

## TO ROAST A CAPON WITH OYSTERS AND CHESTNUTS

The original recipe, “To rost a Capon with Oysters and Chesnuts,” by Hannah Woolley, appears in *The Queen-like Closet* (1670). The recipe, with commentary, can be found in Keith Stavely and Kathleen Fitzgerald's *Northern Hospitality: Cooking By the Book in New England* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).

MAKES EIGHT SERVINGS

Preheat the oven to 450°F.

**1 7-lb. capon (or roaster chicken)**

**½ lb. fresh or dried chestnuts (about 40)**

**18 fresh oysters**

**7 tablespoons unsalted butter**

**1 cup claret or red wine (preferably cabernet sauvignon)**

**Salt and pepper to taste**

Boil the chestnuts gently for about 45 minutes in water to cover. Drain and peel.

Shuck the oysters and *briefly* simmer them in ¼ cup water, only until heated through. Don't overcook them or they will be rubbery.

Coarsely chop the chestnuts.

Drain the oysters.

Stuff the capon with half of the oysters and a quarter of the chestnuts, mixed with a tablespoon of the butter. Rub the outside of the capon with two tablespoons of the butter. Melt three tablespoons of the butter and reserve for basting.

Truss the capon or place on a wire baking rack and roast for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350° F. (At this time, you can add a pan of potatoes, mushrooms, or any other vegetable brushed with melted butter or olive oil to the oven to bake, removing when golden brown and soft.)

Baste the capon with butter every 20 minutes for an hour.

After an hour, remove the capon from the oven and spoon off the drippings. Return the capon to the oven for an additional 10-20 minutes, until the bird's internal temperature reaches 165° F on a meat thermometer.

Remove the capon from the oven and let rest before carving.

Put the drippings into a saucepan. Add the claret or red wine, the remaining tablespoon of butter, the remaining chestnuts, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer the mixture, stirring frequently, for about five minutes. Spoon over the roast capon and serve.