

Chicken



Chicken is a popular protein-rich food. This type of poultry can be a lean meat, especially when eaten without the skin. It is packed with B vitamins and selenium. There are many ways to cook chicken, but let's start with the basics.

Getting Started

Start with cuts of chicken such as the breast, legs, and thighs. You can also buy a whole chicken and have the butcher cut it into 8 pieces. Season chicken with your favorite herbs, spices, and citrus juices to add flavor. To reduce fat, cook chicken with the skin on and remove the skin before eating. If you buy skinless chicken breast, trim off any visible fat before cooking.

Lower your risk of foodborne illness by handling chicken safely:

- Keep chicken in the refrigerator until you are ready to cook it and then cook it thoroughly. To know if chicken is done, insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part. The thermometer should read at least 165° F.
- Defrost frozen chicken in the refrigerator the night before you plan on cooking it. Do not leave it on your countertop to defrost.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after you handle raw chicken.
- Carefully clean and sanitize all cooking tools, dishes, and surfaces that come into contact with raw chicken or its juices before allowing them to touch prepared foods.
- Throw away marinades that were used to flavor raw chicken.

Equipment

- Mixing bowl
- Baking sheet (for baking chicken)
- Sauté pan (for sautéing chicken)
- Two pairs of tongs
- Meat thermometer

How to Grill Chicken

1. Place chicken in a medium bowl and coat with your favorite marinade. Cover the bowl and allow the chicken to marinate for at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator.
2. Heat the grill.
3. Using tongs, place the raw chicken on the grill. Throw away remaining marinade.
4. Cook 6-ounce pieces of boneless chicken breast for about 6 minutes on each side. Cook bone-in pieces of chicken for 15–20 minutes or until cooked through (to 165°F), turning chicken as needed.

How to Bake Chicken

1. Place chicken in a medium bowl and coat with your favorite marinade. Cover the bowl and allow the chicken to marinate for at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F.
3. Lightly coat a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray.
4. Place marinated chicken on the baking sheet. Throw away remaining marinade.
5. Bake boneless chicken for 25–30 minutes and bone-in chicken for about 45 minutes. Make sure the chicken is fully cooked by inserting the thermometer in the thickest part. It should read at least 165°F.

How to Sauté Chicken

1. Use thin pieces of boneless chicken breast. These work best for sautéing.
2. Sprinkle both sides of the chicken with salt, pepper, and herbs or spices of choice.
3. Add 1 tablespoon canola oil to a sauté pan and heat over medium-high heat.
4. Add the chicken to the pan and lower the heat to medium. Cook until browned, 4–5 minutes.
5. Turn the chicken using a clean pair of tongs. Cook an additional 4–5 minutes or until chicken reaches a minimum internal temperature of 165°F.



Recipe Ideas

- **Oven-Baked Chicken:** Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a medium-size bowl, beat 1 egg (or you can use fat-free yogurt). Pour ½ cup bread crumbs into a shallow dish. Dip 2 (5- to 6-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts into the egg or yogurt and then drag the chicken through the bread crumbs until it is coated on both sides. Place the chicken breast on a baking sheet and bake for 25–30 minutes. Serves 2.
- **Chicken Skewers:** Preheat grill. Cut ¾ pound of boneless, skinless chicken breast into 1-inch pieces and marinate in ½ cup teriyaki or peanut sauce for at least 30 minutes. Thread the chicken onto metal or water-soaked bamboo skewers and grill until cooked through, about 4–5 minutes on each side. Serves 2–3.
- **Honey Chicken:** In a large bowl, combine ¼ cup canola oil, ⅓ cup honey, ⅓ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce, and a pinch of black pepper. Add ¾ pound of boneless, skinless chicken breast to the bowl and toss to coat well. Cover the bowl and allow the chicken breast to marinate for at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator. Bake or grill. Serves 2–3.

