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HEG81-146 The Cut Up Chicken, Part II

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The Cut Up Chicken, Part II

This NebGuide shows how to cut a chicken carcass into breast, wings, thighs, drumsticks, ribs and back.

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You can save from 5 to 10 cents per pound if you cut up your own broiler-fryer chickens. There are two basic ways of cutting the chicken carcass. This guide shows how to cut the carcass into breast, wings, thighs, drumsticks, ribs and back. *The Cut Up Chicken, Part I*, HEG 81-145, shows how to cut these parts with the ribs and back attached to the breast or thigh.

If the ribs, back and neck are not cooked with the other parts, make soup stock. Strip the meat from the bones for use in soup, casseroles, salads or sandwich spread.

Cut the bird using clean knives, utensils, cutting board and hands. Keep tools clean to prevent cross-contamination of food with spoilage or disease germs. Do not keep the carcass out of the refrigerator for more than 20 minutes.

Frozen poultry will keep 6-8 months in freezer storage. Clean, fresh cut parts will keep for two days at 40-45 °F. Rewash before freezing if not cooked within two days.



1. Equipment and materials: Knife, easily cleaned cutting board, freezer bags, paper or foil.



2. Unwrap, remove giblets and wash the carcass when brought from the store. If necessary, store in a clean bag at 40-45 °F for no more than two days.





3. To cut, lay the carcass on its side. Hold the first joint of the wing straight out from the body. Cut the wing, at a 45 °angle, through the shoulder joint. Repeat on the other side.



4. Remove the legs. Put the carcass on its back. Stretch the skin between the breast and leg with thumb and fingers. Cut the skin fully to expose the hip joint.



5. Starting at the rib cage, cut through the hip joint removing as much meat as you can from the back. Repeat on the other side.



6. Put the leg skin side down. Find the fat seam across the leg just above the thigh-drumstick joint. Cut the joint below the fat seam. Repeat on the other leg.



7. Put the carcass on its side. Insert the knife into the body cavity just behind the shoulder. Cut through the ribs on a line toward the rear tip of the keel. Repeat on the other side.



8. Carefully take the back and breast in either hand. Press outward and break the shoulder joints.



9. Pull and cut the joints apart.



10. Place the back skin side up. Cut in front of the last ribs and across the back.



11. Break the back, pull and cut into two pieces.



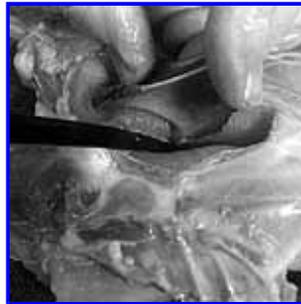
12. Split the breast in half. Hold the shoulder joints in either hand with the finger tips on the keel.



13. Press down on the shoulder joints, push up on the keel, and pop out the keel bone.



15. Place the breast skin side down. Starting at the rear, cut it in half. The wishbone is in front. Break or cut it. This completes the cutting process.



14. The edges of the keel are sharp. Hold the keel carefully. Pull it forward and cut it loose from the breast muscle.



16. The parts are breast, wings, thighs, drumsticks, ribs and back. Rewash each part and package in clean plastic bags, freezer wrap, or foil. Freeze immediately at 0°F or below.

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