



My Baked Chicken and Rice

This was the chicken and rice I cooked for our children nearly every week. I didn't use a recipe but somewhere along the line, someone asked me for the recipe, and I wrote it down. You can use a whole chicken and cut it up, or you can use pre-cut chicken pieces. Buy the best chicken you can afford, and always rinse it when you get it home from the store. I find that chickens aren't cleaned as well as they used to be, and without going into any unsavory details, let's just say rinse it inside and out, and pat dry with paper towels. And this is really a blueprint. You can add mushrooms or carrots, any veg you like. Add some zucchini at the end if they are coming into your garden. Add a splash of sherry if it's close at hand. Make my chicken and rice your chicken and rice.

Serves: 4

Prep: 10 minutes

Soak: 30 minutes

Bake: 2 hours

1 3- to 4-pound whole organic chicken, rinsed

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 medium onion

2 bay leaves

½ cup water or white wine

¾ cup long-grain white rice, such as Basmati

1 cup water

Chopped Italian parsley, for garnish

1. Place a rack in the center of the oven, and preheat the oven to 300 degrees.
2. With poultry shears cut the backbone out of the chicken and discard. Trim off the thigh and leg portions, keeping the thigh and leg in one piece. Keep the double breast with ribs and wings in one piece. Pat chicken dry with paper towels.
3. Place 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in a heavy Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the chicken pieces, skin-side down. Let sear until they are golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes, then with tongs turn to the other sides, and brown them all over. You may need to reduce the heat to medium if the pan gets too hot. Turn off the heat and season the seared chicken with salt and pepper. Discard extra grease in the pan.
4. Meanwhile, peel the onion and cut into quarters. Tuck the onion around the chicken. Add the bay leaves. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water or white wine to the pan, and place the lid on the pan. Place the pan in the oven to cook until the chicken is very tender, $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
5. Remove the pan from the oven, and leave the oven on. Remove the pan lid, and sprinkle the raw rice around the chicken. Pour the water over the rice, and stir with a fork to moisten the rice with pan juices. Place the lid back on the pan. Return the pan to the oven so the rice can cook, 20 minutes more.
6. To serve, carefully remove the chicken to a platter to keep warm. Spoon the rice alongside, and scatter chopped parsley over the top.