperature-or slowly at a low temperature?

Both work, but with high temperatures, you run a greater risk of uneven

cooking, with the wings and legs becoming overcooked before the rest of the bird is done. Usually we recommend a moderate temperature of 350 degrees for whole birds and 375 degrees for parts. If you are in a hurry and want to use a higher temperature, then shield the wings and legs by wrapping them with aluminum foil if they're starting to become too brown .

How much should I allow for shrinkage when cooking chicken?

For each 3-ounce serving of cooked poultry, buy an extra ounce to allow for shrinkage and an extra two ounces to allow for bone.

If I want to use different parts of the chicken from what the recipe calls for, how do I go about making substitutions?

This table should help:

| Name of Part | Approximate No. to Equal One Whole Chicken |
|--------------|---|
|--------------|---|

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Whole breasts | 3 |
| Half breasts | 6 |
| Whole leg (thigh and drumstick) | 6 |
| Thigh | 12 |
| Drumsticks | 14 |
| Wing | 14 |
| Drumette (upper part of wing) | 24 |

When using cooked chicken, allow one pound of whole uncooked chicken for each cup of cooked, edible chicken meat.

Some of your recipes call for roasters. I don't live in an area where Perdue chicken is sold, and I haven't been able to find roasters in the stores. What exactly is a roaster, and can I substitute a broiler?

A Perdue Oven Stuffer Roaster is a 12 week old bird especially developed for a broad breast. Roasters are bigger than broilers, and have a more favorable meat to bone ratio than broilers. Because they are older birds, they also have a much deeper, richer flavor. You can use broilers in roaster recipes, but plan on the chicken's being done sooner and having a noticeably milder flavor.

Frank, by the way, is the man responsible for creating the roaster market.

Back in the early 1970s, when few people had ever heard of a roaster, he was the one who worked to breed these broad-breasted birds, and who put the effort into advertising so people would learn about the new product. He surprised his colleagues by how determined he was in his developing and marketing efforts. One of the men who worked with Frank told me that he was amazed that Frank, who will hang onto an old pair of shoes to save \$50, was willing to spend millions to let people know about the product, and further, he did it without a qualm, because he had such belief in it. If you haven't tried an Oven Stuffer Roaster and you're visiting the East Coast, try one, and you'll see why Frank believed in it so much.

CHICKEN FOR EVERYDAY

Chapter One: CHICKEN FOR EVERYDAY

Napoleon's cook once bet that he could cook chicken a different way every day of the year. The cook found that this was an easy bet to win, and I can see why, having looked at the recipes in Frank's files. Chicken's versatility seems almost endless. Perdue Farms home economists have been developing chicken recipes since the early 1970s and as a result, Frank has more than 2000 chicken recipes. If only Napoleon had chosen to bet with me, I could have won even if he'd said the bet was for six years!

In this chapter, you'll find some of Frank's and my favorites for every day cooking. But there are different kinds of every day cooking, so I've divided the chapter into three sections to take care of three different every day situations.

The first section, Fast Food Chicken from Your Refrigerator, is for when you're in a hurry and want dinner on the table in the shortest possible time. None of these recipes takes more than 15 minutes, and many are ready in five. However, you will find special tricks to make the food more interesting than just heat and serve.

The second section, Perdue Plus Five, is for when you don't mind if dinner isn't ready for another hour or so, but you want your part of the preparation to be as brief as possible. The recipes in this section use only five ingredients in addition to chicken, salt, and pepper, and all of the recipes are simple to prepare though they may take a while to cook.

The third section, Family Favorites, is for relaxed times. When you don't mind spending some time putting together something your family will really like, try this section.

FAST FOOD CHICKEN FROM YOUR REFRIGERATOR

Frank loves to tell people that they can pick up delicious, fast-food chicken within easy walking distance their refrigerators. "When you're hungry and in a hurry," he says, "you don't need to rush across town for great chicken. You can just walk (slowly) to your refrigerator and pick up my Perdue Done It!™ chicken."

Although fried foods are notoriously high in fat, particularly fast food ones. Perdue Done It!™ is an exception. Frank flash fries the Perdue Done It!™ products. They are in oil for seconds only. Further, to assure the chicken is as low in saturated fat as possible, Perdue uses only polyunsaturated soybean oil.

In the recipes that follow, I've used generic nuggets, cutlets, tenders, and other fully cooked products. However, try for the Perdue Done It!™ if you live in the Perdue marketing area, which is the East Coast and some of the Mid Western states. The Perdue nuggets, cutlets and tenders come from white meat fillets, while some of the other brands are pressed and formed from dark meat chicken and don't have the best texture or flavor.

TENDERS, AND NUGGETS

Chick on a Biscuit: Split hot baked biscuits. Fill each with a breaded chicken nugget and a thin slice of ham; top with mustard.

Chicken Mexicali: Top cutlets or tenders with prepared salsa and avocado slices.

Chicken Parmesan: Top partially heated cutlets with spaghetti sauce and sliced mozzarella cheese; broil briefly to melt cheese.

Super Caesar Salad: Quarter heated nuggets and toss with croutons, Romaine lettuce, and Caesar salad dressing.

Holiday Crepe: Heat breast tenders and place on a warm crepe. Top with cranberry sauce and roll up; serve with sour cream.

Japanese Meal-in-a-Bowl: Prepare Japanese-style noodle soup (ramen) as

directed. Add heated chicken breast nuggets or tenders, sliced scallions and a dash of soy sauce. (I often put this in a Thermos and bring it to Frank at his office when he's working late.)

Nugget Sticks: On metal skewers, alternately thread 4 to 5 chicken breast nuggets with 2 inch pieces of bacon. Heat in oven as directed on nugget package. Dip into prepared chutney or sweet-sour sauce.

Stir-Fry Snack: Stir-fry wings in a little oil with red bell pepper strips, scallions and sliced water chestnuts. Season with soy sauce. Serve over rice.

Substantial Sub: Split a loaf of Italian bread lengthwise. Pile on heated breaded chicken cutlets or tenders, provolone cheese, sliced tomato, sweet onion, pimentos and shredded lettuce. Douse with bottled salad dressing and dig in.

Tenders Under Wraps: Brush Boston lettuce leaves with prepared hoisin sauce or Chinese-style duck sauce. Place a heated tender or 2 nuggets and a piece of scallion on top. Roll up lettuce around tender, securing with a toothpick.

PRECOOKED HOT & SPICY WINGS

Chicken Antipasto: Arrange hot & spicy wings on platter with slices of provolone cheese, sliced tomatoes, marinated artichoke hearts and olives.

Out-of-Buffer Wings: Warm hot & spicy wings and arrange with celery sticks around a blue cheese dip. Combine 3/4 cup mayonnaise, 1/3 cup crumbled blue cheese and 1 minced scallion in a small bowl.

Speedy Arroz Con Pollo: Prepare a box of Spanish rice mix as package directs. During last 10 minutes of cooking time, add 1 package hot & spicy wings, 1 package thawed frozen peas and 1/2 cup sliced olives. Cover and heat through.

PRECOOKED BARBECUED WINGS

Tostados Platter: Arrange heated wings on platter with wedges of avocado and tomato, chunks of cheddar cheese, crisp taco chips and a bowl of prepared taco sauce for dipping.

Wings 'n Ribs: Serve hot wings on platter arranged with small barbecued spareribs and thick-cut French fries. Pass additional bottled barbecue sauce on side.

ROASTED CHICKEN AND CORNISH HENS

Aloha Salad: Halve a fresh pineapple and cut fruit into chunks. Toss with chunks of roasted chicken, toasted almonds, and chopped scallions. Blend in mayonnaise flavored with curry powder and spoon back into pineapple shell to serve.

Cheesy Chick: Prepare packaged stuffing mix as directed, adding 1 cup shredded Jarlsberg or Swiss cheese. Stuff whole roasted chicken or Cornish hens with mixture; heat until warmed through.

Chicken Frittata: Shred roasted chicken or cut breaded chicken into cubes. Add to beaten eggs, along with mushrooms, onions, and any leftover vegetables. Cook mixture quickly, forming into an open-faced omelet or frittata.

Chicken Normandy: Arrange cut-up roasted chicken or Cornish hen meat in a shallow baking dish and scatter thinly sliced apples around pieces. Cover and heat until hot and apples are tender. Stir in a little light or heavy cream and warm to serve.

Chicken Reuben: Thinly slice roasted chicken. Pile on sliced rye that's been spread with Russian dressing. Top with prepared sauerkraut, a slice of Swiss cheese, and another slice of rye. Grill or pan fry sandwiches until cheese melts.

Chicken Sesame: Brush roasted chicken or Cornish hens with bottled salad dressing; sprinkle surface with sesame seeds and heat as directed.

Fabulous Fajitas: Slice roasted chicken into strips. Saute in oil, adding lime juice, garlic, and ground cumin to taste. Roll up in warm flour tortillas and top with chunks of avocado, chopped scallion, and cherry tomatoes.

Pasta Pizazz: Saute pieces of roasted or breaded chicken with sliced zucchini, chopped onion, sliced mushrooms, and garlic. Add a dash of heavy cream and toss with hot cooked spaghetti or noodles.

Power Pita: Slice roasted chicken and stuff into a whole wheat pita bread.

Top with shredded carrots, alfalfa sprouts, red pepper strips and a tablespoon of dressing made of plain yogurt seasoned with lemon juice, curry powder and salt and pepper to taste.

Stir Fried Chicken: Dice roasted chicken into a wok or skillet and stir-fry with scallions, celery, mushrooms, and peas. Add cooked rice and soy sauce to taste; toss well.

Super Spud: Halve a baked potato and top with shredded roasted chicken mixed with a little mayonnaise. Pile on shredded Swiss cheese, bacon bits, and chopped chives; bake or microwave until cheese melts.

Taco Perdue: Cube roasted chicken and serve in taco shells, topped with shredded lettuce, chopped tomatoes, onion, shredded cheese, and taco sauce.

Golden Nugget Salad: Heat 1 package of chicken breast nuggets. Combine with Romaine lettuce, halved cherry tomatoes and diced avocado. Toss with your favorite dressing.

NUGGETS OR TENDERS WITH DIP

Fully cooked breaded chicken breast nuggets (14-18 per package)
or Tenders (6-8 per package)

Following package directions, warm nuggets or tenders in a conventional oven or, using package tray, heat in a microwave oven. Serve with ketchup or your favorite mustard. For myself, I've been trying some of the more exotic mustards from the supermarket and sometimes I put out several kinds in pretty little dishes that I'd otherwise use for nuts. Instead of a wine or cheese tasting, my guests end up trying different mustards.

PERDUE PLUS FIVE

When was the last time you baked a pie from scratch?

I'm asking you this question because I'm guessing that you're like many other people who've told me that today they'd never have time to bake a pie from scratch. They might have once, but they don't have the time any more.

In the last few years I've asked this question to dozens and dozens of audiences when giving talks. Almost always, I get the same answer: that people who once had had the time to do a lot of cooking now seldom do. They want to eat well, they enjoy cooking, but they just can't find the time.

If you were to ask me that question, I'd have to answer that I haven't found time to bake a pie from scratch in years either. Frank keeps me so busy that sometimes I think that I'm married to a whirlwind. People joke that he's the only man you'll ever meet who can enter a revolving door in the compartment behind you and come out ahead of you. They also joke that he doesn't get ulcers-but he's a carrier.

Knowing quick recipes has become more important to me than ever, and this section contains a selection of the best. The heating and cooking time may take an hour or so, but your part in the kitchen should be no more than fifteen minutes. In this section, you'll find uncomplicated recipes with few steps, and none of the recipes have more than five ingredients in addition to chicken, salt, pepper and water.

If like me, you also are looking for ways to prepare meals that taste good, look good, give you more satisfaction than microwaving a store bought frozen dinner, but don't require a long time in the kitchen, this section is for you.

BAKED ONION CHICKEN

Recipes don't get much easier on the cook than this. Anne Nesbit developed it for Perdue Farms. One of her jobs as a Perdue home economist was to translate some of the world's most successful recipes into ones that were both easy to assemble and quick to prepare. "I'm an admirer of simple recipes," says Anne. "My heart was in this work because I believed in it. People want food that looks good and tastes good, but they don't have time to put a lot of work into getting there." I've never met Anne, except over the phone, but from this comment, I know I would like her. The recipe isn't fancy, and it may be old-fashioned, but it's a treasure when you're in a hurry.

1 chicken, cut in serving pieces
dehydrated onion soup mix

Preheat oven to 350F. Roll chicken in dry soup mix, using about as much mix as you would salt. Place chicken in a single layer, skin side up, on baking sheet. Bake, uncovered for 55 to 65 minutes until cooked through.

BASIC FRIED CHICKEN

This is fried chicken in its simplest form. It's good enough so that the last time I made it, the grandchildren were making off with pieces almost as fast as I could cook them. Frank's daughter Anne Oliviero particularly recommends basic fried chicken served cold the next day for picnics. She and her family love to explore some of the islands off the coast of Maine, where they live, and cold fried chicken is just about always on the menu.

1/3 cup flour
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper or to taste
1 chicken cut in serving pieces
1/2 cup vegetable shortening

In a large plastic bag combine flour with salt and pepper. Shake chicken in bag with mixture. In a large, deep skillet over medium heat, melt shortening. Cook chicken uncovered, heat for 20 to 30 minutes on each side or until cooked through.

OVEN-FRIED CHICKEN, SOUTHWESTERN STYLE

Any basic fried chicken recipe may be adapted for oven frying. It is a useful technique when cooking larger quantities of chicken and is less messy than stovetop frying. (Especially if you have a self-cleaning oven.)

Simply follow the basic cooking instructions as given in the Southwestern version below.

1 chicken, cut in serving pieces
1 cup buttermilk
3/4 teaspoon Tabasco, optional
Vegetable oil for frying
1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup corn meal
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon chili powder
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper

Place chicken in a large bowl. Sprinkle with Tabasco. Pour buttermilk over all and allow to marinate for 10 to 15 minutes. Preheat oven to 425oF.

Place 1/2 inch of oil in the bottom of a heavy baking pan large enough to hold chicken without crowding. Place pan in oven to heat for 10 minutes.

In a plastic bag combine remaining ingredients. Shake chicken in seasoned flour. Remove pieces one at a time and quickly slip into hot oil. Place in oven and bake for 20 minutes. Turn and bake for 10 to 15 minutes longer or until chicken is cooked through. Drain chicken on crumpled paper towels.

BASIC ROAST CHICKEN

Sometimes there is nothing else that will fill the bill like roasted chicken. Here's the easiest way to do it. You can brush the surface with melted butter, margarine or oil, but it isn't really necessary.

1 whole chicken

1 teaspoon salt or to taste

1 package (7-1/2-ounces) stuffing mix, prepared as directed on package

Sprinkle cavity of chicken with salt. Stuff with favorite prepared stuffing. Or skip stuffing if you're really in a hurry. Place chicken in baking pan (no rack needed).

ROASTING CHART

| Approximate Cooking Time at 350F | Amount of Stuffing [in cups] | Additional Cooking Time if Stuffed |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Broiler/Fryer 1-1/4 to 2 hours (2-1/2 to 4 pounds) | 1-1/2 to 2 cups | 15 to 20 minutes |
| Oven Stuffer Roaster 2-1/4 to 2-3/4 hours (5 to 7 pounds) | 3 to 3-1/2 cups | 20 to 25 minutes |
| Cornish Game Hen 60 to 75 minutes (18-24-ounces) | 1/2 to 3/4 cup | 15 to 20 minutes |

BIRD OF PARADISE

The recipe calls for a chicken cut in serving pieces, but naturally you can substitute any parts that you particularly like, such as breasts or thighs. Three breasts or 6 thighs with drumsticks attached would come out to about the same amount as the 1 chicken called for in this recipe.

1 chicken, cut in serving pieces

Salt and ground pepper to taste

1 egg, beaten

1/4 cup milk

1 teaspoon salt or to taste

1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1/2 cup butter or margarine

1 cup sherry

Season chicken with salt and pepper. In a shallow bowl combine egg and milk. Place cheese in a shallow baking pan. Dip chicken in egg mixture; then roll in cheese. In a large, deep skillet, over medium heat, melt butter. Add chicken and brown for 5 to 6 minutes on each side. Add sherry. Cover and cook at medium-low heat for 35 to 45 minutes or until cooked through.

CORN CRISPED CHICKEN

I grew up on this recipe. It's not new, but it's good and the preparation time is minimal. If you don't have cornflakes, you can substitute almost any breakfast flakes as long as they don't have raisins in them. (The raisins can scorch in the oven.) For variation, you can add 1 teaspoon dried italian seasonings or 1 teaspoon chili powder or 3/4 teaspoon curry powder to the cornflake crumbs.

1 cup cornflake crumbs
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
1/2 cup evaporated milk, undiluted
1 chicken, cut in serving pieces

Preheat oven to 350F. On a sheet of wax paper combine cornflake crumbs, salt and pepper. Place evaporated milk in a shallow bowl. Dip chicken in milk; then roll in seasoned crumbs. Place chicken, skin side up, in a baking pan. Bake, uncovered for 1 hour, or until cooked through.

CUTLET PAILLARDS WITH BASIL BUTTER

When I made this recipe, I happened to be in a hurry, and didn't have time to get fresh basil so I used dried basil instead. Frank liked it and had seconds. The name "Paillard," by the way, comes from a European restaurant famous at the end of the 19th Century.

4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves or 1 thin sliced boneless roaster breast
1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
6 tablespoons butter or margarine
3 tablespoons minced fresh basil, or 1 tablespoon dried
1 small clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon lemon juice
salt and ground pepper to taste
lemon slices, for garnish

Place chicken between sheets of plastic wrap and pound to 1/2 inch thickness. If using thin sliced boneless Roaster breast, omit placing in plastic wrap and pounding. Brush cutlets lightly with oil, Grill over hot coals 3 to 4 minutes per side, rotating to form crosshatch marks characteristic of paillards, or broil 3 to 4 minutes per side or until cooked through. Place butter, basil, garlic and lemon juice in a small pan and melt on the side of the grill. Spoon butter over paillards and season with salt and pepper. Garnish with lemon slices.

EASY OVEN CHICKEN

This recipe has been one of my favorites since college days. The true chicken flavor comes out with just a touch of garlic.

1 chicken, cut in serving pieces
1/4 cup olive or vegetable oil
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
1 small clove garlic, minced

Preheat oven to 350F. In a shallow baking pan arrange chicken in a single layer, skin side up. Pour oil over chicken. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and garlic. Bake, uncovered, for about 1 hour, or until cooked through.

HONEY LEMON CHICKEN

This recipe was originally designed for broiling, but this version requires less attention. 1 chicken, cut in serving pieces

1/2 cup honey

1/4 cup lemon juice

1 teaspoon salt or to taste

Preheat oven to 350F. In a shallow baking pan arrange chicken in a single layer, skin side down. In a small bowl combine honey, lemon juice and salt. Pour half of this sauce over chicken. Bake, covered for 30 minutes. Remove cover; turn chicken. Pour other half of sauce on chicken. Replace cover. Bake another 25 to 30 minutes or until cooked through, removing cover last 10 minutes for browning.

HONEY-MUSTARD BAKED BREAST

Have you ever been concerned about whether the honey you have in your cupboard is fresh or whether it should be thrown out? Not to worry! Honey is itself a natural preservative and samples of honey have been found in the tombs of Ancient Egypt that were still edible. If it's crystallized, it may look bad, but it's still a wholesome food. Just heat it gently until it reliquifies.

1 whole boneless roaster breast
salt and ground pepper to taste
4 tablespoons melted butter or margarine
1/2 cup honey
1/4 cup Dijon mustard
1/4 teaspoon curry powder

Preheat oven to 350F. Season breast with salt and pepper. Combine butter, honey, mustard and curry powder. Spoon half of sauce into a shallow baking dish. Add breast and turn to coat well. Bake, uncovered, for about 1 hour or until cooked through. Turn and baste with remaining sauce once during cooking time.

IT'S A DILLY CHICKEN

When I read this recipe in the files, I noticed several hand-scrawled notes saying that it was really good, and someone described it as "a dilly of a recipe." Yet from reading the recipe, it didn't sound as special as the notes indicated, especially since the ingredients include canned mushrooms rather than fresh. I was curious enough that I went to the kitchen and made the recipe, expecting that this would be one of the recipes that I wouldn't include in this book. But to my surprise, I discovered that yes, dill seed and canned mushrooms, along with the juice from the mushrooms, really do something terrific for chicken. It's not rich or creamy, but there's an attractive, aromatic flavor that permeates the chicken.

1 chicken, cut in serving pieces
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
1 can (4-ounces) whole small mushrooms (with liquid)
1/2 teaspoon dill seed

Preheat oven to 350F. In a shallow baking pan arrange chicken, skin side up, in a single layer. Add salt, pepper, mushrooms (with liquid from can) and dill. Cover with foil. Bake at for 1 hour or until cooked through.

KIWI GLAZED CORNISH HENS

Kiwifruit is only sweet and mild when it's fully ripe. A kiwifruit grower told me that kiwifruits are ripe when they're "soft as a baby's bottom." When they're underripe, they taste like something between a lemon and a crabapple. If your kiwifruit is hard when you bring it home, give it a couple of days to ripen on your kitchen counter.

2 fresh Cornish game hens
salt and ground pepper to taste
3 tablespoons butter or margarine
1 tablespoon sugar
1 ripe kiwifruit, peeled and mashed

Preheat oven to 350F. Remove giblets. Season hens inside and out with salt and pepper. Tie legs together, fold wings back and arrange in baking pan. In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, melt butter. Brush hens with 2 tablespoons butter, reserving remainder. Put hens in oven, and while they are cooking, prepare kiwi glaze. Add sugar to remaining butter in pan and heat over medium-low until sugar dissolves. Add mashed kiwi and cook one minute. Remove from heat. After 45 minutes of cooking time, brush hens generously with kiwi glaze. Continue baking for 15 to 20 minutes or until juices run clear with no hint of pink when thigh is pierced.

FAMILY FAVORITES

In contrast to the preceding recipes, these recipes have more ingredients and require more preparation time, but if you've got the time, they're worth it. If you want to minimize time in the kitchen using these recipes, here are some suggestions.

Tips for Saving Time in the Kitchen

To halve baking time, select boneless chicken breasts. Cooking time is only 15-20 minutes at 350F. A bone-in breast takes 35-45 minutes.

Stir fry chicken can be done in as little as 4 minutes.

Cook double batches and freeze the extras in serving size packages. On days when time is short, pop a package into the microwave for "fast food."

Take advantage of your supermarket's time-saving convenience items. If you're in a hurry, don't bother to slice and chop your fresh ingredients. The salad bar has probably done it for you. You can also find time savers such as shredded cheese and frozen chopped onion. (The supermarket industry has watched restaurants and fast food stores take more and more of your food dollars away each year. They're now doing everything they can think of to reverse this trend and make supermarket shopping so attractive, quick, convenient and economical that you'll want to cook at home.)

Learn to cook chicken in the microwave. A pound of broiler parts that would take 40 minutes in a 350 degree oven takes only 6-10 minutes in the microwave. See Chapter Four, Chicken in the Microwave.

SOUPS

Wherever there are people and chickens, there are chicken soups. Virtually every immigrant group arriving in America brought along favorite chicken soup recipes and often the treasured family soup pot, too.

If you grew up on canned, frozen, and dried soups, you may not realize how easy it is to make truly wonderful soups at home. If so, try it for yourself, perhaps with these American classics. All the soups are based on a key ingredient: rich, homemade chicken stock, made from either whole birds or from parts, in about three hours. Stock takes little tending, just slow easy cooking to bring out all the flavor and wholesome goodness. Why not try making one of these soups now? And then, with the help of your freezer, enjoy the results many times in the coming months.

Basic Guide to Chicken Soup

Older, larger birds, such as the 5-7 pound roasters, make the best soups. An older bird will have developed more of the rich, intense chickeny flavor than the younger, milder-flavored broilers or Cornish hens. I've made soup from broilers and while it wasn't bad, it wasn't as good as it could be.

Use roaster parts if you want to save time. They cook faster and are excellent when you need only a small amount of broth. The richest flavor, by the way, comes from the muscles that are exercised most, which happen to be the dark meat muscles. All parts will make satisfactory soup, but the legs, thighs and necks provide the fullest flavor.

For clear, golden broth, do not add liver. It turns stock cloudy. And avoid a greenish cast by using only parsley stems and the white parts of leeks or scallions.

As the stock cooks down, foam will float to the top. Skim it off, or strain it out through double cheesecloth when the stock is complete. Tie herbs and greens in cheesecloth as a "bouquet garni," so you won't inadvertently remove them during the skimming.

Always simmer stock over low to medium heat. It's not a good idea to boil the stock for the same reason it's not a good idea to boil coffee; too much of the flavor would boil away into the air. oLeftover vegetables and those past their prime are good pureed in cream soups. When thickening such recipes with egg, prevent curdling by stirring a cup of hot soup first into egg, then back into soup. Also, be careful to keep the soup from boiling once you've added the egg.

Most soups develop better flavor if you'll store them, covered, in the refrigerator for a day or two. To seal in the flavor while you're storing the soup, don't remove the fat that's on top. When you're ready to serve the soup you can lift the congealed fat off as a sheet. To remove the last particles of fat, place unscented paper towel on the surface. Draw towel to one side and remove.

When freezing stock, allow 1/2- to 1-inch head room in containers so soup can expand. Freeze some in quart-sized or larger containers for use in soups. Ladle the rest into ice cube trays or muffin cups for adding to vegetables, sauces, or gravies. Freeze and then transfer frozen stock cubes to a plastic bag or freezer container and keep frozen until ready to use.

Soup may be stored in the refrigerator two or three days or frozen for three to four months. When reheating, make sure to bring the broth to a boil. Soups enriched with eggs are, unfortunately, not good candidates for reheating; they're apt to curdle.

BASIC CHICKEN STOCK

Makes about 8 cups

If you need to, you can make the following substitutions for the roaster: 1 stewing hen or spent fowl (5-7 pounds); 2 fresh young chickens (2-4 pounds); or 6 pounds fresh chicken parts, preferably dark meat portions. (As I mentioned earlier, young chickens will not provide as rich a flavor as the older birds but the taste will still be good.) Cooking times for meat will vary from 3 hours for stewing hens or spent fowl, to 1-1/2 hours for 2 smaller birds to slightly less time for parts. In each case, time from beginning of simmer and return bones to stock for an additional 1/2 hour after you've removed the meat.

Chicken stock is delicious served as a simple broth with herbs, shredded or julienne vegetables, slivers of meat, or rice. It also is the base from which countless other soups are made.

- 1 roaster (5-7 pounds)
- chicken giblets, except liver
- 1 large bay leaf
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 teaspoon white peppercorns
- 1 1/2 teaspoons fresh thyme or 1/2 teaspoon dried
- 4 quarts water or enough to cover chicken generously
- 1 cup dry white wine, optional
- 2 medium onions, quartered
- 2 large carrots, sliced
- 2 ribs celery, sliced
- 1 leek, white part only, cleaned and sliced, optional
- 1 bunch fresh parsley, stems only
- 1 teaspoon salt or to taste

Remove giblets from roaster and discard bird-watcher thermometer, if it has one. Place roaster along with giblets in a large stockpot (8 to 10 quarts) or other large sauce pot. Wrap bay leaf, cloves, peppercorns, and thyme in cheesecloth as bouquet garni; tie closed with string. Add to stockpot along with remaining ingredients. Cover pot and simmer over medium-low heat for 2-1/2 hours or until meat is tender. Carefully skim stock from time to time with a ladle or spoon to remove fat particles and foam.

To check roaster for doneness, pull back a leg or cut into meat close to bone; it is cooked when no pink color remains in meat. Remove pieces with a slotted spoon. Cut away meat from bones and return bones to stock; simmer 30 minutes longer. (See Chapter 10: Cooking with Leftovers for uses for the cooked meat.)

Strain stock through a fine sieve. If you want, prepare in advance to this point and refrigerate or freeze. Skim off top fat before using.

To make a soup, bring as much stock as needed to a simmer. Then follow the soup recipe, adding chicken, vegetables, thickeners, seasonings, and garnishes.

CHICKEN-IN-EVERY-POT SOUP

For the best flavor, use fresh vegetables, varying them according to the season. Speaking of fresh vegetables, do you know how to tell a good carrot? Look at the "crown," (that's the stem end). If the crown is turning brown or black or has regrowth visible where the stem was, you've got a carrot that's been around awhile. If the crown and shoulders are a bright orange, you've got a nice, fresh carrot.

1 cup potatoes, cut in 1/2-inch cubes
4 cups chicken broth
1/4 cup dry sherry
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/8 teaspoon ground pepper
1 cup onions, halved and thinly sliced
1 cup carrots, in 1/4-inch by 2-inch sticks
1 cup celery, in 1/4-inch by 2-inch sticks
1 cup fresh or frozen green beans, in 2-inch pieces
2 cups cooked chicken, in 1/4-inch by 2-inch julienne strips
1 cup zucchini, in 1/4-inch by 2-inch sticks

Place potatoes in a saucepan with enough salted water to cover. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook potatoes 5 minutes; drain, rinse under cold water and set aside. In large saucepan over medium-high heat, bring broth and sherry to a boil. Season with salt and pepper. Add onions, carrots, and celery and simmer 5 minutes. Stir in green beans and chicken and heat soup to boiling. Add zucchini and potatoes and simmer 1 minute longer or until vegetables are as tender as you like them.

Variation: Chicken Minestrone

Add 1 cup chopped stewed tomatoes in their juice and 2 cups cooked, drained fusilli or other pasta and 1/2-cup cooked kidney beans when adding zucchini and potatoes. Stir in 1/2-cup grated Parmesan cheese just before serving. Other fresh vegetables may be added according to their cooking times. Minestrone happens to be one of Frank's favorites, although he skips the cheese because of its cholesterol.

NEW ENGLAND CHICKEN 'N' CORN CHOWDER

Chowders are thick soups which take their name from the large French pot used in soup-making called a "chaudiere." You can use fresh corn in this recipe, but I deliberately suggested frozen corn first because frozen corn can actually taste sweeter and fresher than the fresh corn you buy at the supermarket. Corn loses 50% of its sweetness in just 24 hours at room temperature, and it can take days for corn to get from the fields to the supermarket to your house. In contrast, frozen corn is rushed from the fields to the freezer in just a few hours, and once frozen, it stops losing its sweetness. Strange as it may seem, with corn, frozen can taste fresher than fresh.

1/4 pound bacon or salt pork, diced
1 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup chopped celery
4 cups chicken broth
2 cups peeled potatoes, cut in 1/2-inch cubes
1 package (10 ounces) frozen corn or kernels from 2 ears of corn
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/8 teaspoon ground pepper
2 cups cooked, diced chicken
1 cup (1/2-pint) heavy cream
Oyster crackers, for garnish

In large saucepan over medium-high heat, saute bacon for 3 minutes until its fat has been rendered. Add onions and celery and cook 3 minutes longer. Stir in broth and bring to a boil, whisking constantly. Add potatoes and corn, season with salt and pepper and cook 5 to 10 minutes or until tender. Stir in chicken and cream, simmer 3 minutes and serve with oyster crackers.

Variation: Shellfish Chowder

Add 1 cup chopped green pepper and 1 cup cooked crab or shrimp to soup when adding chicken.

HEARTY LANCASTER CHICKEN, VEGETABLE AND DUMPLING SOUP

This is a famous Pennsylvania summer soup made with extra vegetables for hearty winter eating. You can substitute noodles for the dumplings, or add crackers, pretzels - and some people have told me that even popcorn works. I'm skeptical about the popcorn, but if you're feeling adventurous, give it a try.

6 cups chicken broth
2 cups cooked, diced chicken
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/8 teaspoon ground pepper
1/2 cup parboiled potatoes, cut in 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 cup parboiled carrots, cut in 1/2-inch pieces
1/2 cup shredded green cabbage
1 cup thinly-sliced leek, white and tender green parts only, or 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
1 package (10-ounces) frozen corn kernels from 2 ears of corn

Knepp

In large saucepan over high heat, bring broth to a boil. Add other ingredients and reduce heat to low. Simmer for 3 minutes while making dumplings.

Knepp (Little Dumplings)

1 egg
3/4 cup flour
1/3 cup water
1/4 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/8 teaspoon baking powder
Pinch ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon minced, fresh parsley, optional garnish

In small bowl, beat egg; stir in flour, water, salt, baking powder, and nutmeg. Drop batter by half teaspoons into the simmering soup. When dumplings rise to top, stir in parsley and serve.

Variation: Chicken Spinach Straciatella

Omit dumplings. Clean and stem 1/2 pound fresh spinach; stack and cut into 1/2-inch strips. Whisk together 2 eggs with 1/2-cup grated Parmesan cheese. Stir in spinach with chicken, then heat soup just to boiling. Immediately pour in the egg mixture in a thin stream, while stirring. The goal is to end up with thread-like strands of cooked egg. Cook until soup simmers again; stir gently just before serving.

STEW FROM BAVARIA

If you like mild sauerkraut, instead of just draining it, as the recipe suggests, rinse it in a colander or strainer.

1 roaster boneless breast, cut into bite-size pieces

salt and ground pepper to taste

2 tablespoons butter or margarine

1 medium onion, thinly sliced

1 pound sauerkraut, drained

1 can (16 ounces) whole berry cranberry sauce

1 large apple, peeled, cored and sliced

1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Season breast pieces with salt and pepper. In a flame proof casserole or Dutch oven over medium heat, melt butter. Add chicken and onions. Saute until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. In a bowl combine sauerkraut, cranberry sauce and apples. Spoon over chicken and onions and toss gently. Cover and simmer over medium-low heat for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with walnuts just before serving.

BAKED BREASTS WITH CHEESE

When the Perdue Oven Stuffer Roasters and Roaster Parts first came out, Frank used to have recipe cards put in each one because it was a new product and most people didn't know how they should be cooked. The practice was discontinued once Roasters became well-known. The woman in charge of distributing recipes told me that sometimes the recipes on the cards became family favorites, and when a person lost one of the family favorite cards, he or she would actually take the trouble to write to Frank for a replacement. I asked how often this happens and learned that over the years, Frank has received thousands of letters requesting replacement cards. This is one of the recipes that people have asked for over and over again.

3 tablespoons butter or margarine, divided
1 roaster boneless breast
salt and ground pepper to taste
2 scallions, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley
1 and 1/2 teaspoons fresh thyme or 1/2 teaspoon dried
1/2 cup chicken broth
3 tablespoons dry white wine
3/4 cup grated Swiss cheese
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 375F. Lightly butter a shallow baking dish. Place chicken in baking dish and sprinkle with salt, pepper, scallions, parsley, and thyme. In a measuring cup combine broth and wine and pour over chicken. Cover and bake 20 minutes. In a small bowl combine cheeses and bread crumbs. Remove chicken from oven and sprinkle with cheese mixture. Dot with remaining butter and place under broiler until cheese is melted and golden.