

# "Poêle ~ A Modern Approach to a Traditional Technique"

*Good taste starts with excellent fresh ingredients*



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As professional chefs and cooks, we are charged with the responsibility to develop "good taste" in the food we prepare everyday. The method of Poêle or Butter Roasting is one technique available to the cook towards this important goal.

In "The Escoffier Cookbook, A Guide to the Fine Art of Cookery", Escoffier lists Roasts, Grills, Frying, Braising, Poaching, Sautés and Poêle as leading culinary operations. Each of these methods offers advantages or disadvantages according to the nature of the product you are cooking. If it is game, meat, or poultry, one must first evaluate the age of the creature and the quality of the flesh itself.

Escoffier doesn't attempt to direct the work of the cook in any final matter, but rather to suggest alternatives and sound reasoning for how we approach cooking a particular item.

By his example, I will not be so bold to say definitively, that the following is the only way to Poêle.

The size and the cut of the matignon can be altered. Bacon, ham, or pancetta all work well as flavoring elements.

The key issue here is simple. Slow cooking allows the connective tissue to soften while the product absorbs the flavors of the aromatic elements and butter. Fats render and combine with the juices of the product being poêled. This process, is almost a gentle braise with the inherent liquid of the protein and vegetables, followed by browning. This yields an incredible taste, different than "Chicken a la sheet pan" that has been rubbed, salted, and blasted away in a hot oven, which for informal cooking or a bistro is ok, even desirable to many.

Poêle offers real depth and character in the taste of the item cooked. The following is how I would approach cooking chicken utilizing this method.



# Poêle

## The Method

**Step 1:** Season the birds inside with salt, freshly milled pepper, celery leaves, sage and thyme. The birds should be trussed, with or without the wings attached. Removing the wings allows the chicken to be turned more efficiently.



**Step 2:** Prepare matignon, or edible mire poix, which should be sized according to the size of the bird. A turkey for instance, might have a larger cut because it would take longer to cook.



**Step 3:** Butter the pan and add the raw mire poix, aromatics and bacon or smoked ham. Place the chicken on top and brush with a little additional whole melted butter and season.



**Step 4:** Cover with parchment, which will allow the steam to escape and permit the aroma of the aromatics to envelope the poultry.



**Step 5:** Cook at moderate heat, approximately 325° F, for about 45-60 minutes turning a quarter of a turn every 12-15 minutes. Baste with the dripping frequently. Stir the matignon occasionally, to caramelize the vegetables and bacon evenly.



**Step 6:** Remove the parchment, increase the heat to 400° - 425° F, basting the back first and browning, then turn and brown the breasts. Allow to rest for a few minutes before serving.



**Step 7:** Remove the leg and thigh from one side, then the supreme or breast of chicken. Serve some of the matignon with or under the carved chicken. Utilize the additional matignon to fortify the sauce or Jus Lie'. Skim the excess fat after there has been a chance for flavor exchange between the drippings and sauce or Jus.

Technique courtesy of:  
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Step-by-Step Photos:  
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