

## How to Brine and Roast a Chicken

### Recipe notes:

This recipe can be done two ways; with brining, or without. Brining a chicken can yield moister meat, especially in the chicken breast which tends to dry out, but also takes time which some people don't have. If you choose to skip this step, that's perfectly fine (I often do), you will still come out with a delicious fresh roasted bird.

The ratio of salt to water for the brine comes from Michael Ruhlman's book [Ratio: The Simple Codes Behind the Craft of Everyday Cooking](#). However, his recipe includes sautéing vegetables, cooking the brine mixture and cooling it with ice. I prefer an easier method, but it is difficult to dissolve 6 oz of kosher salt in water so a small amount of water must be heated. You can do this in a pot as I did or try pouring hot water from a kettle over it in a heatproof container. Either way, the chicken and the rest of the water are cold enough to cool down the dissolved salt/sugar/water mix.

The brine recipe below is for a 6 lb. chicken. You can adjust the ratio of salt to water down for a smaller chicken.

### Preparing the Chicken:

Place the raw chicken in a clean sink and remove anything inside the cavity (neck, giblets, liver, etc.). Thoroughly rinse the chicken in cold water.

At this point, if you choose not to brine the chicken skip to the "**How to Roast a Chicken**" step.

### Citrus Brine Recipe

120 oz (15 cups) water  
6 oz (wt) kosher salt  
1 oz (wt) brown sugar  
1 lemon  
1 orange  
1 grapefruit  
2-3 sprigs fresh rosemary  
1 bay leaf  
1 tsp black peppercorns  
2 tsp juniper berries  
4 cloves of garlic

Heat 2 cups of the water in a small pot with the salt and brown sugar until the salt and sugar dissolves. Allow to cool for 5 minutes.

## Recipe from FormerChef.com

Toast the pepper and juniper berries in a small pan for about 30 seconds until fragrant. Crush the pepper and juniper berries in a mortar and pestle or with the flat part of a knife.

Smash the garlic cloves.

Place the chicken in a 12 qt pot, large bowl, or large zip lock bag. Cut the citrus in half and squeeze over the chicken. Drop the citrus into the pot. Add the smashed garlic, spices and herbs. Pour in the remaining 13 cups of water and then the dissolved sugar/salt mixture. If the chicken floats, weight it down with a plate. Cover and refrigerate for 8-12 hours. Flip the chicken every few hours.

### **How to Roast a Chicken**

salt  
pepper  
olive oil

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

If brining the chicken, remove it from the brine, rinse and pat dry inside and out. Discard the brine.

Rub the skin with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Place the chicken on a v-shaped rack in a roasting pan in the oven. A 4 lb chicken will take 45 minutes to an hour. My 6 lb bird took about an hour and 15 minutes.

Check the progress after about 1/2 an hour. If some parts are starting to get dark faster than others, cover them with foil (see photo above) and rotate the chicken in the oven for even roasting.

At 45 minutes, start checking for doneness. An instant read thermometer is very useful here; cook the chicken until it reaches an internal temperature of 160 degrees in the thickest part of the meat, thigh or breast, it does not matter.

When done, remove from the oven and let rest for about 10 minutes before cutting to allow the juices to settle. Like a steak, if you cut it too soon, the juices will all run out and you will end up with a very dry chicken.