

# Easy Zuni Cafe Roast Chicken and Bread Salad

NW Edible blog, 2013

Judy Rodgers Zuni Cafe adaptation

Internet address: <http://www.nwedible.com/2013/12/of-dead-heroes-and-roast-chickens.html>



## CHICKEN:

6 pounds whole chicken, 2.5 - 3 pounds per chicken

8 sprigs thyme, soft tip-sprigs, each about 1-inch long or rosemary (or both)

2 tablespoons kosher salt

2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

## BREAD SALAD:

16 ounces bread, thick sliced, rustic style (like ciabatta)

olive oil, as needed

1/4 cup pine nuts

4 whole garlic cloves, chopped (2 to 3)

A few handfuls of arugula or similar greens washed and dried

Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper

## VINAIGRETTE:

2 tablespoons dried currants, or raisins, chopped

2 tablespoons red onion, or shallot, finely minced

4 tablespoons white wine vinegar

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1/2 cup olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste

1/4 cup chicken juices, drained from the hot roasted chicken

Carolyn T's Blog - Tasting Spoons  
<http://tastingspoons.com>

## Servings: 9

(slightly shorter version): Prep time: 24-72 hours (depending on how long you let the salt sit on the birds.); Cook time: 1 hour +; Inspired by the writing and recipes of Judy Rodgers of Zuni Cafe. Adapted from *The Zuni Cafe Cookbook*.

1. CHICKEN PREP - A day or two before you intend to roast your chicken, sprinkle it all over with kosher salt and a little black pepper. A 3 pound bird will use about a tablespoon of kosher salt. Slide an herb sprig under the skin pocket of each breast and thigh. Tuck the wingtips behind the neck but do not truss the bird.
2. Refrigerate chicken, lightly covered with a paper towel or two, for 24 hours to 3 days. This gives the salt an opportunity to season and tenderize the meat.
3. An hour or so before you want to start roasting your chicken, and about two hours before you want to eat, preheat your oven to 475° F and bring your chicken out of the frig so it can come to room temperature.
4. Preheat a large cast iron skillet over medium-high heat for several minutes, until quite hot. (I used a large roasting pan, that happens to be Teflon coated and 2 chickens sat in the pan perfectly.) Place the resting chicken, breast-side-up, in the hot skillet. It should sizzle. Transfer immediately to the hot oven. If your skillet isn't well seasoned, and you worry about sticking, add a bit of olive oil or lard to the skillet just before you add your chicken the skillet.
5. Roast chicken for about 40 minutes to an hour, until fully cooked but still juicy. (If you have a 5-pound bird, it may take 75-85 minutes.) The skin should be beautifully golden and paper thin across the thigh, and the thigh joint should feel loose.
6. When chicken is cooked, using a utensil poked into each end of the bird, carefully tip the bird so the cavity is down and drain the juices from the chicken. Slash the skin between thigh and breast to let out any trapped juices there. Transfer chicken to a platter to rest. Whisk the pan juices in the skillet to release any caramelized bits stuck to the bottom of the pan, then transfer juices to a fat separator if you have one (or use a small bowl) and set aside for 5-10 minutes to allow the fat to rise to the top. You'll use about 1/4 cup reserved juices (not the fat); if you have more, save extra for another purpose.
7. SALAD: While chicken is roasting, prepare the bread salad.
8. VINAIGRETTE: For the vinaigrette, add the currants and minced red onion to a bowl. Add red and white vinegar and set aside for about ten minutes, to allow currants to plump. Then, add Dijon mustard and olive oil and whisk until well blended. Set aside. This can be made a few hours ahead.
9. BREAD: Brush all bread slices liberally with olive oil and salt to taste. Place toast slices under a preheated broiler or in a dry skillet set over medium heat and toast until golden brown. Some darker and lighter spots are fine. (I cut the bread into cubes, and toasted them, lightly tossed with some olive oil in a 375° oven for about 12 minutes until golden brown.)
10. When toasted bread is cool enough to handle, tear into rough, bite-sized hunks if you didn't cut the bread into cubes at the beginning. Some larger and some smaller pieces are fine. Put toasted bread pieces in a large bowl. (You can make the bread a few hours ahead, but once cool, place them in a sealing plastic bag to keep them crispy.)
11. Heat a tablespoon or so of olive oil in a pan. Add the smashed garlic cloves and pine nuts and warm all over medium heat until the pine nuts are toasty but not burnt and the garlic has softened.
12. Add garlic, pine nuts and any olive oil from the pan to the bowl with the toasted bread pieces. Set aside until you are ready to finish the salad.
13. FINISHING: Gather the bowl with the toasted bread, the vinaigrette, the reserved pan juices from the roast chicken and 4-6 handfuls of arugula.

14. Toss the bread with the chicken juices and add about half of the vinaigrette and stir to combine. You want the bread to soak up those juices, so give it a minute if needed. Add in the arugula, toss, and taste for seasoning. Adjust by adding salt, pepper, more vinaigrette, or a tiny splash of red wine vinegar if needed. (Mine was perfect, using about 3/4 of the vinaigrette.)

15. Serve the chicken pulled into pieces, over the bread salad. Good hot or room temperature. If you have extra vinaigrette (I did), serve it at the table and allow guests to pour a bit of it on top of the chicken pieces, if desired.

Yield: 2 whole chickens

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Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 730 Calories; 47g Fat (58.5% calories from fat); 44g Protein; 31g Carbohydrate; 3g Dietary Fiber; 188mg Cholesterol; 1688mg Sodium. Exchanges: 2 Grain(Starch); 5 1/2 Lean Meat; 0 Vegetable; 0 Fruit; 6 Fat; 0 Other Carbohydrates.