

Best chicken breast ever

Thank goodness I subscribe to Cook's Illustrated where I found this awesome way to make moist chicken breast. If you are also a fan of the publication, this mock "sous vide" method of cooking is in the May/June 2012 issue, page 20. In the original method, the kitchen tester required four chicken breasts that were 6 to 8 ounces and less than an inch thick. Unfortunately, the breasts do not come in that perfect size. Thus, I had to improvise a bit. For breasts larger than 1-inch thickness, I cut on the horizontal-diagonal at the thickest part to decrease the thickness; that left me with a small piece and a large piece. Also, I used only three breasts and raised the water to about 175 degrees Fahrenheit instead of 170 degrees (just to be a bit more cautious).

The first recipe I used the breast in was a chicken salad with celery, onions, dried cranberries, chopped pecans, mayo, and seasoning. My husband said it was the best chicken salad he has ever had; I have to agree. I'm sure this chicken will go quite nicely with many hot and cold pasta and salad dishes. I'll let you know as I try them.

UPDATE: Get a sous vide immersion stick or machine. It's basically the same process, but sous vide yields an even more tender chicken breast....and you can cook so many different things with a sous vide. I have the machine – which looks like a bread machine – and LOVE it!

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

6 cups of water, cold to the touch
2 tablespoons of granulated table salt

Set 2

3 regular-sized chicken breasts, boneless, skinless, purchased "fresh" not frozen from the store;

Tools: medium to large pot; napkin-lined plate; digital thermometer for cooking

DIRECTIONS

1. Pour the 6 cups of cold water into a pot. Add the 2 tablespoons of salt to the water.
2. Stir the solution until the salt dissolves.
3. Remove the skin. Cut as much of the breast away from the bone. Separate the tenderloin from the breast meat too (they come apart quite easily). If the breast is thicker than 1 inch, cut a horizontal-diagonal line across the thickest section so that you are left with a large breast, a small piece, and a tenderloin. Repeat for remaining two chicken breasts.
4. Place all of the chicken into the pot of salted water.
5. Put the pot, UNCOVERED, on the stove.
6. Turn the heat to medium heat.
7. Check the temperature of the water at multiple points once steam rises from the pot.
8. When the temperature of the water is between 170 and 175 degrees Fahrenheit, remove the pot from the stove and cover with a snug-fitting lid.
9. Keep the chicken in the covered pot for 17 to 20 minutes.
10. When the time is up, remove the chicken to a napkin-lined plate and cool in fridge for 30 to 60 minutes.
11. Cut into cubes for chicken salad or shred with your fingers for pasta.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of PaulaQ.com.

For me, life is all about a positive mental outlook and having motivational tricks in your back pocket to stay happy, healthy, and productive. Here's a quote I found in my all-time favorite inspirational book, Dale Carnegie's Scrapbook – A Treasury of the Wisdom of the Ages.

“If this world affords true happiness, it is to be found in a home where love and confidence increase with the years, where the necessities of life come without severe strain, where luxuries enter only after their cost has been carefully considered.” – A. Edward Newton