



Kathryn's stuffed Sommerlad chook with apple, pine nuts and bacon

'Michael and I stuff our roast chickens because that's what our parents did and, in our minds, it was how you treated the whole occasion with more care. Shoving it in the oven without seasoning seemed to mean you didn't care as much. Also, we had a heap of kids (10) who loved it and when they started working on the farm, their appetites were huge and the stuffing made the meal go even further. Maybe that's why our parents did it too? It wasn't long before I realised that a lot of modern, fancy-pants chefs and those who ate at their restaurants found it a bit old-fashioned. Regardless, we think it's really delicious.'

Kathryn Sommerlad, producer

Feeds: 6, depending on the size of the chook | Preparation time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 1½ hours | Special equipment: Kitchen string

1 whole Sommerlad chicken (about 2 kg)

Stuffing

- 275 g (9¾ oz/2½ cups) fresh breadcrumbs
- 2–3 French shallots, sliced
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 teaspoons mixed dried or fresh green herbs
- 1–2 rashers belly bacon, finely chopped
- 1 small apple, peeled and finely chopped
- 40 g (1½ oz/¼ cup) pine nuts
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra to drizzle
- 1 beaten egg (optional)

Preheat oven to 170°C (325°F) — Sommerlad chooks grow more slowly than conventional white Cobb or Ross chooks, so low and slow is the best way to go.

Combine stuffing ingredients, except the olive oil, in a bowl, and season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Add just enough olive oil to bring everything together. If you prefer a firmer stuffing add the egg. Spoon stuffing into the cavity, pressing in lightly as you go. Tie the legs together with kitchen string and tuck the wings under. Rub the whole chook with olive oil and season generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Roast for 1½ hours or until golden and the juices run clear when a thigh is pierced with a skewer. Cooking time will vary depending on the size of the bird. Remove from oven, cover loosely with foil and allow the meat to rest for 10 minutes before serving. Make sure you save the carcass to make a delicious chicken stock.