



Make it look easy
How a cook makes a salad and bakes a basic chocolate cake says a lot about her skills. (Hint: Good ingredients will get you far.)



Roast Chicken

4-6 SERVINGS *We cook our chicken in two phases to keep the skin taut and the flesh moist and juicy.*

- 1 Tbsp. kosher salt
- 1 whole 4-lb. chicken, giblets reserved for another use
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) unsalted butter, melted

Rub or pat salt onto breast, legs, and thighs of chicken. Place chicken in a large resealable plastic bag. Set open bag in a large bowl, keeping chicken breast side up. Chill for at least 8 hours and up to 2 days.

Arrange a rack in upper third of oven; preheat to 500°. Set a wire rack in a large heavy roasting pan. Remove chicken from bag. Pat dry with paper towels (do not rinse). Place chicken, breast side up, on prepared rack. Loosely tie legs together with kitchen twine and tuck wing tips under. Brush chicken all over with some of the butter. Pour 1 cup water into pan.

Roast chicken, brushing with butter after 15 minutes, until skin is light golden brown and taut, about 30 minutes. Reduce oven

temperature to 350°. Remove chicken from oven and brush with more butter. Let rest for 15-20 minutes.

Return chicken to oven; roast, basting with butter every 10 minutes, until skin is golden brown and a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh registers 165°, 40-45 minutes. Let rest for 20 minutes. Carve and serve with pan juices.

Classic Salad

4-6 SERVINGS *We use fresh lemon juice for this vinaigrette as often as we do vinegar.*

- 1 small garlic clove, chopped
- 1 anchovy fillet packed in oil, drained, chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (or more) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 9-oz. head of freshest-possible lettuce, leaves separated, torn if large (about 6 cups)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup minced chives

Using a wooden spoon, mash garlic, anchovy, and a pinch each of salt and pepper in a large bowl. Stir in vinegar, then $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and more oil, if desired. Add lettuce leaves and chives just before serving and toss to coat.

Chocolate Sponge Cake

4-6 SERVINGS *Sometimes we spread jam between the layers; other times we simply dust the cake with powdered sugar.*

CAKE

- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup natural unsweetened cocoa powder plus more for pan
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cake flour
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 6 tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

CHOCOLATE ICING

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream
- 1 cup semisweet or bittersweet chocolate chips (do not exceed 61% cacao)

CAKE Preheat oven to 400°. Line the bottom of a 13x9x2" metal baking pan with parchment paper. Butter paper and sides of pan; dust with cocoa powder, tapping out excess. Sift flour and remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cocoa powder through a fine-mesh sieve into a small bowl. Repeat sifting 2 more times. Set flour mixture aside.

Crack 2 eggs into a large deep bowl. Separate remaining 2 eggs, adding yolks to bowl with whole eggs and placing whites in a medium deep bowl. Set whites aside.

Using an electric mixer, beat whole eggs and yolks on low speed for 1 minute. Increase speed to medium; gradually add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar. Beat until mixture is thick and pale, about 3 minutes. Beat in vanilla.

Using clean, dry beaters, beat egg whites until foamy. Sprinkle 1 tsp. sugar over. Continue to beat until soft peaks form, about 1 minute. Sprinkle remaining 5 tsp. sugar over and beat until meringue is thick and glossy, about 30 seconds.

Using a rubber spatula, fold half of meringue into egg mixture. Sift half of dry ingredients over batter and fold until just blended. Repeat with remaining meringue and dry ingredients.

Scrape batter into prepared pan, spreading evenly to edges. Bake until cake springs back when pressed gently with your fingertips, 10-12 minutes.

Let cake cool in pan on a wire rack. Run a knife around sides of pan to release cake.

Place a cutting board on top of pan. Invert cake onto board; remove pan. Carefully peel away parchment. Using a serrated knife, trim edges to create an even layer.

CHOCOLATE ICING Bring cream to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Remove from heat; add chocolate chips and stir until icing is smooth and glossy. Let cool to thicken slightly, about 15 minutes.

Using an offset spatula, spread half of icing down the middle of the cake; smooth evenly to the edges. Cut cake crosswise into 3 pieces. Stack pieces to make 3 layers. Spread remaining icing on sides of cake.

DO AHEAD: Can be made 2 days ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

Melissa Hamilton and Christopher Hirsheimer produce and publish Canal House Cooking, a series of seasonal cookbooks.