# Pan Cooked Chicken

Season and pan-cook boneless skinless chicken thighs with paprika, thyme and garlic. A splash of water loosens the savory pan juices; rest the chicken before serving.

**15 min prep | 20 min cook | 40 min total**
4 servings | Easy | Stovetop



Four servings of pan-cooked chicken with garlic pan juices

## Why this skillet method works

Patting the thighs dry helps them brown instead of steam. Cooking in a single layer over medium heat gives the pieces time to color while cooking through. Garlic goes in near the end so it turns fragrant without burning; a little water loosens the browned bits into pan juices.

## Ingredients (4 servings)

- **Chicken:** 1 1/2 lb (680 g) boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- **Oil:** 1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
- **Aromatics:** 3 garlic cloves, minced
- **Seasoning:** 1 tsp paprika; 1/2 tsp dried thyme; 1/2 tsp (3 g) salt, adjusted to taste; 1/4 tsp (0.5 g) ground black pepper
- **Pan juices:** 1/4 cup (60 ml) water

## Step-by-step method

**1. Dry and season.** Pat the thighs dry with paper towels. Season both sides with paprika, thyme, salt and pepper. Keep raw chicken and its utensils separate from cooked food; wash hands and surfaces after handling.

**2. Sear in a skillet.** Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add chicken in a single layer and cook 6–8 minutes per side, adjusting the heat if it browns too quickly. Avoid crowding; cook in batches if needed.

**3. Add garlic and finish.** Add minced garlic during the final minute and stir it through the pan juices. Add the measured water to loosen the browned bits. Check several of the thickest thighs with a food thermometer; each should reach 165°F (74°C). Rest for 5 minutes and serve with the pan juices.

### DONENESS & SAFE HANDLING

Cook poultry to 165°F (74°C), measured with a food thermometer in the thickest pieces. Keep raw-chicken tools separate from ready-to-eat food. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours (1 hour above 90°F/32°C) and use within 3–4 days.

Use the image set in order: ingredients → prep → cooking → finishing → serving.

# Cook’s guide & photo stages

The five image files follow this recipe in order and show a distinct, identifiable phase at each step.



**01 INGREDIENTS**

Measured chicken thighs, olive oil, garlic, paprika, thyme, salt, pepper and water.



**02 PREP**

Pat thighs dry and season both sides; keep raw poultry and its utensils separate.



**03 COOKING**

Sear chicken in a single layer; add garlic near the end and water to loosen the pan juices.



**04 FINISHING**

Check the thickest pieces for 165°F (74°C), then rest the cooked thighs for 5 minutes.



**05 SERVING**

Serve four hot portions of pan-cooked chicken with the garlic pan juices.

## Technique notes

**Brown without drying:** use medium heat and leave space around the thighs. If the skillet is crowded, cook in batches. Garlic needs only about one minute; add the water after browning and scrape up the flavorful bits. Rely on 165°F (74°C), not color alone, to verify doneness.

## Variations & substitutions

**Herb finish:** add 1 tbsp chopped parsley before serving.

**Mild heat:** add a pinch of chili flakes to individual portions.

**Salt:** taste the pan juices before adding more, especially if your salt crystals differ in size.

## Serving suggestions

Divide the chicken evenly among four plates and spoon the garlic pan juices over the top. Serve hot; prepare any optional side dish separately.

## Storage, freezing & reheating

**REFRIGERATE**

Refrigerate in shallow containers within 2 hours (1 hour above 90°F/32°C). Keep at 40°F (4°C) or below; use within 3–4 days.

**FREEZE**

Freeze cooled chicken and pan juices in airtight portions for up to 2 months for best quality. Thaw in the refrigerator.

**REHEAT**

Reheat chicken with its juices in a covered skillet or microwave-safe dish, turning or stirring midway, until the center reaches 165°F (74°C). Add a small splash of water if needed.

## Quick answers

**How do I know the thighs are done?** Check several of the thickest pieces with a food thermometer; poultry should reach 165°F (74°C).

**Why pat the chicken dry?** Dry surfaces brown more readily and are less likely to steam in the skillet.

Food safety: USDA FSIS, Safe Internal Temperatures and Leftovers; FoodSafety.gov, Cold Food Storage Chart.
Poultry 165°F (74°C); refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours (1 hour above 90°F/32°C), in shallow containers.