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How To: Butterfly A Whole Chicken

Posted By *patrick-decker* On August 30, 2013 @ 7:39 pm In Food | [No Comments](#)



We all love a roast chicken. It's comforting, delicious and just so quintessentially tastes like home. It also takes a time commitment to cook all the way through – time that I don't always have. Next time you're craving that "Sunday Dinner" meal on a weeknight, refer to a butchering technique that chefs call spatchcocking.

To spatchcock (some say spattlecock) a chicken is to remove the sternum and backbone of the bird so that it can lay flat. Once flat, it can be cooked in about half the time it would take to roast the bird whole. Butterflying a whole chicken is a great time-saving technique that only takes a few minutes to do once you get the hang of it. It also makes for a beautiful presentation when served whole on a platter. Follow the simple steps shown below and give it a try next time you're entertaining or craving a bit of weeknight comfort.

**STEP 1: PREPARE THE BIRD**

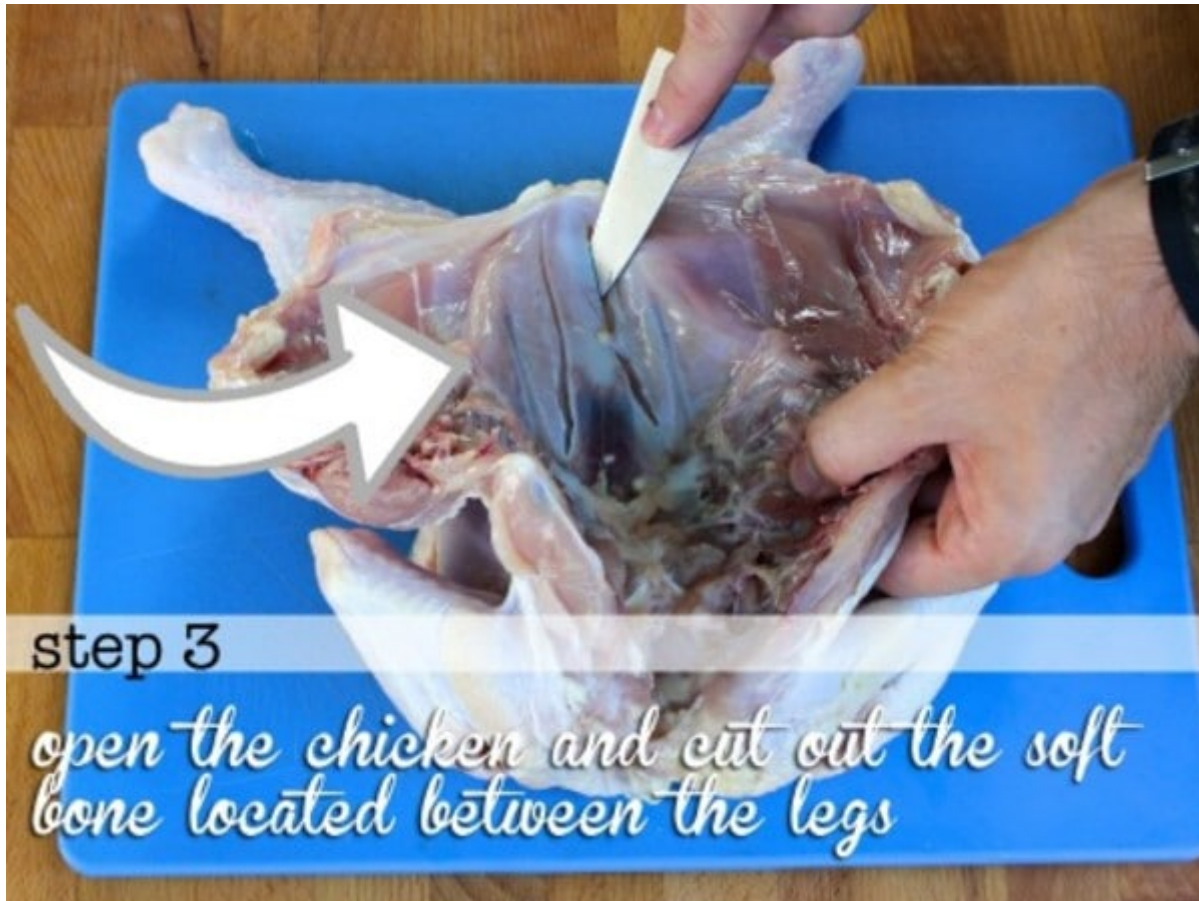
Grab whatever size chicken you would normally roast and remove the neck and giblets from it. Get a sharp paring knife ^[1] and a pair of kitchen scissors and get ready to butterfly your first whole chicken!



STEP 2: REMOVE THE BACKBONE

Place the chicken on a cutting board ^[2] breast-side-down. Working from the cavity opening up to the neck, cut down each side of the back bone with a pair of kitchen shears ^[3]. Discard the backbone.

Grab the chicken with one breast in each hand and open it like a book, exposing the cavity of the bird. The breast bones should crack a bit – that's totally normal.



STEP 3: CUT OUT THE SOFT BREAST BONE

Running from the middle of the bird down between the two legs is a soft bone – this is the breast bone. It's a triangular shape that is firm towards the middle of the bird and becomes softer cartilage as it tapers down between the legs. To remove it, use a paring knife ^[1] to cut down either side of it.

**STEP 4: REMOVE THE SOFT BREAST BONE**

Once you've cut it free, use your fingers to simply pull out the breast bone. Discard the bone.

**STEP 5: GET TO COOKING!**

That's it, you're done! You've spatchcocked your first chicken! From this point, the chicken can cook flat either on a grill or you can sear it in a [large skillet](#) ^[4] and then finish roasting it in the oven. Either way, it will cook through in about half the time roasting a whole bird would.

Patrick W. Decker's life revolves around food. Always has, probably always will. As a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America and past member of the culinary teams for Food Network stars Rachael Ray, Sandra Lee, Marc Forgione, Bobby Deen and Paula Deen, he now works as a food stylist and producer in NYC by day and a food writer and recipe developer at his home in New York's Hudson Valley by night. You can see what he's up to by following him on Instagram at [@patrickwdecker](#) ^[5] or visiting his website at [patrickwdecker.com](#) ^[6].

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[1] knife: <https://rachaelray.wpengine.com/shop/kitchen/cutlery/knife-sets-a1826487420.html>

[2] cutting board: <https://rachaelray.wpengine.com/shop/kitchen/cutlery/cutting-boards-a1515572854.html>

[3] kitchen shears: <https://rachaelray.wpengine.com/shop/kitchen/cutlery/shears-a403747423.html>

[4] large skillet: <https://rachaelray.wpengine.com/shop/kitchen/cookware/pans/frying-skillets-a1632842098.html>

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