

## Chicken Rao

From Nelson's Kitchen  
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Signature dish from New York's Rao restaurant. Adapted from *America's Test Kitchen*.

### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup salt
- 3 pounds bone-in chicken pieces (2 split breasts cut in half crosswise, 2 drumsticks, and 2 thighs), trimmed, or 3 pounds of chicken thighs.
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large shallot, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 4 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 4 teaspoons grated lemon zest plus 1/4 cup juice (2 lemons)
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley leaves
- 1 teaspoon fresh oregano leaves

### Procedure:

#### Brine the Chicken

- Dissolve salt in 2 quarts cold water in large container.
- Submerge chicken in brine, cover, and refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour. You can brine for longer, if doing so, do the next step only in the last hour of brining.
- Mix the zest of one lemon into the brining liquid.
- Remove chicken from brine and pat dry with paper towels — alternatively, put chicken pieces over a rimmed baking sheet fitted with a rack and put in the refrigerator, uncovered, for several hours. Make sure to stretch the skin over the pieces of chicken so that skin covers each piece.

#### Brown Chicken on top of stove

- Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 475 degrees.
- Heat oil in oven-safe 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking.
- Place chicken skin side down in skillet and cook until skin is well browned and crisp, 8 to 10 minutes.
- Transfer breasts to large plate.
- Flip thighs and legs and continue to cook until browned on second side, 3 to 5 minutes longer.
- Transfer thighs and legs to plate with breasts.

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**Preparing the base and Oven-cooking chicken**

- Pour off and discard fat in skillet.
- Return skillet to medium heat; add butter, shallot, and garlic and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds.
- Sprinkle flour evenly over shallot-garlic mixture and cook, stirring constantly, until flour is lightly browned, about 1 minute.
- Slowly stir in broth, scraping up any browned bits, and bring to simmer.
- Cook until sauce is slightly reduced and thickened, 2 to 3 minutes.
- Return chicken, skin side up (skin should be above surface of liquid), and any accumulated juices to skillet and transfer to oven.
- Cook, uncovered, until breasts register 160 degrees and thighs and legs register 175 degrees, 10 to 12 minutes.

**Prepping finishing flavours**

- While chicken cooks, chop parsley, oregano, and remaining 2 teaspoon zest together until finely minced and well combined. Squeeze one tablespoon of lemon into a small bowl.
- Remove skillet from oven and let chicken stand for 5 minutes.

**Finishing Base and Serving**

Transfer chicken to serving platter.

Whisk sauce, incorporating any browned bits from sides of pan, until smooth and homogeneous, about 30 seconds.

Whisk half of herb-zest mixture and the lemon juice into sauce.

Sprinkle remaining half of herb-zest mixture over chicken.

Pour some sauce around chicken. Serve, passing remaining sauce separately.