

Baked Chicken Breasts

By Lidey Heuck

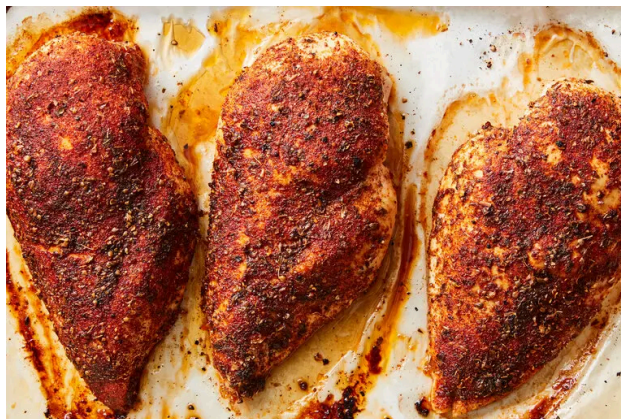
Updated April 17, 2024

Total Time 1 hour 15 minutes

Prep Time 5 minutes

Cook Time 40 minutes, plus at least 30 minutes brining

Rating ★★★★★ (1,377)



Christopher Testani for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Simon Andrews.

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts are a popular cut of meat for their versatility, and because they are so lean, knowing how to properly season and cook them is essential. When it comes to baking, a quick brine in a saltwater solution ensures the meat comes out tender, moist and well-seasoned. (Don't leave the breasts in the brine for longer than 2 hours, or the salt could negatively affect the texture of the meat.) The chicken is delicious as-is, but it can also be diced or shredded and mixed into salads, soups or any recipe that calls for cooked poultry. Feel free to swap the dried herbs and spices here with your favorite seasoning blends — just stick to around 1½ teaspoons seasoning total for each breast and be mindful of the salt if it's included in the blend.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
(10 to 12 ounces each)

2 tablespoons kosher salt (such as
Diamond Crystal)

Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

4 teaspoons dried oregano or
Italian seasoning

4 teaspoons garlic powder

4 teaspoons sweet paprika
(optional)

Black pepper, to taste

PREPARATION

Step 1

In a large bowl, combine 4 cups of room temperature water and the salt. Stir until the salt is dissolved.

Step 2

Add the chicken breasts, making sure they are fully submerged. Brine for at least 30 minutes and up to 2 hours. (Cover and refrigerate if brining for more than 30 minutes.)

Step 3

Heat the oven to 425 degrees and line a sheet pan or large baking dish with parchment paper. While the oven heats, remove the chicken breasts from the brine and pat them dry with paper towels, discarding the brine. Place the chicken breasts on the prepared pan. Drizzle generously with olive oil, flipping chicken so both sides are coated. Sprinkle with the dried oregano, garlic powder, paprika, if using, and some black pepper.

Step 4

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the breasts reaches 165 degrees. Rest for 10 minutes before slicing into the chicken and serving.

Private Notes

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