

POULTRY & GAMES

A general name given to all domesticated birds bred for the table, as distinct from the edible wild birds which are classed as game. It includes Chicken, Turkey, Duckling and Goose. Guinea Fowl which used to be regarded as game, is now farmed and classified as poultry. Methods of breeding and rearing poultry have changed dramatically, so that now it is cheap and plentiful and no longer served only on special occasions.

STORING POULTRY

Remove any wrappings from the bird as soon as possible and the giblets if there are any. The bird can be stored on a plate, covered with greaseproof paper or foil, in the refrigerator for 2-3 days. The giblets are best cooked the same day.

Frozen birds should be transferred to the freezer while still solidly frozen. If possible, freeze the giblets separately as they only have a freezer life of 1 month.

FABRICATION

TRUSSING - It is done to keep the bird in compact shape. You need a trussing needle or fine skewer and thin thread.

BREASTS (Fillet) - Maximum 2nos of fillet can be taken out from a poultry. It is generally taken out from the breast portion and it has to be boneless or may be with the wing bone.

SUPREME - Maximum 2nos of supreme can be taken out from the breast part of a poultry. Generally it is situated beneath the breast. This suppose to be most tender part of a poultry and the uses for this is also for some less time taking dishes.

LEGS - There will be maximum 2 legs for a poultry. Generally from the legs we take out different parts such as Thigh, which is the upper part of the leg and Drumsticks which are the lower part of the leg.

PERSON'S NOSE - This is not an exact cut but an essential part of a poultry and is used for different dishes. Generally situated at the end of the body and contains huge amount of fat which helps to maintain the energy source of the body.

GIBLETS (Offals) - The intestinal part of poultry is known as Giblets or Offals. Generally this refers to Stomach and Liver but may be sometimes the Heart and Kidneys are also included.

CHICKEN / POULET / VOLLALILE

A domestic fowl that is classified as poultry and bred for its meat and eggs. It is extremely popular and widely available. Modern methods of breeding and rearing have led to chicken being reasonably cheap and plentiful. It is available fresh or frozen and is used in dishes all over the world. It is very important, however, that a frozen bird be thoroughly thawed before cooking to ensure it is cooked through before eating.

Chicken like all meat, is a good source of protein, iron and B vitamins. It contains very little fat. Chicken can be grilled, fried, roasted, boiled, poached or casseroled. Classic chicken dishes include Coq-Au-Vin, Chicken Maryland, Chicken Marengo, Chicken Kiev and Chaud-froid of Chicken.

- BUYING CHICKEN** - As well as the standard whole bird, chicken can be bought in a number of other forms in the shops, including a variety of smaller or larger birds that are treated in particular ways, and various ready-cut chicken portions.
- POUSSINS** - Are very small chickens, 450 - 575gms, 4 - 8 weeks old, 1 serves 1 to 2 person.
- SPRING CHICKEN** - Also known as Broiler. These are smaller birds, 1.1kgs, 12 weeks old, 1 serves 2 to 3 people.
- ROASTERS** - Are generally young cockerels or hens. They are 1.8 - 2.3kgs and 1 serves 5 to 6 people.
- BOILING FOWLS** - Are older, tougher birds, 1.8 - 3.2kgs. They should be 18 months old, but may in some cases be older. They are usually served in casseroles. A 2.3 - 3.2kgs boiling fowl will serve 6 - 8 people.
- CORN FED CHICKEN** - Are yellow in colour because of their diet of sweet corn (maize) and cost more than chickens fed on standard diet.

NB Difference between HEN & CHICKEN

** Hens are always female but chicken could be male or female.

NB

THAWING - It is process to bring out the temperature of a frozen material into room temperature. To do a thawing a separate room is used which is known as thawing room and the temperature of a thawing room is never more than 4°C.

GAME

The name given to wild birds and animals which are hunted for food, but which at certain times of the year are protected by law. Also included in this category are PIGEONS, QUAIL which are farmed, RABBITS, which are also farmed but are cooked in the same way as hares, and VENISON. Game feeds on food not available to farm-reared animals which gives it its distinctive gamey flavour.

GAME BIRDS

SELECTION POINT

Game birds are best eaten young. The PLUMAGE is a guide as all young birds have soft, even feathers. With PHEASANT and PARTRIDGE, the long wing feathers are V-shaped in a young bird, as distinct from the rounded ones of an older bird. Smooth, pliable legs, short spurs and a firm, plump breast are other points to look for. Most game birds need to be hung so ask the butcher if the bird has been hung and for how long. If it is not hung, the flesh will be tough and tasteless.

Alternatively you can also hang game birds according to your choice in a cold, dry, airy place. The birds should be hung by the neck without being plucked or drawn, except in the case of wild duck, which may be drawn before hanging.

If you are given a bird that has been damaged by shot or is wet, it will not keep as long as a bird in good condition. Check out frequently and cook it as soon as the tail feathers will pluck out easily.

Hanging Times for Game Birds:-

BIRD	HANGING TIME (Days)
Black Game (Grouse)	3 - 10
Capercaillie	7 - 14
General Grouse	2 - 4
Partridge (Grey & Red Legged)	3 - 5
Pheasant	3 - 10
Ptarmigan	2 - 4
Snipe	3 - 4
Wild Duck (Mallard, Teal & Widgeon)	2 - 3
Wild Geese (Pink-footed & Grey leg)	2 - 9
Woodcock	3 - 5
Wood Pigeon	Requires no hanging

Storing Game Birds:-

A bird that has been hung and is ready for cooking can be stored for 1 - 2 days in the refrigerator or it can be frozen. If necessary, a bird can be frozen for a short time with its feathers on, and plucked after thawing, but it is best to pluck and draw first.

Cooking & Serving:-

The more simply game is cooked, the better. For a young bird, there is no better way than roasting, but for older birds, which are likely to be tough if plainly roasted, braising or casseroles are better methods.

Game birds lack fat, so it is usual to cover or bard the breast before roasting with pieces of fat bacon and to baste frequently with butter or margarine during cooking. When the bird is nearly cooked, the bacon can be removed in order to brown the meat.

Accompaniments:-

1. Thin Gravy - Can be served with any roast game bird.
2. Fried Crumbs - Are another popular accompaniments. Fry in butter or margarine till golden and serve hot.
3. Game Chips - Made out of potato and fried into golden brown colour.
4. Bread Sauce - Is traditionally served with pheasant, but may also accompany other game birds.

Small birds, such as grouse, are often roasted on a slice of toast or bread. The bird is then served on the toast or bread on which it is roasted.

CAPERCAILZIE - The largest member of the grouse family whose flesh is somewhat resinous flavour and available in Scotland most. It is cooked in the same way as grouse.

DUCK (Duckling) - It is a flavoursome bird that is delicious roasted and served with its traditional accompaniment, Orange Sauce. Nearly all breeds of domestic duck are descended from just 2 species of wild duck, the Mallard and the South American Muscovy Duck. The best breeds are considered to be the British Aylesbury, the American Long Island and the French Rouen and Nantes Duck.

GOOSE - Goose are rather fatty and when they are cooked the flesh is dark, with a rich, meaty flavour, therefore accompaniments should counteract this. Traditional accompaniments include sage and onion stuffing and apple or gooseberry sauce.

GROUSE (Moor Fowl) - There are several varieties of this game bird, but the name generally refers to the red or Scotch grouse, which is at its best from August to October. The young birds make the best eating which have pointed flight feathers.

PARTRIDGE - A greyish-brown game bird. When young, the legs and feet of partridge are yellowish, the beak supple and the wing feathers pointed.

PHEASANT - A game bird which is at its prime in October. In the fields, it is the cock bird, with its colourful feathers which delights the eye, but on the table, the duller brown hen bird is preferred. It may also be mixed with veal, ham and mushrooms in a pie, or cooked in a casserole with onion, tomato, bacon and sherry or other ingredients such as apple, celery, grapes, cream and wine.

PIGEON - Pigeons are plucked, drawn, singed, washed and trussed like other poultry or game, except that the feet are not cut off but are scalded and scraped. To roast pigeon, prepare, stuff and truss, then cover the breasts with rashers of streaky bacon and place a small shallot inside each bird. Roast at 200°C for 20 - 30 minutes. Serve each bird on a fried bread, garnished with watercress and serve with roast gravy.

PTARMIGAN - A small wild bird of the grouse family, which is found in Northern Europe, including Scotland and it turns white during winter season. The flavour of ptarmigan is not so good as that of Grouse, but the bird may be treated in the same way.

QUAIL - The Quail is a very small bird, weighing only 100 - 125 gm. and it is usual to serve 2 birds per person. It is usually sold oven ready and are cooked and eaten without being drawn.

RABBIT & HARE - Rabbits and Hares look similar but are two different species. Hares are available from late summer to early spring. Rabbits are available all the year round and may be tame (farmed) or wild. Hares are a darker more gamey flavoured flesh than rabbits.

Hares are hung by the hind feet without being paunched (entrails removed) for 5 - 7 days to improve the flavour. During this time, the blood collects in the chest cavity. When paunching, collect the blood if required for jugged hare and add 5ml of vinegar to stop it coagulating. It can be stored, covered in the refrigerator for 2 - 3 days.

Rabbits are available both fresh and frozen. Unlike hares, they are paunched within a few hours of killing and are not hung. Fresh rabbit can be cooked as the same way as hare.

Paunching - To remove the entrails of a hare or rabbit by reserving the kidneys and liver inside the body. Discard the lungs but keep the heart and if used for Paunched hare reserve the blood.

SNIPE - A small bird with a long bill and stripped plumage. It should be eaten really fresh, so make sure when buying that the bill is dry and the feet supple.

VENISON - Venison is the meat of the red, fallow or roe deer. The meat is inclined to be tough so it is hung for 1 - 2 weeks before cooking. The meat should be dark and firm with clear white fat.

WOODCOCK - A small wild bird with mottled plumage, long bill and large eyes. The young birds are best and can be recognised by the fact that the feathers beneath the wing are like down. Woodcock are cooked without drawing and with their heads still on. They are usually roasted and should be barded with bacon beforehand.