

Fieldcraft Skills

Field Cooking



Can Cooked Chicken

This is the main course of a meal that can be made with a minimum of cooking gear. This recipe is measured for two to three servings, but is dependent on the size (weight) of the chicken used, can be scaled to meet your needs while at camp or on the trail.

Pre-camp preparation:

Prepare the cooking can (a number 10 can or large coffee can)

- About one inch from the bottom, cut or drill a series of holes around the perimeter of the can. A minimum of 6 holes are needed for sufficient ventilation. You can place a few wood blocks inside the can for support while cutting or drilling holes.
- Vent cuts can also be made using a triangular can opener or the can opener tool on a Swiss Army Knife or multitool.
- Be careful to remove or smooth any jagged edges on the inside of the can to prevent cutting the foil used in the cooking process
- Make two holes on opposite sides of the can just below the upper rim
- Fashion a wire bail handle from a heavy duty wire hanger and with another smaller piece of the hanger wire, an "S" hook for hanging the cooking can

Ingredients and Components:

- one 3 pound chicken
- spices or dry rub as desired
- heavy duty aluminum foil
- 16 to 18 charcoal briquettes

In camp meal preparation:

- Ignite 16 regular size charcoal briquettes inside the cooking can, and allow to burn until they develop a coat of white ash on the outside of the briquettes
- Prepare the chicken by sprinkling with your choice of seasoning or a dry rub
- Place the chicken neck area down on the first sheet of foil, and wrap tightly upward toward the leg/tail end
- Once the first layer is wrapped, repeat the process with the second sheet of foil ensuring the folded seam areas are not aligned



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In camp meal cooking process:

- Check the charcoal to ensure that all of the briquettes have a white ash coat, and spread them evenly on the bottom of the can
- Insert the foil-wrapped chicken into the can with feet/tail up
- Using the back of a spoon, insert between the chicken and the edges of the can to ensure that there is free air-flow space around the foil-wrapped chicken
- Hang the cooking can securely from a tripod or the branch of a tree, and let it cook
- Make sure that there is nothing above the can that can easily catch fire; and ensure the ground below is free of debris that can easily catch fire
- After 3 hours, take can down from where it was hung, gently tip can to allow the foil-wrapped chicken to slide out onto a non-flammable surface
- Allow to cool for 5-15 minutes before outer foil is removed, and then remove inner foil.
- Chicken should easily pull apart and be removed from the bones and should be tender and juicy.



Cooking Tips:

- A larger chicken will require more charcoal briquettes and longer cooking time; plan for cooking time to be 1 hour per pound
- And vegetables added to the cavity of the chicken will increase cooking time by up to 45 minutes to an hour depending upon what is added to the cavity
- sprigs of rosemary can be inserted into the cavity of the chicken for flavoring, as well as other dry spices, and it will have no effect on the cooking time

- makes 2 to 3 servings