

# Salt and Serenity

## Braised Chicken Provençal

Tomatoes, onions, olives, garlic, wine, and thyme combine in this Southern French braise, with a twist. The braised onions get pureed with the liquid after cooking to produce a creamy velvety sauce without any cream. It's a trick I learned from [food52](#) genius recipes.

Serves 4

2 pints cherry tomatoes (if you can find the ones on the vine, it makes for a very pretty presentation)

2 Tablespoons olive oil

½ teaspoon Diamond Crystal Kosher salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

3 sprigs fresh thyme

1.5 kilograms bone-in and skin-on chicken thighs (about 8 thighs)

1½ teaspoons Diamond Crystal Kosher salt

½ teaspoon black pepper

2 Tablespoons olive oil

2 medium onions, peeled and quartered

2 tablespoons tomato paste

¼ -½ teaspoon red pepper flakes

3 cloves garlic, finely minced

1 cup chicken stock

¼ cup white wine

2 Tablespoons capers

½ cup Caselveltrano green olives (or regular green olives)

2 thyme sprigs, leaves stripped off sprigs

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Arrange tomatoes on baking sheet. If you can find the ones on the vine, leave them on the vine. Drizzle with 2 Tablespoons olive oil, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper and arrange thyme sprigs on top of the tomatoes. Roast in oven for about 20 minutes, just until they start to blister. Remove from oven and set aside. Discard thyme sprigs.
2. While the tomatoes are roasting, prepare the chicken thighs. Season both sides of chicken with 1½ teaspoons salt and ½ teaspoon black pepper. Heat 2 Tablespoons olive oil in a 12-inch skillet (cast iron is perfect for this if you have it). Add chicken, skin side down and cook for about 5 minutes, until skin is well browned. Turn thighs and brown on second side for about 4 more minutes.
3. Remove chicken thighs from pan. Pour off all but about 1 tablespoon of chicken fat from pan. Turn down heat to low. Add onion quarters and toss in pan until all sides are coated with fat.
4. Add tomato paste, red pepper flakes and minced garlic and stir until well combined. Cook for about 1 minute. Add chicken stock and wine and stir. Add capers, olives, and thyme. Nestle chicken pieces back into the pan, skin side up. The liquid will come about ⅓ of the way up the side of the pan. If the liquid level seems a bit low, add more wine or stock. You don't want to cover the chicken pieces with liquid.

5. Place pan in oven and braise for 30-35 minutes, until an instant read thermometer, inserted into the thickest part of the thigh (not touching bone), registers 195°F. Remove pan from oven.
6. Remove chicken pieces from pan with tongs, onto a plate. Using a slotted spoon, scoop out the olives and capers and set them on the plate with the chicken. Pour braised onions and all the liquid in the pan into a blender. Process on high speed until sauce is smooth.
7. Pour sauce into a casserole dish. Place chicken, olives, and capers onto the sauce. Add reserved roasted tomatoes. Place back into oven to reheat for a few minutes if you prefer to serve it piping hot.