

Chicken Fricassee with Apples

SERVES Serves 4

TIME 1 hour



Why This Recipe Works

Chicken fricassee is an old-fashioned country dish of stewed chicken in a creamy sauce. For our version, we dredged the chicken breasts lightly in flour before sautéing, which not only protected the chicken's exterior from becoming tough while cooking but also thickened the sauce and gave it body. Equal parts cider and chicken broth created a savory yet fruit-forward balance while cream and cider vinegar finished the dish with richness and brightness. Adding vibrant apples to the mix created a complex and delicate sweetness that enhanced the savory chicken. Fuji, Gala, and Braeburn apples remained sweet once cooked (unlike Granny Smith apples, which tasted sour) and contributed the best apple flavor. Browning the apples in butter (and adding them back to the skillet to warm through once the chicken was cooked) gave them beautiful color without overcooking them and added complex caramelized flavor to the sauce. Additionally, searing the apples set their pectin and helped them retain their shape.

Gather Your Ingredients

- 4** (6- to 8-ounce)
boneless, skinless
chicken breasts, trimmed
- Salt and pepper
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 3** tablespoons unsalted
butter

Before You Begin

- * Note that the apples are not peeled; their red skins contribute visual contrast to this otherwise pale dish. Cut each apple into 16 wedges; each wedge will be approximately 1/2 inch thick.

Instructions

2 Fuji, Gala, or Braeburn apples, cored and each cut into sixteen 1/2-inch-thick wedges

1 onion, chopped

2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme

1/2 cup apple cider

1/2 cup chicken broth

1/2 cup heavy cream

2 teaspoons cider vinegar

1 tablespoon minced fresh chives

- 1.** Pat chicken dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Spread flour in shallow dish. Dredge chicken in flour to coat, shaking to remove excess; transfer to plate and set aside.
- 2.** Melt 2 tablespoons butter in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. Season apples with salt and pepper. Cook apples, cut sides down, until browned, about 5 minutes per side, moving and redistributing apples as needed for even browning. Transfer to second plate; set aside.
- 3.** Melt remaining 1 tablespoon butter in now-empty skillet over medium heat. Add chicken and cook until lightly browned, about 2 minutes per side. Return chicken to plate.
- 4.** Add onion, thyme, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper to now-empty skillet and cook over medium heat until onion is softened and browned, 5 to 7 minutes.
- 5.** Add cider and broth and bring mixture to boil. Return chicken to skillet. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until chicken registers 160 degrees, 8 to 12 minutes.
- 6.** Transfer chicken to platter and tent with aluminum foil. Add cream and apples to skillet. Increase heat to medium-high and bring to boil. Cook until sauce has thickened slightly, about 2 minutes. Stir in vinegar and any accumulated chicken juices. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon sauce and apples over chicken and sprinkle with chives. Serve.

Ingredient Spotlight: Cider Vinegar



Just like salt, a touch of vinegar can markedly improve the flavor of a dish, adding brightness and bringing flavors into focus. Until the early 20th century, cider vinegar was a natural byproduct of hard cider; the drink fermented into vinegar as it sat in wooden barrels. Today, most cider vinegar is mass-produced by putting cider and bacteria into an acetator, a machine that rapidly circulates oxygen through the cider to feed the bacteria, creating vinegar in just a few hours.