

A tale of chickens, a recipe for vegetables

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What's Cookin

Okay, so I know you're going to think it's a bit odd, that the recipe this week is for a nice veggie side dish, yet, I'm going to talk about chicken. Well, I've got a particular chicken issue on my mind, so no time like the present!

The issue is air-chilled chicken vs. wet-chilled chicken. What am I talking about? In many, perhaps even most processing plants, once the chickens have been slaughtered, they are quickly chilled in huge water baths. This cools the chicken, but at the same time, the chicken actually absorbs some of the water. As a matter of fact, the chicken can absorb up to about 11 per cent water.

Air-chilled chicken, on the other hand, is another method used by some processing operations. With this method, the chicken is hung individually after slaughter and passes through a series of chambers, all the while being blasted with cool air. This method chills the chicken

down, but there is no water absorption.

The wet-chilled method is quicker and less expensive. Thus, the lower processing cost is reflected at the cash register. However, remember that when you get to the cash, up to 11 per cent of your money is buying water that was absorbed by the chicken and will be released during the cooking process. Have you ever put some chicken in a pan to make a stir fry, turned around for a few minutes, then looked at the pan again and the chicken looks like it is boiling in some kind of liquid? That's your chicken-chilling bath water.

If the package doesn't say air-chilled, it is most likely wet-chilled, but it's worth asking your butcher. Because there is no water to dilute the flavor of the meat, air-chilled chicken gives a better flavor. Also, air-chilled gives a crispier skin. Give it a try and see if you notice the difference!

Have fun and keep cooking!

Green Vegetable Trio

Serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. green beans
- One half lb sugar snap peas
- 1 bunch asparagus
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper

METHOD

1. Prepare and wash vegetables, leaving beans whole, trimming rough ends from asparagus, then snapping into 2 pieces. Snap peas stay whole.
2. Blanch each vegetable separately in the same boiling, salted water for 1 minute. Then



immediately shock in a bath of ice water. Set aside to drain.

3. At serving time, heat olive oil and butter in a large pan on medium heat. Sauté garlic for 1 minute. Add vegetables and stir fry until heated through (3-5 minutes), season with salt and pepper.

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