Mountaire® Black Label Chicken Chop®

CHEF-TESTED TECHNIQUES & TIPS



The ultimate how-to guide from our kitchen to yours

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From our chefs to your kitchen

Mountaire® Chicken Chop® is an extremely versatile product. You could even say that anything a chicken breast can do, the Mountaire Chicken Chop can do better—grilling, smoking, working as an ingredient, or as the star of the dish. It can cook longer and at higher temperatures with less risk of becoming dry or tough.

Still, no matter if you're dealing with front half or back half, the game-changer in any dish will be the skin, choosing to include it or not, and how best to keep its integrity and coax a crispy finish from the dish.

The Mountaire Chicken Chop not only works wonderfully as a center-of-the-plate ingredient, but it also works extraordinarily well *with* the dish, rather than the dish having to conform around the protein. The flavor is pronounced but not overpowering, bringing rich flavor to any application.

There are very few downsides with this product, and what cons may exist can be easily managed with a bit of care and attention to truly highlight the great flavor and versatility of the Mountaire Chicken Chop.

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Introduction

Our goal was to reveal and highlight the best practices when cooking with the Mountaire® Chicken Chop®. We applied 21 different cooking methods to determine which cooking techniques excelled and discover what to avoid.

In a way, the skinless and skin-on Mountaire Chicken Chop behave as completely different products, both equally versatile, equally delicious, and equally valuable.

Let’s dig in to the cooking tests and techniques.

At the end of this document, we’ve summarized takeaways and the best methods we recommend.

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Pan-fried, Skin-on

Method: Season chicken generously on both sides, then cook in a carbon-steel pan with oil; cook skin-side down for approximately 10 minutes on medium heat, under a grill press, finished skin side up until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 15-18 minutes

Observations: The majority of the cook can and should be done on the skin side, in order to render the fat in the skin and create a crispy exterior and golden color.

Recommended for Best Results: Use a steak weight or press to ensure flush contact with the pan to develop an even sear.

Avoid: Consider not going through this process to order. Though the chicken can be done start to finish in a pan, the cook time (greater than 15 minutes) may be too long for a high volume restaurant. Consider searing/rendering the skin side before service and finishing in a pan in the oven.

Tasting Notes: The chicken is dense and juicy with rich chicken flavor. The skin has an audible crunch when sliced. Consider not slicing this product in the final presentation (or only slicing once) in order to preserve the crispy skin texture.

Additional Notes: Cook on medium heat to avoid burning the outside of the meat before the center is fully cooked. By cooking the chicken the majority on the skin side, it renders out the thick skin to be crispy, rather than chewy or gummy.

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Pan-fried, Skin-on





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Pan-fried, Skinless, Pounded, Breaded

Method: Pound meat to ¼ inch, season on both sides, then bread in flour-eggs-breadcrumbs, before shallow frying in oil over medium to medium-high heat in a carbon steel pan until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F. Finish by adding butter and basting the cutlet.

Approximate Cook Time: 6-8 minutes

Observations: Pan frying without skin, versus deep frying, keeps the meat flat, rather than bowing up during the cooking process.

Recommended for Best Results: Ensure the leg is pounded to ¼ inch to ensure quick and even cooking. Baste with foaming butter at the end of the cooking process to add a richness and nuttiness to the finished product. Allow the cutlet to rest on a wire rack for 1-2 minutes after cooking to keep the breading from becoming soggy and slipping from the chicken.

Avoid: High heat can burn the breading, so cook on medium to medium high heat. The pan should contain a healthy amount of oil so that all parts of the chicken are in contact with the oil at all times, in order to avoid soggy or steamed pockets of breading.

Tasting Notes: Chicken is juicy and very tender due to the pounding. The addition of butter really translates here, giving a rich, nutty, browned butter flavor. Consider adding fresh herbs, such as thyme, rosemary, or sage to the pan during the basting process to infuse aromatics into the final product.

Additional Notes: If a browned butter flavor is not desired, butter should still be added at a slightly lower temperature, and at a slightly later stage in the cooking process, allowing for the lactic flavor of the butter to infuse with the breading before browning.

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Pan-fried, Skinless, Pounded, Breaded







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Deep Fried, Skinless, Not Pounded

Method: Generously season chicken on both sides, then dredge with egg wash and a 2:1 mixture of bread flour to cornstarch. Fry at 350°F until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 6-8 minutes

Observations: The chicken cooked quickly and evenly, maintaining a light golden color.

Recommended for Best Results: Consider allowing the chicken to rest on greased wire racks, under refrigeration, for 30 minutes (up to 2 hours) before frying, allowing the breading to hydrate in the egg wash, reducing slippage on the chicken.

Avoid: Be thorough in the breading procedure to avoid unbreaded bits of chicken which can overcook and become tough in the cooking process. The aim is to completely seal in the chicken with the crust of breading, so that the meat steams inside as it cooks and does not lose moisture.

Tasting Notes: The chicken is firm and juicy, with a distinct “fried” flavor on the breading.

Additional Notes: Test temperature in the thickest part of the muscle to ensure the chicken is cooked thoroughly. Consider flavoring or marinating the meat, rather than the breading, as spices can burn during the cooking process. Chicken can also be trimmed or pounded to ensure an even cook and faster cooking time.

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Deep Fried, Skinless, Not Pounded





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Deep Fried, Skin-on, Not Pounded

Method: Generously season chicken on both sides, then dredge with egg wash and a 2:1 mixture of bread flour to cornstarch. Fry at 350°F until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 6-8 minutes

Observations: The chicken buckled quite a bit during the cooking process and needed to be submerged with fryer baskets to ensure even cooking. The breading also had a distinct bubbling pattern which pushed away from the flesh, forming large air pockets.

Recommended for Best Results: Consider allowing the chicken to rest on greased, wire racks, under refrigeration, for 30 minutes (up to 2 hours) before frying, allowing the breading to hydrate in the egg wash, reducing slippage on the chicken.

Avoid: Be sure to be thorough in the breading procedure and avoid unbreaded bits of chicken which can overcook and become tough in the cooking process.

Tasting Notes: There is a distinct pull and chew caused by the skin of the chicken being intact. Though it does contribute flavor in a small way, as it has not been rendered, the skin feels a bit fleshy and rubbery. It juxtaposes the crispy breading, but not in a way that is pleasing.

Additional Notes: Test temperature in the thickest part of the muscle to ensure the chicken is cooked thoroughly. Consider flavoring or marinating the chicken, rather than the breading, as spices can burn during the cooking process. Chicken can also be trimmed or pounded to ensure an even cook and faster cooking time.

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Deep Fried, Skin-on, Not Pounded





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Stir-fried, Skin-on, with Cornstarch

Method: Thinly slice the chicken into irregular pieces then lightly dust with cornstarch; sauté in a wok or nonstick pan with a generous amount of oil over high heat, agitating constantly until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F. Finish with a splash of soy sauce or other sauce.

Approximate Cook Time: 2-3 minutes

Observations: The cornstarch reacts quickly in the pan to create rigid shapes within the chicken. About ⅓ of the skin detached from the meat during the cooking process. Nevertheless, the corn starch created very crispy pieces of the skin, with the meat being slightly less crispy.

Recommended for Best Results: Fry in a wok with a generous amount of oil to allow the cornstarch to quickly fry and become crisp. Additionally, toss the meat quickly and consistently in order to fry all pieces evenly.

Avoid: Shallow sauté pans can lead to burns.

Tasting notes: The use of cornstarch does give the chicken a coated texture and mouthfeel, but it doesn't take away from the flavor or tenderness of the meat itself. Notes of char and wok hei can be noted from the hot and fast cooking technique.

Additional Notes: In order to get the best texture, a generous amount of oil is needed in order to allow the starch to quickly fry in the fat. Caution should be exercised, as this cooking technique at a high temperature can cause splatters of hot oil.

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Stir-fried, Skin-on, w/ Cornstarch







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Stir-fried, Skinless

Method: Thinly slice meat into irregular pieces. Sauté in a wok or nonstick pan with oil over high heat, agitating constantly until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F. Finish with a splash of soy sauce or other sauce.

Approximate Cook Time: 2-3 minutes

Observations: This is a quick cooking process that can be achieved in just minutes. The addition of soy sauce (or other sauce) at the end of the process can help to round out caramelization and add charred notes.

Recommended for Best Results: When cutting the chicken, begin cutting with the grain, rather than against, as this will create neat, even strips. Cutting against the grain before cutting can result in stringy pieces. Since pieces will inevitably differ in size, constant agitation during the cooking process ensures a more even cook.

Avoid: Since these pieces are small and not uniform, extended cooking times can cause the meat to dry out and become tough. Refrain from adding sauce to the pan until just before finished, to avoid burning the sugars in the sauce over high heat.

Tasting notes: Pleasant charred and wok hei notes come from the high heat and by finishing with soy sauce. Texture is firm but tender, due to the small pieces.

Additional Notes: For large batches, consider blanching or velveting the chicken ahead of time for quick pickups with extra flavor and a more tender bite.

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Stir-fried, Skinless







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Sautéed Fajita Strips, Skinless

Method: Thinly slice meat into long strips; cook in a carbon steel pan or on a flat-top grill with oil over high heat, turning as needed to develop caramelization, until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 3-4 minutes

Observations: The chicken cooks quickly and becomes more caramelized than charred with this method.

Recommended for Best Results: Slice the fajita strips with the grain of the muscle to create long, even strips of uniform size. Cook over high heat in order to quickly develop caramelization.

Avoid: Be careful not to overcook this product, as the meat is thin. If cooked at a lower heat, the meat will not have a chance to develop color or caramelization before overcooking.

Tasting Notes: Chicken is tender, while the muscle structure remains firm, due to being cut with the grain. Chicken has rich flavor thanks to the dark meat and caramelization from the cooking process.

Additional Notes: At scale, cooking on a flat-top grill or plancha is ideal in order to maintain consistent caramelization and cooking time. In this application, the meat could be cooked a la minute, or cooked in bulk and held for service.

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Sauteed Fajita Strips







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Sauteed Ground Meat, Skin-on

Method: Cut chicken into large pieces with skin attached, then pass through a meat grinder twice. Sauté over high heat with oil until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 2-3 minutes

Observations: When freshly ground, the chicken can fall into small, delicate pieces rather than larger, emulsified or packed clumps like you might find in commercially processed ground meat.

Recommended for Best Results: Cut meat into cubes, being sure to include the skin, and freeze for 10 minutes before grinding to ensure an even grind. Grind twice on a large die to ensure even fat distribution and cooking. Cook on high heat to ensure even caramelization.

Avoid: Avoid grinding meat at room temperature, as this can cause the fat to smear and melt inside the grinder. Avoid seasoning the meat before grinding, unless making sausage, as this will change the overall texture. Avoid low heat or crowding the ground meat, as the steam released will prevent the meat from caramelizing. Allow the meat to stay in contact with the heat source as much as possible, turning only a few times, in order to develop caramelization.

Tasting notes: The chicken has strong, savory chicken flavor, uncommon with ground chicken breast, as well as a supple texture that is not dry—even in smaller pieces.

Additional Notes: At scale, ground chicken can be cooked on a flat-top grill or plancha, or broken into pieces and roasted at high heat with fan to create even caramelization.

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Sauteed Ground Meat, Skin-on







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Roasted or Griddled–Sausage

Method: Cut chicken into large pieces with skin, then pass through a meat grinder twice. Mix in 2% salt with additional ingredients or spices and allow to rest for 8 hours before roasting or pan-frying to reach an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 4-5 minutes in a pan; 12-14 minutes in an oven

Observations: Due to a lower fat content (sausage typically has 20% fat vs 10% in this application) the sausage needs to be griddled in oil to avoid charring.

Recommended for Best Results: Mix in 2% salt by weight to the grind, along with other seasonings and panade (if desired), then rest for a minimum of 8 hours under refrigeration. This will give the meat the bouncy snap desired in sausage. Forming into sausage balls and roasting is a great technique to avoid drying out the sausage.

Avoid: Avoid griddling directly onto a heat source without oil. Although it is common practice with many sausage or meat patties to press them directly onto a flat top, the lean (90%) nature of this sausage can dry out using this method.

Tasting Notes: Sausage is juicy, but not luscious in the way higher fat sausage can be. The sausage has a distinctive bite due to its resting time with salt. The chicken flavor is pronounced, but not overstated in a way that overpowers other flavors.

Additional Notes: The Mountaire® Chicken Chop® is approximately 90% lean. Additional fat, such as lard or additional chicken skin, can be added to achieve desired ratio of fat in the sausage.

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Roasted or Griddled–Sausage

Pictured Recipe: 1 lb. ground chicken, 4 scallions–sliced, 2 tsp. Minced ginger, 3 cloves minced garlic, 1 tbsp. Soy sauce, 2% salt (9 grams)







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Roasted or Griddled–Sausage





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Grilled, Skin-on

Method: Season chicken on both sides, spray lightly with oil, then grill over medium heat until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 15-20 minutes

Observations: By cooking over medium heat, the skin renders completely. Chicken becomes golden and pleasantly charred on both sides from the grill.

Recommended for Best Results: Be sure grill grates are clean and free of debris and lightly coated with oil. Turn and rotate the chicken every 5 minutes or so to ensure even cooking–moving on and off hot spots to render the skin appropriately.

Avoid: Avoid cooking over high heat, as the chicken can become charred and burnt on the outside before being properly cooked through. Take note that leaving chicken over hot spots can burn the skin or meat. Not all chicken will cook the same over a grill and should be monitored.

Tasting Notes: The fully rendered chicken skin, though not explicitly crispy, is pleasant and carries a charred flavor. The chicken is quite juicy and tender, but does not maintain as much moisture as those cooked in a pan or oven.

Additional Notes: Cooking over live fire, such as charcoal as opposed to gas, opens new possibilities to impart smoky flavor. Consider marinating chicken or cooking skinless, as both will yield excellent results, as well.

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Grilled, Skin-on







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Roasted, Skin-on

Method: Season chicken with salt and lightly spray with oil; roast until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 15-18 minutes

Observations: Though the skin of the chicken does take on golden color, it does not quite achieve the caramelization or crisp of being rendered in direct contact with a heat source, such as a pan.

Recommended for Best Results: Consider roasting with a high convection fan, first curing and air drying, finishing under a broiler, or starting in a pan and finishing in the oven.

Avoid: Avoid cooking at temperatures below 375°F, as the skin will struggle to take on color and become crisp at lower temperatures.

Tasting Notes: The skin has a texture closer to being gummy than being crispy. Meat is tender and juicy with rich dark meat flavors.

Additional Notes: Though his may be the most efficient way to prepare many food items, consider taking steps to ensure a crispy skin. Or roast with the skin on, allowing the fat to render and baste the meat, then discard after the cooking process and reserve the meat for a cold preparation, such as chicken salad.

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Roasted, Skin-on





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Breaded, Oven-baked

Method: Lightly pound the chicken until muscle structure is level, season leg meat on both sides with salt, then bread using standard breading procedure, with breadcrumbs. Lightly spray the top with oil and bake at 450°F until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 15-18 minutes.

Observations: The breading on the bottom side of the chicken is very soggy after being roasted, and some of the breading has worked its way into the folds of the leg meat to become almost like stuffing. However, the underside of the chicken does have more caramelization, due to being in contact with the baking sheet.

Recommended for Best Results: Consider baking on wire racks to increase airflow around the chicken. Bake using a high convection fan.

Avoid: Avoid over-breading the chicken, as too much egg wash or too much bread crumb can result in a disproportionate ratio of breading to meat, and can also run a greater risk of making the breading mushy.

Tasting Notes: The chicken has a gummy, soggy texture due to the breading. The breading is only crisp on the top, and after cutting or slicing, the juices of the chicken mix with the breading to form a sort of paste that is not pleasant on the palate. However, the chicken is still very juicy and tender.

Additional Notes: Consider pounding the chicken thin before breading, and baking on wire racks in order to increase texture contrast.

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Breaded, Oven-baked







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Roasting + Broiling

Method: Season the chicken with salt and lightly spray with oil. Roast in an oven until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F, then transfer to a broiler to finish the skin.

Approximate Cook Time: 15-18 minutes

Observations: Broiling will likely result in uneven char patterns. The chicken should be monitored closely during this process to avoid burning. The skin on top will become very crispy and bubbly.

Recommended for Best Results: Rotate the chicken during the broiling process in order to achieve a more even cook on the skin. Transfer the meat onto a clean tray after roasting and before broiling to avoid steaming the chicken with any residual pan jus during the broiling process. Allow to rest for 2-3 minutes after broiling before slicing for crispiest skin.

Avoid: Be cautious not to burn yourself during this process as the remaining moisture on the chicken can splatter and sizzle during the broiling process.

Tasting Notes: In comparison with roasting only, the broiled chicken is slightly more dry, but with an excellent, crispy skin, and very pleasant roasted flavor, reminiscent of a Sunday roast.

Additional Notes: Broiling after roasting yields a fully rendered and crispy skin. At scale, the chicken can be roasted in large batches, and finished a la minute under a broiler.

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Roasting + Broiling







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Pressure Cooked, Skinless

Method: Season the chicken on both sides with salt. Add a cup of water to the pressure cooker and cook on high pressure for 15 minutes.

Approximate Cook Time: 15-20 minutes

Observations: Chicken shreds and pulls easily after being pressure cooked with no caramelization or color.

Recommended for Best Results: Consider brining overnight, or salting chicken an hour ahead of cooking, or first searing the chicken to gain color and flavor. Consider seasoning the water, as well, or cooking with additional aromatics to infuse flavor.

Avoid: Exercise appropriate caution when working with pressure cookers. Avoid pressure cooking chicken skin, as it will become quite mushy and unpleasant.

Tasting Notes: Overall, the chicken was quite bland and additional steps should be taken in order to produce a more flavorful product.

Additional Notes: The leftover liquid from pressure cooking can be reserved and used for light chicken stock. Additional aromatic ingredients used will yield a more flavorful stock.

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Pressure Cooked, Skinless






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Air-dried, Roasted

Method: Season chicken with equal parts salt and sugar and allow to dry, uncovered, on roasting racks, under refrigeration, overnight to form a pellicle; Lightly coat with oil before roasting in the oven until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 15-18 minutes.

Observations: The chicken skin did not take on very much color, and would likely overcook before golden, crispy skin is achieved.

Recommended for Best Results: Consider using a high convection fan while roasting, or consider a combination of cooking techniques to render and caramelize the skin more directly. Further, though the chicken has already been cured, consider lightly seasoning the meat with salt just before roasting in order to boost flavor without becoming too salty.

Avoid: Avoid roasting at temperatures below 350°F as the oven will not be hot enough to properly caramelize the skin.

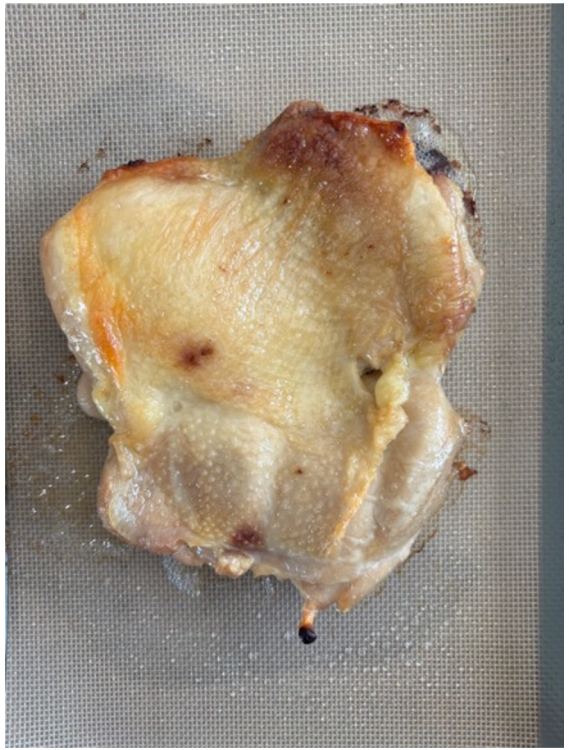
Tasting Notes: The chicken is well seasoned throughout the meat, but lacks a crispy skin or any sort of deep caramelization. The chicken is firm and juicy, but needs an additional step, such as broiling, to finish the skin.

Additional Notes: Curing chicken can be done in large batches on sheet trays and is a quick and less cumbersome alternative to wet brining.

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Air-dried, Roasted







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Air-dried, Pan-roasted

Method: Season chicken with equal parts salt and sugar and allow to dry, uncovered, on roasting racks overnight to form a pellicle. Cook skin side down in a carbon-steel pan with oil, pressing the chicken with a weight during the first few minutes. Flip chicken and finish in the oven until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 15 minutes

Observations: The skin of the chicken caramelizes quickly and can be prone to char due to the sugar content.

Recommended for Best Results: Render the chicken skin over medium to medium-high heat before finishing in the oven to achieve consistently crispy skin. Even though the chicken has been cured overnight, a light sprinkle of salt just before cooking will elevate the seasoning without becoming too salty.

Avoid: Avoid cooking on high heat, as this can cause the skin to burn before properly rendering.

Tasting Notes: Chicken has a plump, firm bite and is juicy and tender. The skin is nicely rendered in some areas, but has a few uneven pockets of chewier fat. Chicken is seasoned evenly throughout but not overly so.

Additional Notes: Consider rendering out the skin on a large, greased flat-top over low heat before service, to make for a quicker pickup at scale.

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Air-dried, Pan-roasted







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Simmering (soup)

Method: Sweat mirepoix and garlic until tender. Season chicken on both sides and sear until caramelized. Deglaze with white wine and add chicken stock. Simmer 1 hour, then shred chicken. Add a sachet of herbs and simmer and additional 15 minutes. To serve, add cooked pasta of your choosing.

Approximate Cook Time: 90 minutes

Observations: The dark meat flavor adds additional depth of flavor to the soup. The dark meat also works well being cooked for an extended time, as it maintains texture and flavor over time.

Recommended for Best Results: Be sure to check seasoning throughout the cooking process, adjusting final salinity at the end for desired flavor. Use a high collagen stock for increased richness and mouthfeel.

Avoid: Do not cook and hold pasta directly in the soup. Pre-cooked pasta can be added a la minute or should be held in small batches to not overcook the noodles. Avoid dicing the chicken ahead of time, as the chicken can easily be pulled after cooking to create natural tears and a luscious mouthfeel.

Tasting Notes: The chicken has deep, comforting, savory notes and is very tender without being overcooked.

Additional Notes: Adding cooked and blanched pasta to the final soup, rather than cooking the pasta directly in the broth will help the pasta to not overcook while hot holding and will not affect the ratio of broth in the soup.

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Simmering (soup)

Recipe: Sweat one small, diced onion, two diced carrots, three cloves of garlic, and two stalks of celery. Add chicken and cook on both sides until golden. Deglaze with a half cup of white wine, then add a quart of chicken stock. Simmer, covered for 1 hour, then shred chicken. To serve, add cooked noodles and heat through.







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Steaming, Skinless

Method: Season chicken on both sides, then cook with high steam for 15 minutes or until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 12-15 minutes.

Observations: Chicken is very unattractive and any fat becomes gelatinous rather than crispy during this method. However, the chicken is evenly and quickly cooked and quite tender.

Recommended for Best Results: Be sure any large fat deposits have been trimmed away before cooking. Season the chicken and allow to rest for 30 minutes or overnight in order to impart deeper penetration of salinity.

Avoid: Avoid this process with skin-on chicken.

Tasting Notes: Though there are no notes of roasting or caramelization, the chicken is very tender and juicy. However, any untrimmed fat has an off-putting mouthfeel.

Additional Notes: This technique is excellent for creating shredded chicken. With a longer cooking time, the meat will easily shred and pull.

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Steaming, Skinless







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Braising, Skin-on

Method: Marinate chicken for at least 30 minutes. Sear chicken on both sides to caramelize, then remove from pan and sweat aromatics. Return chicken, add remaining marinade with water, and simmer uncovered for 25 minutes until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F and meat is very tender.

Approximate Cook Time: 45 minutes

Observations: The chicken adds deep chicken flavor to the braising liquid, while also taking on the flavor of the braise, without either becoming overpowered.

Recommended for Best Results: Though braising is a forgiving cooking process, meat can still become dry during the cook. Be careful to monitor time and temperature, keeping the braise at a light simmer and checking desired tenderness. Consider lightly dusting the chicken in cornstarch or flour before searing in order to thicken the braising liquid and develop a deeper crust on the chicken itself.

Avoid: Though many recipes may call for skin-on braising preparations, the thickness of the thigh skin will become melty and tender, as opposed to crispy, which may be off-putting to guests. Consider adapting recipes to use skinless Mountaire® Chicken Chop®.

Tasting Notes: The chicken is very tender but not altogether juicy. The skin is partially rendered and flavorful, but not crispy at all. The marinade and braising flavors are pronounced, but the chicken finishes with deep, rich, dark-meat chicken flavor.

Additional Notes: This cut would work well in many braises or stews, such as biryani or coq au vin. Consider cutting the Mountaire Chicken Chop into smaller pieces before the cooking process, to make production and serving easier at scale.

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Braising, Skin-on

Recipe: Combine ⅓ cup white vinegar and ¼ cup soy sauce with 3 cloves crushed garlic, then marinate chicken at least 30 minutes. Sear chicken on both sides then remove from pan. Sweat onions then return chicken with marinade and a cup of water; simmer uncovered for 25 minutes until sauce has become syrupy. Serve over rice.






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Smoking

Method: Season chicken with salt, then hot smoke at 300°F for 30-40 minutes, or until reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.

Approximate Cook Time: 30-45 minutes

Observations: Skin dries and renders nicely and takes on a deep, lacquered color. Although the skin is rendered, it is not crisp.

Recommended for Best Results: Smoke over apple wood or other fruit wood. Consider curing overnight, wet-brining, or adding a rub to enhance flavor. The chicken can be cooked to a higher temperature, such as 185°F, which will cause the muscle to break down and easily pull. If this is the desired effect, monitor carefully and consider a lower cooking temperature over a longer period as to not dry out the meat.

Avoid: Avoid using hardwoods like oak or hickory, as the smoky flavor can overwhelm the flavor of the chicken.

Tasting Notes: Deep, smoky flavor with mild salinity. The meat is firm and moist, but not particularly juicy.

Additional Notes: This product is excellent for single-serving barbecue, and can be served whole, without slicing or carving.

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Smoking







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Roulade

Method: Pound out the meat until thin and even, about ¼ inch. Season meat on both sides with salt. Place sausage or other filling in the center of the leg and wrap the meat around the farce; wrap tightly in cling wrap and then vacuum seal (if applicable). Poach traditionally in plastic wrap for one hour, or cook sous vide for 2 hours at 150°F. Pan fry or deep fry to develop color before serving.

Approximate Cook Time: 1-2 hours

Observations: After being poached, the chicken holds its form nicely and is set into an even, cylindrical shape.

Recommended for Best Results: When rolling the chicken meat around the farce, the meat will have a rough rectangle shape and the farce should be distributed and wrapped along the length of the chicken, as rolling along the width will create a thick, dense roulade with uneven distribution of chicken.

Avoid: If cooking sous vide, take care that the chicken is adhering to proper food-handling requirements and HACCP plan standards in order to avoid undercooked meat, or meat that has been in the temperature danger zone for too long. Avoid seasoning the meat too aggressively, as the leg has been pounded and will require less salt to permeate the flesh.

Tasting Notes: Chicken is well seasoned and very flavorful from the sausage stuffing. Make note, any farce used in this preparation will marry with the chicken during the cooking process. The chicken is tender and juicy and the skin is crispy with pleasant, roasted flavor.

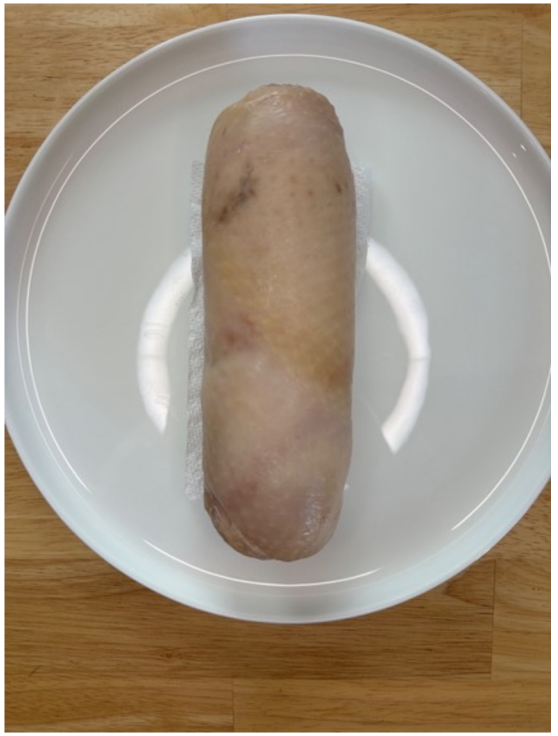
Additional Notes: At scale, this can be done ahead of service and roulades can be held in a water bath, or the roulades can be poached, chilled, and then sliced into medallions ahead of service, then pan-fried for pick-up. With the addition of a stuffing, a single Mountaire® Chicken Chop® can be served as more than one entree.

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Roulade







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Roulade







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Takeaways & Best Methods

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Pro-tip Takeaways: Skin-on Mountaire® Chicken Chop®

Overall, the skin-on Mountaire Chicken Chop begs to be the star of the show and the center of the plate.

- **Overview**: Take conscious steps to embrace and highlight the skin, bringing a deep, roasty, caramelized skin to the final product. Skin-on Mountaire Chicken Chop is best when cooked with high heat, such as being rendered in a pan, cooked over a grill, finished under a broiler, or even fried. The skin-on Mountaire Chicken Chop is also versatile in that it can be ground and used for sausage or meatballs, or pounded and used as a roulade.
- **Best practices**: Though perhaps non-traditional with dark meat, a wet brine or marinade will definitely increase the quality and flavor of the chicken.
    - Wet brines can impart flavor and weight, and create a juicer product—ideal for applications such as smoking or grilling.
    - A dry brine or cure made of salt and sugar will create a slightly more firm texture and bite, ideal for applications such as pan-roasting.
    - In either application, skin should be thoroughly dried before cooking, in order to achieve the optimal crispiness. Rendering the skin is critical to a crisp, golden final product. Consider rendering out skin on a lower heat before finishing with direct high heat, such as with roasting and broiling, or pan-roasting.
- **Areas to avoid**: High-moisture cooking is no friend to the skin-on Mountaire Chicken Chop as the skin becomes tender, chewy, slimy, or even rubbery in these applications. Avoid techniques such as steaming, braising, or poaching. Avoid quick, hot and fast cooking applications for skin-on, such as with fajita strips or stir-fry, since the skin does not have enough time render.

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Best Methods & Menu Ideas: Skin-on

Pan-roasting: This method allows for the crispiest skin possible and highlights the Mountaire® Chicken Chop® is a center-of-the-plate ingredient.

- Poor man’s risotto with spinach, peas, and garlic-herb rubbed chicken leg
- Roasted root vegetable platter with pan-roasted chicken leg, olives, and romesco sauce
- Five spiced glazed chicken leg with broccoli, bok choy, chili crisp, and lime

Ground: Grinding the skin-on Mountaire Chicken Chop yields a ground meat that is still lean (90%) but yields big flavor and will stand up to a host of applications and cooking methods.

- Thai seasoned ground chicken lettuce wraps with rice, peanuts, and herb salad
- Ginger-scallion chicken meatballs in pho-spiced noodle soup with fresh herbs, chili, and lime
- Buffalo chicken sausage pizza with pickled onions and whipped blue cheese

Grilled: When grilling the Mountaire Chicken Chop, the skin becomes rendered, while the char flavor of the grill accents the deep, dark-meat flavor of the chicken. The dark meat can be grilled hot-and-fast or low-and-slow.

- Garlic-lemon-rubbed grilled chicken with feta, tomato, kale, and couscous salad
- Chopped chicken Caesar salad sandwich with Asiago and pickled peppers
- BBQ-rubbed grilled chicken tacos with rum BBQ sauce, spicy pineapple salsa, and pepperjack cheese

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Pro-tip Takeaways: Skinless Mountaire® Chicken Chop®

The skinless Mountaire Chicken Chop can work center-of-plate and also in harmony with other flavors and ingredients to create a cohesive dish.

- **Overview**: When working with the skinless Mountaire Chicken Chop, one can still cook with confidence to develop deep caramelization and rich flavor without the risk of overcooking. Skinless Mountaire Chicken Chop is best used in applications like fried chicken, pan frying a la schnitzel, hot-and-fast applications such as stir-frying or fajita strips, or for longer cooking times where a tender pulled chicken application is the desired outcome, such as with simmering, steaming, or braising.
- **Best Practices**: Just as with skin-on Mountaire Chicken Chop, wet or dry brining will both yield favorable results which can impart flavor and texture to the final application. However, it is still important to pat the skin dry before applying heat, as any residual moisture on the chicken will cause the meat to steam, rather than caramelize. This can be disregarded in high-moisture cooking applications such as steaming, pressure cooking, or braising.
- **Areas to Avoid**: Consider avoiding smoking or roasting with the skinless Mountaire Chicken Chop, as the skin helps to protect the meat and self-baste during the cooking process. If cooking with high-moisture techniques, check to remove any excess fat deposits, as they will not render in the cooking process.

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Best Methods & Menu Ideas: Skinless

Deep-fried: The skinless Mountaire® Chicken Chop® allows the breading to adhere directly to the flesh, creating a crispy crust without slippage.

- Karaage fried chicken bowl with vegetable slaw and spicy yuzu barbecue sauce
- Spicy vodka chicken parmesan with arugula, basil, and almond salad
- Crunchy-saucey, gochujang hot chicken sandwich with pickled onions and slaw

Strips: When cut into thin strips, the Mountaire Chicken Chop cooks quickly and holds nicely while retaining rich, juicy flavor, perfect for a host of applications.

- Loaded, cheesy chicken quesadilla with ancho-chipotle blackened chicken
- Bulgogi chicken power bowl with black rice, pickled vegetables, and kimchi dressing
- Chicken gyro with whipped feta tzatziki, baby kale, and roasted bell peppers

Braised: The Mountaire Chicken Chop works excellently as a braise, taking on a sear without overcooking, and holding up to longer cooking times without drying out.

- BBQ rubbed chicken leg braised in sweet and zesty Jack-and-Coke baked beans
- Cajun paella with chicken, Andouille, black eyed peas, and shrimp
- Filipino adobo with ginger rice, peanuts, and green onion salad

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