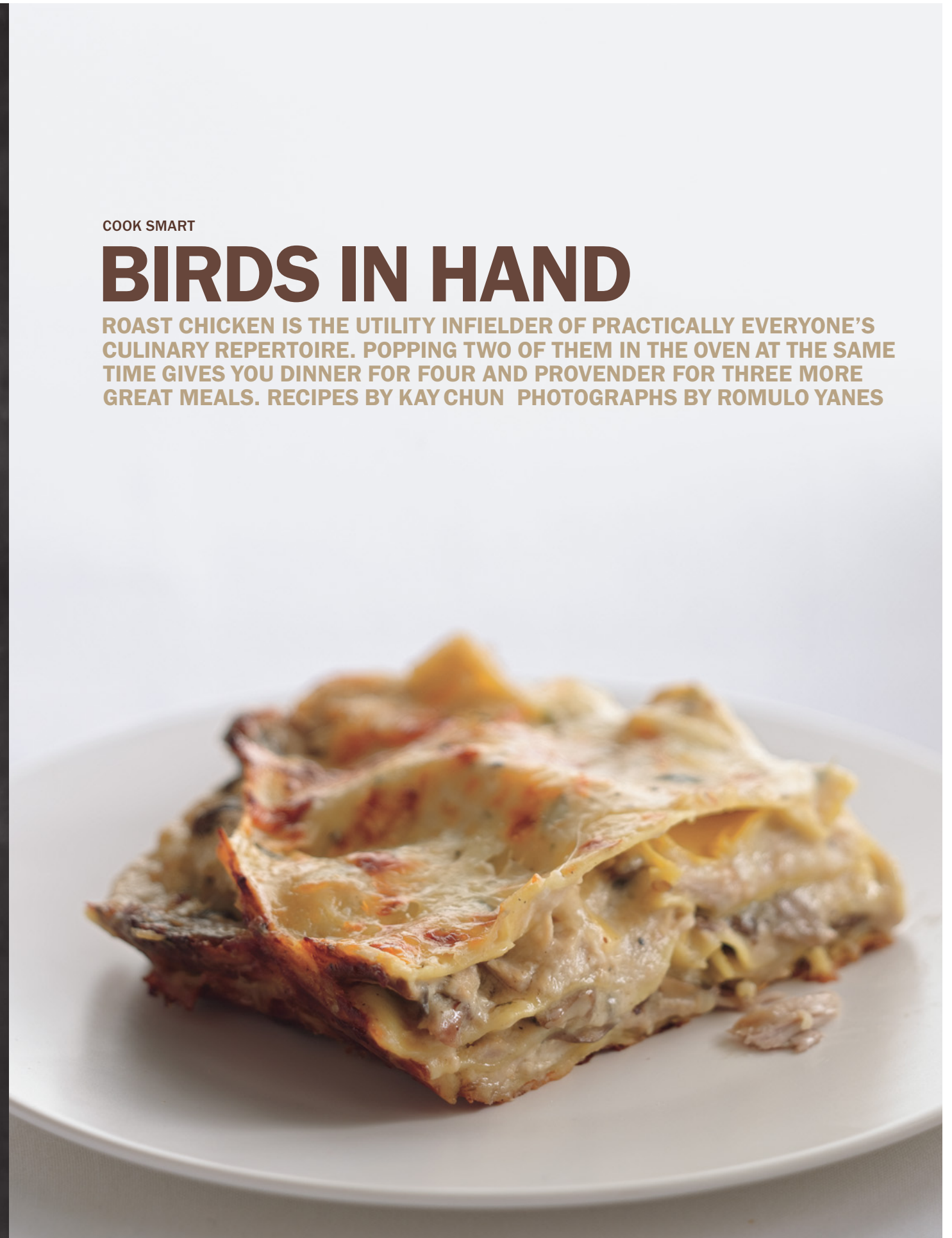




COOK SMART

BIRDS IN HAND

ROAST CHICKEN IS THE UTILITY INFIELDER OF PRACTICALLY EVERYONE'S CULINARY REPERTOIRE. POPPING TWO OF THEM IN THE OVEN AT THE SAME TIME GIVES YOU DINNER FOR FOUR AND PROVENDER FOR THREE MORE GREAT MEALS. RECIPES BY KAY CHUN PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROMULO YANES



Putting delicious, sustaining meals on the table consistently, economically, and with a minimum of fuss is something all home cooks aspire to. Over the years, we've learned that having two roast chickens on hand pays real dividends in terms of speed, convenience, and energy efficiency. **MEAL NUMBER ONE: ROAST CHICKEN WITH PAN GRAVY** The secret to a gorgeous, golden-brown bird is basting—a bit of a bore, true, but more than worth the effort. We use melted butter flavored with smashed garlic cloves, then tuck the garlic and a lemon half inside the chicken. If you have rosemary or thyme sprigs in the fridge or growing on a windowsill, toss in a few of them as well. Pan gravy, a snap to make, is the kind of finishing touch you will become famous for. And, after dinner, put the chicken carcass in a ziplock bag and stash it in the freezer; those remains of the day, so to speak, will eventually end up in the stockpot. **MEAL NUMBER TWO: CHEESY CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM LASAGNE** Use the meat from half of the second bird (and don't forget to save those bones for stock). Much of the dish's flavor and moistness will come from the thigh and drumstick. The people at your table who profess to dislike dark meat won't know it's there because it's cleverly camouflaged with cheese and mushrooms. Brilliant. **MEAL NUMBER THREE: GYROS WITH CUCUMBER SALSA AND TSATSIKI** It's hard to beat a good chicken sandwich, and that is what the last half of the cold roast bird is slated for. Assembling wrap-style sandwiches with a flatbread other than tortillas takes you to another part of the world, the Mediterranean. Cucumber, tomato, red onion, and mint contribute crunch and freshness, and thick Greek yogurt adds substance and a creamy tang. The real beauty of **LEFTOVER-ROAST-CHICKEN STOCK** is that you don't have to make or use it immediately if you don't have the time. The bones will keep in the freezer for weeks, and the stock can be frozen for months. ›



FOOD STYLING: PAUL GRIMES PROP STYLING: HALEY THURSWELL

The big, generous flavors of Greece turn a chicken sandwich into a meal. Homemade stock is the key to a risotto of leeks, peas, and grilled calamari.

It’s a fundamental building block for soup, obviously, but why not go in a less predictable direction? **MEAL NUMBER FOUR: LEEK AND PEA RISOTTO WITH GRILLED CALAMARI** At first glance, fish stock may seem a more appropriate choice for this risotto, but, in fact, chicken stock has a way of bringing out the savory quality—the meatiness, really—of pan-grilled squid. There you have it: Two chickens, four meals. As for dessert, you’re on your own. —Jane Daniels Lear

ROAST CHICKEN WITH PAN GRAVY

SERVES 4 WITH LEFTOVERS

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN START TO FINISH: 1½ HR (INCLUDES RESTING)

In an uncertain world, everybody needs a truly excellent recipe for roast chicken, one that will never, ever fail you. This is it. And although basting the chickens seems like a chore, it will give them a beautiful burnished glow. Killing two birds with one stone—that is, cooking two birds together—provides dinner tonight and enough leftovers for three more meals. Saving both chicken carcasses for the stockpot (they can be frozen if desired) is key.

- 2 whole chickens (about 3½ lb each)
- 1 stick unsalted butter, cut into tablespoons, divided
- 6 large garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
- 2 lemons, halved
- 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2 cups water

EQUIPMENT: kitchen string

ROAST CHICKEN: Preheat oven to 450°F with rack in middle.

► Pull off excess fat around cavities of chickens and discard, then rinse chickens and pat dry. Melt 4 Tbsp butter with garlic and brush butter all over chickens. Season both chickens inside and out with 2½ tsp salt and 1 tsp pepper (total). Put half of garlic and 1 lemon half in each cavity and loosely tie legs together with string. ► Roast chickens in a large (17- by 11-inch) flameproof roasting pan, basting with pan juices using a spoon (remove pan from oven and tilt if necessary) every 20 minutes, rotating pan, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into fleshy part of a thigh of each chicken (do not touch bone) registers 170°F, 50 to 60 minutes total. Baste chickens once more, then carefully tilt them so juices from cavities run into roasting pan. Transfer chickens to a cutting board (reserve pan) and let rest 15 minutes before carving. **MAKE GRAVY WHILE CHICKENS REST:** Pour off all but 2 Tbsp fat from pan, then cook remaining drippings over medium-high heat until deep golden, 1 to 2 minutes. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Stir in water and simmer, stirring and scraping up brown bits, until thickened, about 3 to 4 minutes. Whisk in remaining 4 Tbsp butter and lemon juice to taste (from remaining lemon halves). Season with salt and pepper. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a gravy boat.

COOKS' NOTE: If desired, you can also add herbs such as thyme or rosemary to cavities before roasting.

CHEESY CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM LASAGNE

SERVES 4

ACTIVE TIME: 35 MIN START TO FINISH: 1½ HR

No-boil lasagne noodles are a lifesaver: They can turn what’s often perceived as a party dish into a practical weeknight supper—especially since you have the luxury of simply reaching into the refrigerator and pulling out the main ingredient: half a roast chicken. Leftover lasagne noodles are handy for crumbling into soup.

- 1 (10-oz) package cremini or white mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 5 Tbsp unsalted butter, divided
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ½ roast chicken, skin discarded, meat shredded (about 2¼ cups), and carcass reserved for stock (page 99)
- 3½ cups whole milk
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp thyme leaves
- ¾ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 12 Barilla no-boil egg lasagne noodles (less than a 9-oz package)
- 1½ cups coarsely grated Gruyère (3 oz)

EQUIPMENT: an 8-inch square baking pan

► Preheat oven to 425°F with rack in middle. ► Cook mushrooms, garlic, ¼ tsp salt, and ½ tsp pepper in oil and 1 Tbsp butter in a 4-qt heavy saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms are softened, about 3 minutes. Add wine and simmer briskly 2 minutes. Transfer mushroom mixture to a large bowl and stir in chicken. (Set aside saucepan.) ► Bring milk to a bare simmer in a medium saucepan. Melt remaining 4 Tbsp butter in 4-qt saucepan over medium-low heat. Add flour and cook roux, whisking constantly, 3 minutes. Add hot milk in a slow stream, whisking constantly. Add thyme, ¾ tsp salt, and ½ tsp pepper and simmer, whisking occasionally, until thickened, 5 to 6 minutes. Remove from heat and reserve 1 cup sauce. Stir parmesan into sauce remaining in pan, then stir into mushroom filling. ► Pour half of reserved plain sauce into baking pan, spreading evenly to coat bottom. Add 3 lasagne sheets, overlapping slightly, and one third of mushroom filling, spreading evenly, then sprinkle one fourth of Gruyère over top. Repeat 2 times. Top with remaining 3 lasagne sheets and remaining plain sauce, spreading evenly. Sprinkle with remaining Gruyère.

► Cover with foil, tenting slightly to prevent foil from touching top of lasagne but sealing all around edge, and bake 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake until cheese is golden, about 15 minutes more. Let lasagne stand 10 minutes before serving.

CHICKEN GYROS WITH CUCUMBER SALSA AND TSATSIKI

SERVES 4

ACTIVE TIME: 40 MIN START TO FINISH: 40 MIN

It’s March, which feels like the longest month, and for many of us, it’s still cold and dreary outside. Time to start fantasizing about sitting at a café table somewhere hot and dazzlingly sunny—a Greek island would do nicely. These hearty sandwiches will take you there.

- 2 Kirby cucumbers, divided
- 1½ cups Greek yogurt (¾ lb)
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice, divided
- 5 garlic cloves, minced, divided
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, quartered
- 1 small red onion, halved and thinly sliced
- ⅓ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ¼ cup chopped mint
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 rounded tsp dried oregano
- 1 rounded tsp dried rosemary, crumbled
- 1 (12-oz) package naan bread (four 8-inch pieces) or 4 (8-inch) pocketless pita rounds
- ½ roast chicken, skin discarded, meat shredded (about 2¼ cups), and carcass reserved for stock (this page)
- ½ head iceberg lettuce, thinly sliced

► Preheat broiler. ► Peel and grate 1 cucumber, then squeeze it with your hands to remove excess water. Stir together with yogurt, ½ tsp lemon juice, one third of garlic, and ¼ tsp each of salt and pepper to make *tsatsiki*. ► Cut remaining cucumber into ¼-inch pieces and stir together with tomatoes, onion, parsley, mint, remaining ½ tsp lemon juice, and ¼ tsp each of salt and pepper to make salsa. ► Gently simmer oil, oregano, rosemary, remaining garlic, ¼ tsp salt, and ⅛ tsp pepper in a small heavy saucepan, stirring constantly, until garlic is fragrant but not browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Toss chicken with 3 Tbsp garlic oil and brush one side of bread with remainder. ► Heat bread, oiled side up, in a 4-sided sheet pan, covered with foil, 3 to 4 inches from broiler 3 minutes. Uncover and broil, rotating bread for even coloring, until golden in spots, about 2 minutes. ► Spread some of *tsatsiki* on warm bread and top with chicken and some of lettuce and salsa. Serve remaining lettuce, salsa, and *tsatsiki* on the side.

COOKS' NOTE: *Tsatsiki* can be made 1 day ahead and chilled.

LEEK AND PEA RISOTTO WITH GRILLED CALAMARI

SERVES 4

ACTIVE TIME: 45 MIN START TO FINISH: 45 MIN

Homemade stock will make any risotto fabulous. Here, the delicate, springlike combination of leeks and peas is given texture and heft with the addition of calamari, turning it into a main course.

- 6 cups chicken stock such as leftover-roast-chicken stock (recipe follows)
- 5 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced
- 2 medium leeks (white and pale green parts only), thinly sliced and washed (see Tips, page 107)

FOR A VIDEO DEMONSTRATION OF HOW TO CARVE A CHICKEN, VISIT GOURMET.COM

- 1¼ cups Arborio rice
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- ½ cup frozen peas
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- ⅓ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 1 lb cleaned small squid, patted dry

EQUIPMENT: a large (2-burner) grill pan

► Bring stock to a bare simmer in a medium saucepan, then keep at a bare simmer. ► Whisk together 2 Tbsp oil, lemon juice, scallion, ¼ tsp salt, and ⅓ tsp pepper in a medium bowl to make vinaigrette. ► Cook leeks in 2 Tbsp oil in a 4-qt heavy pot over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until softened but not browned, 7 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a plate. ► Add remaining Tbsp oil and rice to pot and cook, stirring constantly, until rice is coated evenly, about 1 minute. Add wine and briskly simmer, stirring, until most has been absorbed, about 1 minute. ► Add 1 cup hot stock and briskly simmer, stirring constantly, until stock has been absorbed. Continue simmering and adding hot stock, 1 cup at a time, stirring constantly and allowing each addition to be absorbed before adding the next, until 1 cup stock is left, 15 to 18 minutes. Add peas, leeks, and remaining cup stock and cook, stirring, until rice is just tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in butter and cheese, then remove from heat. ► When last cup of stock has been added to risotto, heat grill pan over high heat until hot. ► When risotto is done, season squid with ⅓ tsp salt and oil grill pan. Grill squid, pressing down with a spatula and turning halfway through, until opaque and just cooked through, about 1 minute total. Toss with enough lemon vinaigrette to coat. ► Serve risotto topped with calamari and drizzled with any remaining lemon vinaigrette.

LEFTOVER-ROAST-CHICKEN STOCK

MAKES 6 CUPS

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN START TO FINISH: 2¼ HR

This time-honored example of kitchen thrift is ready when you are: Have it simmering away while you tend to another meal or are pattering around on a Saturday morning. Just looking at it in the refrigerator or freezer will make you happy, secure in the knowledge that you can put a terrific meal on the table in no time at all.

- 2 chicken carcasses left over from roast chicken, any herbs in cavities discarded
- 1 onion, quartered
- 2 celery ribs, chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 1 head of garlic, halved crosswise
- Scant ¼ tsp black peppercorns
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 8 parsley sprigs including long stems
- 4 qt water

► Bring all ingredients to a boil in an 8-qt stockpot. Reduce heat and simmer, skimming foam occasionally, 2 hours. ► Strain stock through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, pressing on and then discarding solids. If you have more than 6 cups, boil to reduce; if less, add water. If using stock right away, skim off and discard fat. If not, chill stock (covered once cool) and discard fat after it solidifies. **COOKS' NOTES:** In place of roast-chicken carcasses, you can use 3½ to 4 lb wings, necks, and backs from uncooked chickens. • Stock can be chilled up to 3 days or frozen up to 3 months. 🍴