

How to play it safe when cooking chicken

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

Kathleen Perry, hostess of the nationally syndicated TV show "The Everyday Gourmet," has traveled the country talking about chicken safety, for the National Broiler Council.

Perry said bacteria is present on the skin of any meat, fish or poultry. It's easy to eliminate bacteria from chicken by cooking it to 165 degrees (for boneless chicken) and 185 degrees (for whole chicken) or cut-up parts with bone, she explained.

So you don't have a meat thermometer? "If the juices run clear instead of pink, everything's all clear," Perry said.

Raw chicken requires care. "When you thaw, thaw it in the re-

'If the juices run clear instead of pink, everything's all clear.'

— Kathleen Perry

frigerator the night before, or in the microwave, or under cold, running water. Bacteria loves to grow at room temperature," she said.

When you buy a whole chicken, it should be removed from the bag, rinsed and repackaged in a plastic bag. If you buy it in the supermarket package, that's fine. "It's already antiseptically done at the processor," she said.

WASHING YOUR hands, cutting

"Freeze them. When you get enough, you can do a quick stir-fry, and serve it over pasta or rice. You can also bread the tenderloins with parmesan dressing and have your own chicken fingers."

When cooking chicken breasts, "Tarragon is especially lovely," Perry said. She gave a recipe for "just a quick saute, with equal parts (one tablespoon each) of butter and oil — peanut butter is nice — it has a high smoking temperature."

Don't season the chicken until after it is cooked. Otherwise, the seasoning will draw out the juices. Remove the chicken from the heat, pour off the fat and deglaze the pan on high heat, with ½ cup wine or chicken broth. Let it boil down, or cook down to ¼ cup. Add spices (tar-

ragon, pepper and salt) and a couple tablespoons of cream."

ANOTHER RECIPE from her cookbook, "The Everyday Gourmet," is for Medallions of Turkey (or chicken) with Mushroom-Tarragon Sauce. "It can be served over pasta or rice," Perry said.

Other spices good with chicken include rosemary, or garlic. Her favorite recipe for chicken breasts is Chicken Rollups. "You can vary the fillings. It looks like you really fussed. Ham and cheese is chicken cordon bleu. Call it rollups, the kids will eat it. It makes its own sauce in the microwave."

Try chicken breasts with herb butter (dill, tarragon or basil). "You can put a pat over the chicken, and just

sauté it," Perry said.

Her cookbook, published in 1986, is available in paperback in the Warner Books Edition for \$8.95.

"I'd like to be a real gourmet," Perry said. "It takes a great deal of time and effort." She found she enjoyed fewer things her family enjoyed, so she "simplified the classic recipes. Everything (the ingredients) is available from the supermarket."

WITH BARBECUE season coming up, she stressed, "Don't put cooked meat on the platter that carries meat to the grill. Use a separate platter."

Wood cutting boards need to be scoured well. "Use acrylic because it goes in the dishwasher. Save the wood board for vegetables."

Chicken — don't try it raw but any other way's OK

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If you are one of those cooks who opens a package of chicken and only cooks one or two pieces, try cooking all the pieces at the same time and reserving a few extra cooked pieces for a cold chicken salad or pizza sandwich.

ROAST CHICKEN STUFFED WITH PASTA

1 ounce dried mushrooms
½ cup boiling water
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
2 chicken livers, trimmed and patted dry
pinch thyme
pinch red pepper

2 ounces fresh mushrooms, cut into matchsticks
1 medium red bell pepper, cut into matchsticks
2 ounces baked ham, finely chopped
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
3 ounces fresh fettuccine noodles, dried
salt and pepper

one 3-pound chicken olive oil

Soak mushrooms in boiling water until soft, about 15 minutes. Drain again. Discard stems, chop caps.

Melt 1 tablespoon butter or margarine in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Add livers, thyme and red pepper and cook until livers are brown for about 5 minutes. Chop well and transfer to a large bowl.

Melt remaining butter in same skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms and red bell pepper and sauté until liquid evaporates. Add to livers with dried mushrooms, ham and parsley. Cook fettuccine in boiling salted water until al dente. Drain

well. Toss with liver mixture. Season with salt and pepper.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Pat chicken dry. Rub the inside and out with salt and pepper. Fill chicken with fettuccine mixture, packing in as much as possible without compressing pasta. Tuck in to close the cavity. Place in a small roasting pan and brush with olive oil.

Bake at 400 degrees for 50 minutes or until juices run clear when pierced with a fork. Let stand 5 minutes. Cut chicken in half with poultry scissors or a sharp knife. Set each half on a plate, stuffing side up. Serve immediately.

This recipe can easily be doubled or tripled and done on the outside barbecue.

SALT-AND-PEPPER-CURED

PAN-FRIED CHICKEN

one 3-pound chicken, cut into pieces
¼ cup coarsely cracked peppercorns
2 cups coarse (Kosher) salt
about 3 cups milk
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon cayenne
1 about 1½ cups peanut oil

Arrange chicken in a single layer in a shallow dish. Sprinkle with pepper, turning pieces to coat evenly. Pack salt over and around chicken. Let stand at room temperature 2 hours. Rinse chicken in cold water, dry thoroughly. Clean dish; add chicken. Pour in milk to cover.

Chill for 23 hours in the refrigerator. Drain chicken. Combine flour and cayenne in another dish. Coat chicken with the mixture, shaking off the excess. Arrange chicken in a single layer on a rack. Refrigerate, uncovered for 4 hours. Heat ½ inch of oil in a heavy skillet to 375 degrees.

Add dark meat. Fry 4 minutes, then turn and fry other side for 4 minutes. Add white meat and continue frying until chicken is golden brown and cooked throughout, turning pieces 3-4 times, about 15-20 minutes. Drain on paper towels and serve immediately.

cooking calendar

• KIDS' CLASSES

Early registration is recommended for repeats of two sell-outs held at the Southfield Art Center. "Quick and Easy Desserts" will be prepared by kids, grades 3 and up, from 1-3 p.m. Tuesday, June 27, under the guidance of cooking expert Judy An-

ishin. "Kids Chocolate Saturday" is 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, July 8. Young chefs, grade 3 and up, will create chocolate treats. Aprons are must for both classes. Registration is at the Southfield Parks and Recreation Building, 26000 Evergreen Road. Fee is \$8 for each class.

• AT JACOBSON'S

"How to Plan the Perfect Wedding" will feature a seminar with the owner of Patterson's Florist, wedding cakes by Kevin Paulina, a stationery representative, and Bridal Registry information at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 22, in the Lounge at Jacobson's in Birmingham. For reservations call 644-6900, ext. 554. American Cooking demonstrations by Peg Watson are offered from 1-3 p.m. Thursday, June 29, at the Kitchen Shop of Jacobson's in Rochester.

A salad that Popeye would rate highly

AP — Popeye, the spinach-craving strongman sailor of the comic page, would love this side-dish salad because it's full of his favorite food.

It's easy on the cook in the galley, too, with just three ingredients plus the zippy dressing.

COTTAGE CHEESE AND SPINACH SALAD

7 cups torn fresh spinach (10 ounces)

1 ½ cups creamy-style cottage cheese
½ cup chopped walnuts
creamy Dressing or bottled creamy dressing

Place spinach in a large salad bowl. Spoon cottage cheese on top of spinach in a ring. Sprinkle with walnuts. Pour on dressing; toss lightly until spinach is coated. Makes 6-8 servings.

creamy vinegar. Cover and chill until serving time.

Nutrition information per serving: 194 cal., 11 g protein, 11 g carb., 13 g fat, 17 mg chol., 368 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 69 percent vit. A, 23 percent vit. C, 13 percent riboflavin, 12 percent calcium.

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