

How to Safely Cook Chicken from Frozen

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If you are in a rush, you may not have the time to thaw chicken for a meal. Luckily, you can save yourself some time and safely cook chicken from frozen. You can roast a whole, frozen chicken for a large group, or bake breasts or drumsticks for a smaller meal. Regardless of how much chicken you cook, it is important to always follow the safety guidelines for cooking chicken and thoroughly cook your meat to avoid any foodborne illnesses.

Method 1

Method 1 of 3: Roasting a Whole Chicken from Frozen



1 Use caution when cooking frozen chicken. If you are cooking any parts of a chicken from frozen, there is an increased risk for foodborne illness. To kill any pathogens in the chicken, be sure to cook the meat to an internal temperature of at least 165°F (74°C). Always prepare from frozen chicken in the oven or on the stovetop and, as a rule of thumb, cook it about 50 percent longer than you would thawed meat.^[1] ^[2]

- For example, it would take about two hours to roast a thawed 5-pound (2.25 kg) roasting hen at 350°F (177°C). If frozen, a similarly sized chicken would take about three hours to cook thoroughly at the same temperature.
- Check the internal temperature of the meat by inserting a meat thermometer into thickest part of the breast and the innermost part of the thigh and wing. If the thermometer does not read 165°F (74°C), continue cooking the bird.
- Do not try to cook the frozen chicken in a slow cooker. The appliance will not get hot enough to kill the pathogens in the meat. It also leaves the meat sitting for too long at unsafe temperatures.



2 Preheat the oven. Turn on your oven and heat it to 350°F (177°C). While your oven warms up, put the frozen chicken breast-side-up in a large roasting pan. This will ensure that the densest meat of the bird gets thoroughly cooked.^[3]

- Depending on the size of the chicken, you may also be able to use a Dutch oven instead of a roasting pan.



3 Dress the chicken. If the bird is not frozen closed, try to remove the giblets from inside of the chicken. Once you remove the giblets, stuff the bird with your favorite ingredients, such as lemon, onion, rosemary, and thyme. Then rub the exterior of the chicken with olive oil and sprinkle it with salt and pepper.^[4]

- If you cannot access the inside of the bird, wait until it has cooked for about 45 minutes to remove the giblets. Use tongs and an oven mitt to remove the giblets and insert any stuffings that you want.



4 Cook the chicken. Place the seasoned chicken in the oven uncovered and roast for about 90 minutes. Then increase the temperature of the oven to 450°F (232°C) and cook the chicken for another 15 to 30 minutes. This will help brown the skin. Remove the pan from the oven and serve once a meat thermometer placed into various parts of the chicken reads 165°F (74°C). [5]

- These cooking times are based on a 4-pound (1.8 kg) chicken. Be sure to adjust the roasting time based on the weight of your chicken.
- Let the chicken rest for 10 to 15 minutes to cool before carving.
- If there is any pink or red meat, place the whole bird or uncooked pieces back in the oven until they turn white and there is no red in the juices.

Method 2 of 3: Preparing Breaded Chicken Breasts from Frozen



1 Freeze the breasts individually. When you bring the chicken breasts home from the grocery store, place them in single layer in a freezer bag. Make sure that there is some space between the breasts. If they freeze together, it will be hard to separate them and you will likely have to thaw them.^[6]

- You can also freeze the breasts flat on a plate or tray and then transfer them to a freezer bag.
- This is a good strategy for freezing any individual chicken parts.



- 2 Preheat the oven.** Preheat your oven to 425°F (218°C). While the oven warms, lightly oil a baking sheet. You can use olive oil, vegetable oil, or any other preferred cooking oil or fat. Then place four boneless skinless chicken breasts on the tray so they're spread out and cook evenly.^[7] ^[8]
- If you are cooking frozen chicken breasts without breading, preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C).



- 3 Add breading.** As the oven warms, mix 1/3-cup (113 g) dry breadcrumbs, ½-teaspoon (3 g) salt, ¼-teaspoon (1.5 g) of black pepper, ¼-teaspoon (1.5 g) garlic powder with one tablespoon (15 ml) of cooking oil. Spread about one teaspoon (5 ml) of mustard on the top of the frozen chicken breasts. Then sprinkle the breadcrumb mixture onto the breasts, making sure that the mix sticks to the mustard.^[9]



4 Bake the breasts. Place the tray in the oven and cook the breasts for about 30 to 40 minutes. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the breast to make sure that it is cooked thoroughly. Keep your oven closed while they're baking so it doesn't lose any heat.^[10] If the temperature is below 165°F (74°C) or if there is any red or pink meat, put the breasts back in the oven and let them cook until they are white and the juices run clear.^[11]

- If you are cooking four frozen 4-oz (28 g) chicken breasts without any breading, you should cook them at 350°F (177°C) for 30 to 45 minutes. However, it is important to remember that the cooking time depends on the size of the chicken breasts.

Method 3 of 3: Baking Frozen Chicken Legs



- 1 Season the legs before freezing.** Because it is difficult to get seasoning to stick to frozen chicken skin, it may be easier to season your drumsticks before freezing them. Before you put them in the freezer, coat your drumsticks with your desired seasoning or rub. This will freeze the seasoning to the skin and make it easier to pull the legs from the freezer and toss them in the oven when you are ready to cook.^[12]
 - This is a great way to season any individual pieces of chicken before you freeze them.



- 2 Preheat the oven.** Heat the oven to 350°F (177°C). While the oven warms, remove your drumsticks from the freezer and place them on a tray. For a side, you may also want to add some chopped vegetables like carrots and onions or a few sliced potatoes to the tray.^[13]



3 Cook the drumsticks. Place the tray in the oven and cook the drumsticks for about 50 to 60 minutes. Once the time is up, insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the drumstick to make sure that it is cooked. If the temperature is below 165°F (74°C) or if there is any red or pink meat, put the breasts back in the oven and let them cook until they are white and the juices run clear.^[14]

- When you are taking the temperature of the drumsticks, try not to touch the bone with your thermometer. This will give you an inaccurate temperature.



Community Q&A

Question

Why does the chicken have to be uncovered?



Community Answer

Because you don't want to cook plastic, foil or paper into the chicken.

Helpful 1 Not Helpful 14

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This article was co-authored by **Ollie George Cigliano**. Ollie George Cigliano is a Private Chef, Food Educator, and Owner of Ollie George Cooks, based in Long Beach, California. With over 20 years of experience, she specializes in utilizing fresh, fun ingredients and mixing traditional and innovative cooking techniques. Ollie George holds a BA in Comparative Literature from The University of California, Berkeley, and a Nutrition and Healthy Living Certificate from eCornell University. This article has been viewed 86,931 times.

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