

## POULTRY FOR CHRISTMAS . . .

not wait for it to cease kicking, but begin plucking the feathers out immediately after dislocating the neck. Start at the neck end and work back to the tail. Do the breast and keel first, then the back, sides, and legs. Leave the tail and wings until last.

The secret of success in wet plucking is the scald. Many poulters like the water close to 160 degrees F., but temperatures up to 180 degrees are satisfactory if the time of dipping is reduced. If the bird is dipped too long, the skin will scald too soft and tear as the feathers are plucked, especially on the legs, wings, and breast; if the dipping time is not sufficiently long, the feathers will be just as hard to take out as in dry plucking.

Use a bucket wide and deep enough to permit the bird to be put into it easily. Use sufficient water at about 170 degrees F. to submerge the bird completely. Scalding is best done about 20 and not more than 30 minutes after the bird has been killed. Dip the bird for a couple of seconds, pull it out of the water, and immediately submerge it again, moving it around in the water as much as possible. At the end of 25 seconds pull it out again and test whether the scald is sufficient by pulling one wing feather. If it comes out readily, the scald is right; if not, submerge the bird once more and test again 5 or 6 seconds later.

The order of taking out the feathers is entirely different from that in dry

plucking. Do the wings first, then the tail, the legs, the back (working from tail to neck), and last the keel, breast, and abdomen. A few feathers will be missed in the first pluck, but these are attended to in the final "fine" pluck.

### Gutting

For the person who seldom prepares poultry for the table there are only two aspects to gutting—how to get out the crop and how to cope with the rest of the internal organs.

The crop is best taken out from the neck end.

All the rest of the organs are removed through a cut made in the abdomen. This cut can be made in one of three ways. The most popular is to make a long incision from the end of the keelbone right to the vent. Another way is to make a long cut from side to side across the abdomen, halfway between the keel and the vent. Both these methods make it easy for a person even with large hands to do the job quickly, but they leave an unsightly gap and compel the cook to stitch together the abdominal skin after stuffing the carcass. The roast poultry illustrated on page 476 was gutted by this second method.

In the bird illustrated on the next page the hole through which the gutting was done is so small that it can barely be seen. The leg bone

is tucked into the hole, which because of its smallness stops the leg from springing out; this is one method of trussing. This third method of gutting needs only a small stab cut on one side of the abdomen; full details were given on page 437 of the "Journal" for November, 1949. It is a slower way than the other two, but the carcass looks a great deal more attractive both after completion of the job and after being cooked.

Take out the lungs and wash the carcass well, but, if the poultry is not going to be cooked soon, drain and dry it thoroughly. Water does not harm poultry flesh because it is protected by an internal as well as an external skin.

### Old Hens

An old hen should not be despised as a table bird. There are many misconceptions about the old hen. Some people condemn females as table birds, others say second-year birds are tough, and some insist on using only heavy-breed varieties. Neither the age nor the variety matters very much if the bird is well fleshed, especially on the breast, keel, and legs, in which case it can be cooked so that it will be tender and can compare favourably with any other kind of poultry. It is more important to have some idea of the age of the bird, not so much in terms of months or years, but by the classification of young, very young, or not young. The bird should then be cooked according to its classification.

## COOKING POULTRY

### Chickens and Hens

Very young chickens may be roasted or fried; in fact, they are the only type of bird suitable for frying, as any other would be too tough for this method.

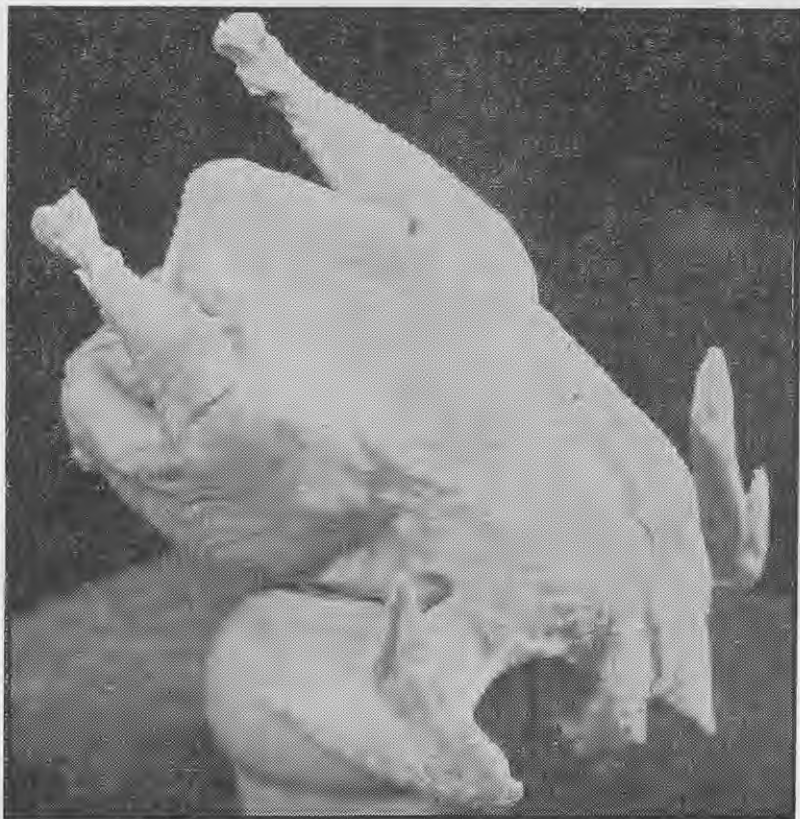
#### Fried Chicken

Cut the bird into neat serving pieces, dredge them with well-seasoned flour, and fry them in bacon fat until they are tender and golden brown. Do not fry the chicken too quickly or for too long. Serve it with bacon rolls and fried parsley.

#### Fried Chicken in Batter

1 young chicken, cut into serving pieces	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of flour
2 eggs	1 small onion, chopped finely
1 tablespoon of melted butter	1 tablespoon of chopped parsley
A little gravy or stock	2 tomatoes
	Salt and pepper

Beat the yolks of the eggs and stir in the cooled melted butter, a little gravy, and the flour. Pour in 1 cup of cold water to make a smooth batter and put it aside to set. Whip the egg whites until they are stiff and add them to the batter, also stirring in the parsley and onion. Dredge the pieces of chicken with flour, dip them in the batter, and fry them in hot fat. Drain the fried chicken on soft paper and serve it on a hot dish garnished with parsley, slices of fresh tomato, and small strips of fried bacon.



[Fraser Niederer photo.]

A hen plucked, gutted, and washed ready to be trussed and stuffed.