

**PREP TIME:**

15 minutes

**COOK TIME:**

45 minutes

**INGREDIENTS**

- For the Roast Chicken:
- 1 (5 to 6-pound) roasting chicken
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large bunch fresh thyme
- 1 lemon, halved
- 1 head garlic, cut in half crosswise
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 large yellow onion, thickly sliced
- 4 carrots, cut into 2-inch chunks
- 1 bulb fennel, tops removed, and cut into wedges
- Olive oil
- For the Gravy:
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- For the Creamy Herbed Polenta:
- 6 cups chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic (3 cloves)
- 1½ cups stone-ground cornmeal
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1½ cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 6 tablespoons crème fraîche
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs (such as parsley, thyme, or chives)

# JUICY BAKED CHICKEN

**DIRECTIONS**

- Prepare the Roast Chicken:
- Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C).
- Remove the chicken giblets. Rinse the chicken inside and out, and pat dry.
- Liberally salt and pepper the inside of the chicken. Stuff the cavity with the thyme, lemon halves, and garlic.
- Brush the outside of the chicken with melted butter and season with salt and pepper.
- Tie the legs together with kitchen string and tuck the wing tips under the body.
- Place the onions, carrots, and fennel in a roasting pan. Toss with olive oil, salt, pepper, and 20 sprigs of thyme. Spread around the bottom of the roasting pan and place the chicken on top.
- Roast the chicken for 1½ hours, or until the juices run clear when you cut between a leg and thigh.
- Remove the chicken and vegetables to a platter and cover with aluminum foil while you prepare the gravy.
- Make the Gravy:
- Remove all but 2 tablespoons of fat from the bottom of the roasting pan.
- Add the chicken stock to the pan and cook on high heat for about 5 minutes, until reduced, scraping the bottom of the pan.
- Combine the 2 tablespoons of fat with the flour to make a paste, and add to the pan. Boil for a few minutes to cook the flour.
- Strain the gravy into a small saucepan and season to taste. Keep warm over low heat.
- Prepare the Creamy Herbed Polenta:
- In a large saucepan, bring the chicken stock and garlic to a boil.
- Reduce the heat to a simmer and slowly add the cornmeal, whisking constantly to prevent lumps.
- Switch to a wooden spoon, add 1½ tablespoons salt and 2 teaspoons pepper, and simmer over very low heat for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring almost constantly, until thick.
- Off the heat, stir in the Parmesan, crème fraîche, butter, and chopped herbs. Taste for seasonings and serve hot.
- Serve:
- Carve the roast chicken and serve alongside the roasted vegetables.
- Spoon the creamy herbed polenta onto plates and drizzle with the prepared gravy.
- Enjoy this hearty and flavorful Sunday supper!
- Note: This recipe is inspired by Ina Garten's "Perfect Roast Chicken" and "Creamy Parmesan Polenta" from Barefoot Contessa.