

Chickin; a versatile food!

When many of us think of a chicken dish at feast we usually come up with the idea of a golden roasted bird. Well I'm here to tell you how much scope our feathered friend truly has for the medieval palate. Because chicken has such a deliciously simple base flavour, it lends its self to the many cooking methods available. I hope I somehow inspire you to do a little research yourselves see what wonderful things can be made from the humble chicken.

So below I have given you a recipe for roasted chicken that is very popular, one that uses meat from a precooked bird (edible flowers) and a third recipe that I stumbled upon and loved because it uses one of my favourite ingredients....that's right sugar!

Please read, cook and consume with gusto!

Yours in Service,

Lady Thomasina Freborn, AOA, OGT and Journeyman Laurel.

1. Chike Endored-

Original recipe: Take a chike, and drawe him, and roste him, And lete the fete be on, and take away the hede; then make batur of yolkes of eyroun and floure, and caste there-to powder of ginger, and peper, saffron and salt, and powder hit faire til hit be rosted ynogh.

Redacted recipe-

Chicken, whole or in pieces, roasted until nearly done

6 raw egg yolks

2 T flour

1/4 tsp each powdered ginger and black pepper

1/2 tsp saffron

1/8 tsp salt

In a bowl, lightly beat raw egg yolks. Put the flour into another bowl, and stir in the egg yolks, bit by bit, blending the mixture into a paste. Stir in salt and spices. With a pastry brush, spread the endoring paste as thinly and evenly as possible over the chicken, and return to the oven (400°) for ten or fifteen minutes, or until the endoring has set. Arrange on a serving platter.

Endoring is gilding; sometimes whole birds or other spectacular dishes were endored. If real gold leaf was not available, then this paste of egg yolks and saffron was substituted.

2. Rosee-

Original recipe: "Tak the flowrys of rosys and wasch hem wel in water, and after bray hem wel in a mortar; & than tak almondys and temper hem, & seth hem. & after tak flesch of capons of or hennys and hac yt smale, & than bray hem well in

a mortar, & than do it in the rose so that the flesch acorde wyth the mylk, & so that the mete be charchaunt; & after do yt to the fyre to boyle, & do thereto sugur & safroun that yt be well ycolowrd & rosy of levys of the foreseyde flowrys, & serve yt forth."

Redacted recipe-

3 cups diced cooked chicken

1 1/2 cups hot chicken broth

1 1/2 cups rose petals (that is: petals of 3 to 4 medium sized fragrant and pesticide free roses, preferably red, rinsed in cold water, dried gently, with the white bases cut off and discarded.)

2 ounces chopped, slivered or ground blanched almonds

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon sugar, optional

1/4 teaspoon ginger, optional

Reserving a few for garnish, grind rose petals with almonds. They are difficult to grind by themselves, and this is a case where a mortar may be helpful. Mix the resulting powder with the chicken broth and allow steeping for about ten minutes, or bringing to a boil and simmering for a minute or two. Chop the chicken and put it through a processor or blender with the broth mixture; blend thoroughly. Season and heat, stirring (or microwave), for no more than five minutes. If it is overcooked, flavour and colour will deteriorate. To serve, mound on a platter. This goes well with rice cooked in chicken broth with saffron, which can form a border on the serving dish. Garnish with the reserved rose petals (which taste like a superior lettuce). This dish is also excellent cold.

3. *Capon Inzucarati-*

Original recipe: Piglia caponi grassi he grossi he morti de doi di, poi, bene netti, falli alessare che non sian toppo cotti; da poi falli sugare fora de la pignata; poi piglia zucaro he fallo squagliare cum aqua rosata he fallo uno pocho bullire; da poi getta lo dito zucaro squagliato sopra de quisti caponi che siano coperti per tuto, cum canella bona; he quasi presto se voleno manducare.

Translation: Sugared Capon. Get big fat capons; two days dead; when they are cleaned well, boil them, but not to the point they are overcooked; take them out of the pot to drain; then get enough fine sugar for the size of the capons you wish to sugar, and break up the sugar, and break up the sugar and dissolve it in rosewater and boil it a little; then pour the dissolved sugar over the capons so they are completely covered, along with good cinnamon; they are eaten almost immediately.

Redacted recipe-

2 capons or 2 large chickens

White sugar

Rosewater

Cinnamon

In a large pot, bring the capons to a boil; reduce heat and simmer just until fully cooked - do not overcook! Remove from the water, drain, and pat dry. In a small sauce pot, dissolve the sugar in the rosewater, then heat the mixture to a soft boil; remove from heat. Place the birds on their serving platter(s), then with a small pastry brush, "paint" on the rosewater sugar mixture until the birds are completely covered. Sprinkle or dust with cinnamon, then serve immediately.

Rosewater is best bought from a health food store as you get a bigger bottle and better quality than at the supermarkets (the same goes for orange flower water).

Source-

1. Heatt, Constance B. and Sharon Butler. *Curye on Inghlish: English Culinary Manuscripts of the Fourteenth-Century (Including the Forme of Cury)*. New York: for The Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 1985.

2. Austin, Thomas. *Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery-Books. Harleian MS. 279 & Harl. MS. 4016, with extracts from Ashmole MS. 1429, Laud MS. 553, & Douce MS 55*. London: for The Early English Text Society by N. Trübner & Co., 1888.

3. Scully, Terence. *Cuoco Napoletano. The Neapolitan Recipe Collection (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS Buhler, 19): A Critical Edition and English Translation*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000.