INDIRECT · EASY

Free-Range Chicken Roasted in a Cocotte with Lemon, Garlic and Thyme on the Kamado

A whole free-range chicken, lemon, garlic, thyme and potatoes in an enamelled cocotte: covered to keep it juicy and uncovered at the end to colour the skin, with the kamado set up for indirect heat.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
30 min	100 min	4	200 °C

Ingredients

- **1 ud** free-range whole chicken, 1.4-1.5 kg, at room temperature
- **2 ud** lemons: one in thick slices, the other zested and halved for the cavity
- **8 rama** sprigs of fresh thyme
- **2 cda** extra virgin olive oil
- **al gusto** freshly ground black pepper
- **600 g** waxy potatoes, in large quarters
- **1 ud** head of garlic, halved crosswise
- **40 g** soft butter
- **15 g** fine salt, divided between the chicken and the potatoes
- **100 ml** dry white wine or water, for the base of the pot

Method

1 DRY AND SALT THE CHICKEN

Take the chicken out of the fridge 40 minutes ahead. Dry it very thoroughly with paper, inside and out, and salt the whole surface and the cavity. If it has been sitting uncovered in the fridge since the day before, just pat the skin dry again. Mix the butter with the zest of one lemon and a little pepper.

2 STUFF, RUB AND TIE

Put half a lemon, half the head of garlic and half the thyme in the cavity. With your fingers, loosen the skin over the breast a little and spread part of the butter underneath; the rest goes on the outside. Tie the legs with kitchen string and tuck the wing tips under the body so they do not burn.

3 PREPARE THE COCOTTE

In the enamelled cocotte toss the potatoes with the oil, a pinch of salt, the rest of the garlic and thyme and the slices of the other lemon. Pour in the wine or water. Set the chicken on top, breast up. Do not heat the pot empty: the enamel does better when the heat arrives with food inside.

4 LIGHT WITH THE DEFLECTOR

Fill the firebox with Jealous Devil, light it and set the deflector with the grate above it. Bring the kamado to 200 °C with the bottom vent open about two fingers and the top vent half open, and let it settle for about 15 minutes. Adjust gradually: the ceramic is slow to respond and it is easy to overshoot.

5 ROAST COVERED

With the Rösle gloves on, open with burping (5 cm, about 5 seconds, face turned away), set the covered cocotte in the centre and close. Roast about 50 minutes, holding 190-200 °C. Avoid opening earlier: every opening drops the temperature and takes time to recover.

6 CHECK AND UNCOVER

Open with burping and gloves, lift the pot lid away from you and measure at the thickest part of the thigh without touching the bone: it should read about 70 °C. Open the vents further to raise the chamber to 210-220 °C. If a lot of liquid remains, let it reduce; if the base dries out, add a splash of water.

7 CRISP THE SKIN

Leave the pot uncovered for 20-30 minutes, watching the colour from minute 15. The skin should be golden and the thigh should read 74 °C; check the breast as well. If one area colours too quickly, turn the pot a quarter turn. The potatoes must be tender inside.

8 REST AND SERVE

Lift the cocotte out with the gloves and both hands: the handles are at chamber temperature. Close the kamado vents to put the coals out. Rest the chicken for 15 minutes on a board, loosely tented with foil. Carve and serve with the potatoes, the roasted lemon and the pot juices with a little thyme.

Editor's tips

- Always measure the temperature in both thigh and breast: poultry is ready at 74 °C. The reference for each cut is in the temperature and time chart.
- If the skin will not brown, pat it dry with paper before uncovering and raise the chamber by about 10 °C instead of extending the time: more time at the same temperature only dries out the breast.
- Cut the potatoes into large pieces of similar size; small ones fall apart in the juices and very large ones stay hard inside.
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The pot juice is the sauce. Spoon off the fat, scrape up the base with the thyme and squeeze in a little roasted lemon to lighten it.

Gear for this recipe

Staub round cocotte: 24 cm enamelled cast iron casserole

This is the pot where the chicken cooks covered, in its own steam, before moving to the uncovered stage. The 24 cm, 3.8-litre Staub is enamelled cast iron with an iron lid too, and according to its listing measures about 30 cm with handles and about 15 cm tall with the lid; the metal knob withstands up to 250 °C. It weighs about 4.6 kg and fits a 1.4-1.5 kg chicken with potatoes around it snugly. The real drawback: at 4.6 kg it is awkward to handle loaded and hot, and with a bigger bird the lid will not close properly.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/staub-cocotte-redonda-24-hierro-fundido

Rösle leather barbecue gloves: long, one size

The cocotte goes in and out of the kamado at about 200 °C, with handles and lid at that same temperature, and the kamado is opened several times with burping. The Rösle gloves are leather with a cotton and polyester lining and measure about 41.5 cm long, so they protect hand and forearm when moving the lid and lifting out a pot of over 4 kg with the chicken inside. Honest drawback: the listing gives no maximum temperature and they cannot be washed, so they are not for holding hot iron longer than necessary.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/rosle-guantes-cuero-barbacoa

Kamado Bono Media 51 cm

The recipe needs a kamado that holds 200 °C for over an hour and rises to 210-220 °C once uncovered. The Kamado Bono Media is the 51 cm model in the range and is sold as a bundle with the deflector included, exactly the piece this indirect cook requires; the cocotte, about 30 cm with handles, sits centred with room to spare. Drawback: with the deflector between the coals and the grate, the chamber is slow to respond to the vents, so stabilise it before putting the pot in.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-bono-media-51

Jealous Devil 100% White Quebracho lump charcoal 15.8 kg

That is almost two hours of fire at 200-220 °C with no refuelling, on a bed of coals that has to stay steady. Jealous Devil is quebracho blanco charcoal, a very dense wood; its listing mentions large pieces, little ash (around 3 %) and a neutral aroma that does not mask the lemon or thyme. A full firebox at the start is plenty for the whole recipe, and whatever has not burned goes out when you close the vents. Drawback: it burns hotter than supermarket charcoal, so start closing the vents before you reach 200 °C to avoid overshooting.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/jealous-devil-quebracho-lump-charcoal

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/pollo-asado-cocotte-limon-tomillo-kamado

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