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January 28, 2012

KITCHEN DAILY

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Stuffed Chicken Thighs Braised in Tomato Sauce

First Posted: 10/27/11 05:55 PM ET Updated: 1/9/12 11:23 AM ET

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Burris, Ken

Provided by: [EatingWell](#) **EatingWell.com**

2 hr 30 mins total 2 hr prep 333 calories/serving

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Servings

Spinach-Parmesan stuffing provides great flavor in boneless, skinless chicken thighs. Try it with the optional chicken livers in the stuffing for an extra-rich treat. And don't worry, even though when stuffed it looks like the filling will ooze out, it doesn't. The egg in the stuffing acts as a binder to keep everything in place. The recipe makes plenty of sauce, so be sure to cook up some [pasta](#) or make mashed [potatoes](#) to serve alongside the saucy chicken.

Ingredients

- Stuffing & [Chicken](#)
- 1 cup frozen (thawed) or [cooked spinach](#), squeezed [dry](#)
- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs from day-old [bread](#), preferably whole-[wheat](#) (see Tip)
- 4 ounces fresh chicken [livers](#), coarsely [chopped](#) (optional; see Note)
- 1/2 cup freshly grated [Parmesan cheese](#)
- 1 large [egg](#), lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons chopped [fennel](#) fronds (optional)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped [shallots](#)
- 1 tablespoon chopped [garlic](#)
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh [thyme](#)
- 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground [pepper](#), divided
- 1/2 teaspoon [salt](#), divided
- 10 4- to 5-ounce boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin [olive oil](#)
- [Sauce](#)
- 2 cups finely chopped [onion](#)
- 1/2 cup finely chopped [carrot](#)
- 1/2 cup diced fennel [bulb](#)
- 1/4 cup finely chopped shallot
- 2 tablespoons [minced](#) garlic
- 1 1/2 cups dry white [wine](#)
- 3 cups reduced-[sodium](#) chicken [broth](#)
- 1 28-ounce can crushed [tomatoes](#)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh [basil](#)
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Directions

- 1. To prepare stuffing & chicken: Combine spinach and breadcrumbs in a medium bowl with chicken livers (if using), Parmesan, egg, fennel fronds (if using), 2 tablespoons shallot, 1 tablespoon garlic, thyme, 1/2 teaspoon pepper and 1/4 teaspoon salt until well blended. Cover and [refrigerate](#) for at least 30 minutes or up to 1 day.
- 2. Place a chicken thigh skinned-side down on a work surface. Fill the thigh with 2 to 3 tablespoons of the stuffing, first filling the area (or pocket) left by the [bone](#) and placing the rest in the center of the thigh. Roll the thigh closed and secure with 2 pieces of kitchen string. Repeat with the remaining thighs and stuffing. (You may have leftover stuffing.) Season with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper and salt.
- 3. Heat oil in a large, heavy, high-sided skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium and add half the thighs, seam-side down. Cook, turning 2 or 3 times, until [brown](#) on all sides, 7 to 10 minutes total. Transfer to a clean plate and repeat with the remaining thighs.
- 4. To prepare sauce: Add onion, carrot, fennel, 1/4 cup shallot and 2 tablespoons garlic to the pan. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are soft and beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Add wine and scrape up any browned bits; bring to a [boil](#) over medium heat and continue to boil until the liquid is reduced by about half, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in broth, tomatoes, basil, thyme and the chicken thighs. Bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat to a [simmer](#) and cook, uncovered and turning the thighs occasionally, until cooked through and [tender](#), 35 to 40 minutes.
- 5. Remove the thighs with a slotted spoon; tent with foil to keep warm. Simmer the sauce further to thicken it, if desired, or thin with a little broth or [water](#) if it's too thick. Season with 1/2 teaspoon pepper and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Serve the chicken with the sauce.
- Tip: To make fresh breadcrumbs, trim crusts from whole-wheat bread. Tear bread into pieces and process in a food processor until coarse crumbs form. One slice of bread makes about 1/2 cup fresh crumbs.
- Note: Look for fresh chicken livers that have not been previously frozen. Previously frozen livers exude more liquid when cooking.
- To Make Ahead: Prepare the stuffing (Step 1), cover and refrigerate for up to 1 day or stuff the chicken (Step 2), cover and refrigerate for up to 1 day. | Equipment: Kitchen string
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