

Classic Chicken Cacciatore

Authentic Italian Chicken Cacciatore recipe with tomatoes, peppers, and herbs. Hunter-style braised chicken that's perfect for family dinners.

20 min

PREP

45 min

COOK

1h 5min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Classic Chicken Cacciatore

Ingredients

- 4 chicken thigh
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion
- 3 clove garlic
- 1 bell pepper
- 1 cup mushroom
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup parsley
- 1 cup olive

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the chicken**

Pat 4 chicken thighs dry with paper towels. Season both sides generously with salt and black pepper. Let sit at room temperature for 15 minutes while you prepare the vegetables.
- 2 Prepare the vegetables**

Dice 1 large onion into ½-inch pieces. Mince 3 garlic cloves. Cut 1 bell pepper into ½-inch strips. Slice 1 cup mushrooms into ¼-inch thick pieces.
- 3 Brown the chicken**

Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add chicken thighs skin-side down and cook without moving for 5-6 minutes until golden brown. Flip and cook 4-5 minutes more until second side is golden.
- 4** Transfer chicken to a plate and set aside. Leave the oil and browned bits in the pot.
- 5 Cook the aromatics**

Reduce heat to medium and add the diced onion to the same pot. Cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened and translucent. Add minced garlic and cook 30 seconds until fragrant.
- 6** Add bell pepper strips and sliced mushrooms to the pot. Cook for 5-6 minutes, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened and lightly browned.

- 7 Build the sauce**

Add 1 cup crushed tomatoes and 1 teaspoon dried oregano to the pot. Stir to combine and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot (this adds flavor to the sauce).
- 8 Braise the chicken**

Return chicken thighs to the pot, nestling them into the sauce skin-side up. Add 1 bay leaf. Bring to a gentle simmer, then reduce heat to low and cover.
- 9** Cook covered for 25-30 minutes until chicken is completely tender and internal temperature reaches 165°F (74°C). The sauce should be thickened and bubbling gently.
- 10 Finish and serve**

Remove bay leaf and taste sauce for seasoning. Add salt and pepper as needed. Stir in 1 cup black olives if using. Serve immediately over pasta, rice, or polenta.

Tips

Choose the Right Chicken: Bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs provide the best flavor and stay moist during braising. If using breasts, reduce cooking time to prevent drying out.

Don't Skip the Searing: Properly browning the chicken creates a flavorful fond on the bottom of the pan, which becomes the foundation of your sauce's depth.

Control the Heat: Keep the braising at a gentle simmer rather than a rolling boil to ensure tender, not tough, chicken and prevent the sauce from reducing too quickly.

Layer Your Flavors: Sauté vegetables until they're properly softened and slightly caramelized before adding liquids - this builds complexity in the final dish.

Wine Selection Matters: Use a wine you'd drink - dry red wines like Chianti or Sangiovese work best, but avoid cooking wines which can be overly salty.

Fresh vs. Dried Herbs: Add dried herbs early in cooking for maximum flavor infusion, but reserve fresh herbs for the last few minutes to maintain their bright flavor.

Sauce Consistency: If your sauce is too thin, simmer uncovered for the last 10 minutes. If too thick, add warm chicken broth gradually until desired consistency is reached.

Resting is Key: Let the finished dish rest for 5-10 minutes before serving to allow the sauce to thicken slightly and the flavors to settle.