

USA POULTRY & EGG EXPORT COUNCIL

This Buyer's Guide to Chicken and Chicken

Products is made available courtesy of the

USA Poultry & Egg Export Council and the

USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. An effort

has been made to describe all the food

products processed and sold by the United

States chicken industry. However, due to the

independent structure of the industry, not all

products, nor the array of product shapes,

sizes and weights that may be available have

been described.

Questions concerning specific products or the supply sources for all chicken and chicken products should be directed to the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council offices at the addresses shown on this page.

Visit our website at www.usapeec.org



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USA POULTRY & EGG EXPORT COUNCIL

Chicken and Chicken Products

Buyer's Guide



FEEDING THE WORLD

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American Broiler Chicken. The Answer for Today's Lifestyles.

People of all ages in all cultures, all around the world, include American broiler chicken as a staple of their diet. It's delicious. It's versatile. It's nutritious. It is a central ingredient to gourmet dishes and family favorites alike. It's easy to prepare, and is a perfect choice for busy and active lifestyles.

And, of course, chicken is an excellent value. It offers better nutrition at lower cost than any other meal-time meat product.

Best of all, U.S. broiler producers offer a rich variety of products in dozens of different forms, from whole birds to boneless, skinless parts to marinated and prepared specialty products. Even better, companies are working to develop an even wider array of products for consumers, institutional users, retail stores and manufacturers all across the globe.

Healthy diets require lighter, well-balanced meals low in fat, calories, cholesterol and salt. Chicken can fill all these needs.



Preparing and Serving

Pathogenic contamination must be avoided when handling chicken. This requires diligent care and attention when preparing chicken and chicken products.

Specifically:

- 1) All food handlers must observe strict and sanitary personal hygiene.
- 2) Food handlers must continuously apply sanitary food handling techniques.
- 3) Handling of all products must be kept to a minimum.
- 4) Procedures for proper handling, cooking, serving and reheating must be closely followed.
- 5) Cooked meat must never be stored near raw, uncooked meat.

Reheating, Holding and Servings

Reheating

Chicken that has been cooked and then refrigerated should be reheated rapidly to a minimum of 165° F (73.9° C) before serving. This reheating should be done with ovens. Steam tables and all other food-holding equipment are not suitable for use in reheating.

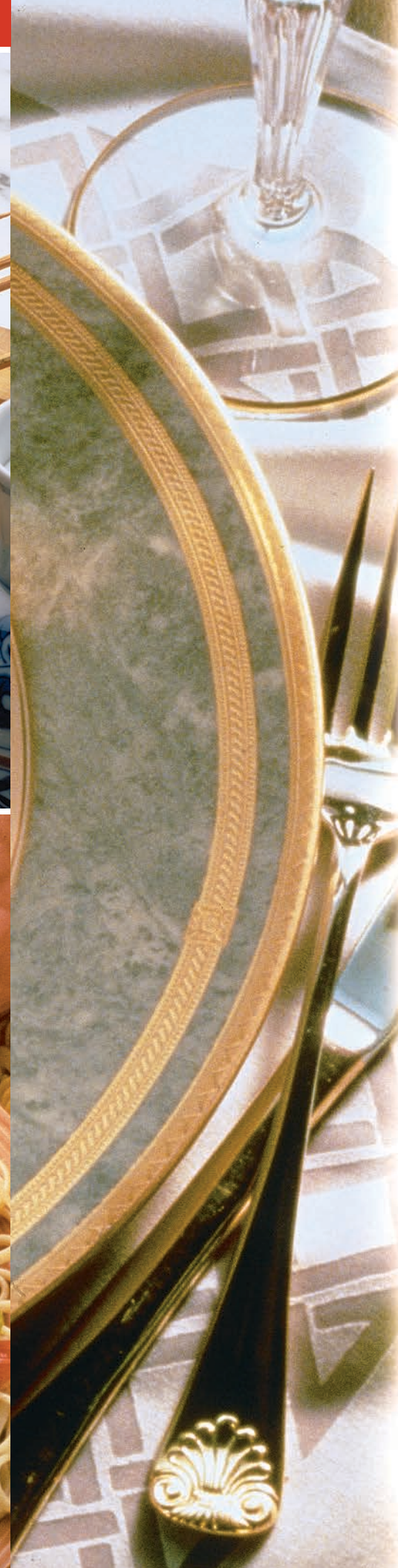
Holding

The following internal temperatures for fully cooked chicken and chicken products should be maintained during serving.

- For cold foods: 40° F (4° C)
- For hot foods: 140° F (60° C) or higher

Servings per Pound

Allow 1/3 to 1/2 pound per person; one chicken (quartered) easily serves four.



American Broiler Chicken. The World's Favorite Meat.

The United States is the largest producer of food products in the world. And of all meat products, chicken is the most popular. It's no wonder — chicken is high in protein and low in calories. It's also lower in fat and cholesterol than other meats and rich in vitamins A and E.

High-quality poultry and poultry products from the U.S. are enjoyed all over the world. Each year the U.S. produces more than 14 million tons of poultry (chicken, turkey, duck) and nearly 77 billion shell eggs. Producers and consumers insist on quality in every step of the process — from growout to processing to distribution.

Producing Quality

The best products begin with the best chickens. The modern domesticated broiler chicken is descended from the wild Bankiva chicken, which was domesticated in India more than 4,000 years ago. The earliest settlers in America brought chickens with them. Today's broiler comes from breeding stock that is the product of years of genetic selection by top poultry scientists. The modern bird yields a high percentage of tasty, nutritious meat without the use of artificial ingredients or hormones.

In the U.S. broiler-producing region, which is concentrated mainly in the southeastern crescent from Delaware to Texas, broilers are grown by individual farmers. Fed a diet of high-protein grains such as corn and soy, broilers are grown to market size in just under seven weeks in automated, climate-controlled houses. Vertically integrated companies process, market and distribute the products. Inside the processing plant, cleanliness is an obsession. Plants routinely shut down daily for a thorough sanitizing washdown.

Maintaining this level of quality and cleanliness requires constant attention. Most U.S. processors have advanced research and testing laboratories on site. Plants also work closely with poultry research labs and universities in their individual states. This helps many plants to exceed the already high standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

High Standards and the USDA

The USDA inspection standards for all phases of poultry processing are the toughest in the world. By law, each bird must be inspected individually. At minimum, four separate inspections are required, starting with the live bird and continuing throughout the slaughter, processing and packaging phases.

The USDA employs more than 7,000 highly trained food safety inspectors, and every poultry processing line in America is under the care of between one and three inspectors. Many inspectors have agricultural training or food science education, and many others have earned degrees in veterinary medicine.

From Us to You

Once processed, broiler parts and products are distributed around the U.S. and the world. For retail sale, products are packaged in a variety of ways to preserve wholesomeness. Products for the export market are blast-frozen and generally packed in bulk.

Broiler producers are shipping and distribution experts. In the domestic market, product leaves the plant in refrigerated trucks that are scrubbed and sanitized after every load. Temperature is monitored constantly. Product destined for export is blast-frozen at the plant or nearby. Frozen product may travel aboard reefer cargo vessels, or in ocean-going refrigerated containers.

All together, the United States poultry industry is a precisely monitored and tightly integrated system that produces, quite simply, the best poultry in the world.





Prepared Products

Prepared products are those that are ready to eat with minimum preparation. They include frankfurters, pulled and diced chicken meat and fully cooked whole chickens and chicken parts. Also included in this classification are breaded products that are raw and ready-to-cook, fully cooked (requiring only warming prior to serving) and blanched products that have been partially cooked.

Always read the product label and follow the instructions provided to prepare and serve all chicken and chicken products.



Whole Cooked Chicken

Available baked, smoked, barbecued or roasted, fully cooked whole chickens are marketed hot from the deli. Vacuum packaged, fully cooked, refrigerated chickens need heating to become a meal in minutes.



Cooked Chicken Parts

May be found hot and ready-to-eat or as vacuum packaged items. Fully cooked, sliced, boneless, skinless chicken breast makes ready-to-eat sandwiches. Product sizes, shapes and methods of cooking vary among the numerous companies which produce cooked chicken parts including: whole roasted chicken breast, whole oven roasted cornish hen, cooked thighs, cooked bone-in breast, hot wings, grilled broiler half and roasted drumsticks.



Canned Chicken and Chicken Dinners

Includes products ranging from whole chickens to chicken salads, baby foods, specialty meats and ready-to-heat and eat chicken meals. There are a multitude of convenience foods produced by the U.S. chicken industry.



Diced and Pulled Chicken

Diced and pulled chicken (usually made from spent fowl), is boneless, skinless, fully cooked chicken meat. Pulled meat is separated from the bone and skin by hand; diced meat is pulled meat that has been cut into cubes. It may be packaged as breast meat, leg meat or combined breast and leg meat. When packaged in combination the product label will note "natural proportions."



Chicken Frankfurters, Bologna & Sausage

Chicken frankfurters are a blend of mechanically deboned white and dark meat. Chicken bologna is cured, seasoned and mechanically deboned chicken meat. Cocktail franks are miniature chicken frankfurters. Chicken sausage is available in a variety of shapes, types and sizes, including breakfast sausage.



Mini-Biscuit Chicken Sandwiches

These mini-biscuits contain a breaded chicken patty made from white and dark meat. They come packed in a single serving with two biscuits, ready for the microwave and great for the snack area in convenience stores.

The Quality Control Process

The Food Safety Inspection Service

All U.S. chicken meat which is offered for export must be inspected and approved by the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The 90-year-old agency is regarded as a model for food inspection services worldwide. A USDA inspection stamp indicates that a chicken product was properly processed, has been inspected and is safe to eat. There are three integral layers in FSIS food safety assurance: manual inspection, HACCP and pathogen reduction.

1) Manual Inspection

According to the FSIS, meat inspection has several functions: to detect diseased meat and take it off the line; to assure clean and sanitary handling and preparation; to prevent adulteration and false labeling; and to apply inspection insignia. Federal inspectors are in place at every poultry plant in the United States examining each chicken carcass as it moves through the processing channel. Inspectors are closely involved in plant construction, antemortem inspection, postmortem inspection, product inspection, product content determination, control and restriction of condemned products and marking, labeling and application of inspection insignia. Although this traditional form of inspection is thorough, it cannot detect microscopic or invisible defects.

2) Pathogen Reduction and HACCP: A New Level of Food Safety Assurance...

On July 25, 1996, the FSIS introduced the Final Rule on Pathogen Reduction and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP.) The aim of this new approach is twofold: to target pathogens that cause foodborne illness and to increase industry's awareness of its responsibility to produce safe food.

What is HACCP?

Essentially, HACCP is a procedure which seeks to identify and control the points in processing at which contamination can occur. Since HACCP systems are designed to accommodate specific plant requirements, the process design varies from plant to plant. A typical HACCP process involves the following steps:

Step one:

Identify hazards in the food processing system.

Example: bacteria

Step two:

Identify critical control points in the processing channel at which potential hazards can be eliminated or reduced.

Example: cleaning, cooking, chilling, handling and storage.

Step three:

Establish preventive measures with critical limits for each control point.

Example: time and temperature are examples of critical limits. Poultry must be chilled to 40 degrees F. during processing to prevent bacteria from growing. In this case, 40 degrees would be the critical limit.

Step four:

Establish procedures to monitor the control points.

Example: where temperature has been identified as a critical limit, product samples would be checked at fixed intervals to ensure that the temperature is within the critical limit.

Step five:

Establish procedures for taking corrective actions when monitoring indicates that a critical limit has not been met.

Example: take steps to lower the temperature in the chiller.

Step six:

Establish effective record-keeping to document the HACCP system.

Example: in regard to temperature monitoring, records should be kept of temperature measurements and the corrective action taken where applicable.

Step seven:

Establish procedures to certify that monitoring equipment is always effective.

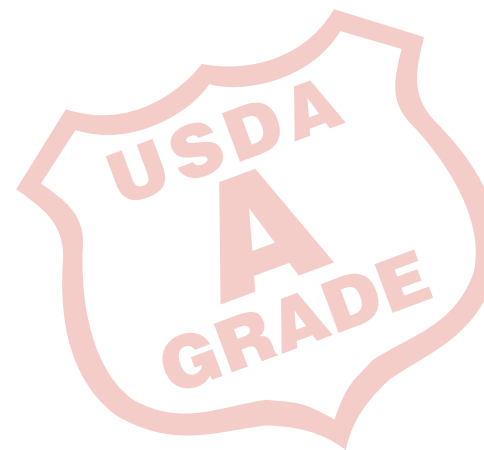
Example: in regard to temperature monitoring, the temperature gauges should be tested at fixed intervals to ensure that they are working properly.

3) What is Pathogen Reduction?

The pathogen reduction initiative has two aspects. First, in order to verify that HACCP systems are effective in reducing bacterial contamination, FSIS has established pathogen-reduction performance standards for salmonella. Plants must ensure that their salmonella contamination rate is below the current national rate. Secondly, slaughter plants will be required to conduct microbial testing for generic *E. coli* to verify that their process-control systems have prevented fecal contamination, the primary vehicle for harmful bacteria.

Bringing you the Highest-Quality Chicken

The traditional FSIS form of inspection is a thorough, comprehensive system for manual inspection; however, it cannot detect microscopic or invisible problems. The introduction of the Final Rule on Pathogen Reduction and HACCP adds a scientific dimension to the existing inspection process. HACCP systems dramatically reduce potential hazards in the manufacturing process while the pathogen reduction initiative prevents contaminated products from entering the market place. The combination of these three key elements in U.S. food safety assurance means that consumers around the world can enjoy the highest-quality U.S. chicken products.



Frozen Uncooked Products

All skin-on parts shown are available in both yellow and white skin variations.

Note that the majority of U.S. broiler processing plants employ personnel certified to slaughter birds using methods that strictly comply with religious requirements.



Roaster

One of the larger varieties of whole chickens, roasters may be marketed with or without giblets.



8-Piece Cut Broiler

The whole broiler is cut into 2 breast halves with ribs and back portion, 2 thighs with back portion, 2 drumsticks and 2 wings. The parts are packaged and labeled whole cut-up chicken. Cut-up broilers are usually sold without giblets.



Whole Chickens

Whole Chickens are marketed in two forms: fresh or frozen. They may be packaged individually and carry a producer or processor's brand name. A giblet pack (neck, heart, liver and gizzard) is usually included with whole chickens. Chickens packaged without giblets may be labeled WOGS (without giblets) or WOGN (without giblets and neck). Skin color of broilers is either white or yellow, and is generally determined by natural ingredients in the diet. Skin color is a matter of preference, with customers in different parts of the world preferring one color over the other.



Broiler Breast Quarter

Broiler halves may be further cut into breast quarters which include the wing. A broiler breast quarter, including portions of the back, is all white meat.



Whole Broiler Leg

A whole broiler leg is the drumstick-thigh combination. The whole leg differs from the leg quarter in that it does not contain a portion of the back. One leg-thigh combination is considered a serving.



Broiler Drumsticks

Broiler drumsticks include the lower portion of the leg quarter; or that portion between the knee joint and the hock. Drumsticks weigh from 4 to 5 ounces (114 to 142 grams). Two drumsticks make one serving.



Whole Chicken Wing

The whole wing is an all white meat portion composed of three sections: the drumette, mid section and tip.

Specialized Products

Specialized products are chicken items developed for industrial, food service or home use. They include major groups of raw chicken, cooked chicken, broth, fat and dehydrated chicken. The cooked products are generally available as broth, fat and dehydrated chicken.

Mechanically Separated Chicken (MDM)

The chicken is separated mechanically from the bone and skin to produce products that vary in texture.

Finely Ground Chicken Emulsified (comminuted)

Packaged frozen in 40 pound (18 kilogram) poly-lined boxes, and fresh in 2,000 pound (907 kilogram) poly-lined tote bins.

Finely Ground Chicken Non-Emulsified (non-comminuted)

Ground Chicken

Packaged frozen in 40 pound (18 kilogram) poly-lined boxes, and fresh or frozen in 1 to 10 pound (.45 to 4.54 kilogram) chubs, and fresh in 2,000 pound (907 kilogram) poly-lined tote bins.

Powdered Chicken

Produced from mechanically separated or hand deboned fowl or broiler. The raw material is cooked, homogenized and spray-dried to produce a fine, tan colored powder.

Dehydrated Granulated Chicken

Made from raw materials identical to powdered chicken, the finished product is textured with particle sizes that range from 1/8 of an inch to 1/4 of an inch. Packed for shipment in 50 pound (22.7 kilogram) poly-lined boxes or in 100 pound (45 kilogram) poly-lined fiber drums.

Dehydrated Diced or Irregular Chicken

Combinations of whole breast, thigh or finely ground chicken blended with seasoning and binders before cooking in a loaf. The cooked product is ground, diced or random cut, then freeze-dried and packaged in oxygen-moisture barrier foil-poly bags.

Chicken Broth

An ingredient used primarily for the industrial manufacturing of consumer food items. Available as both a frozen broth or dehydrated powder, with special formulations that include MSG, fats, and salt, etc. Frozen product is packaged in 40 pound (18 kilogram) poly-lined fiber boxes and in plastic pails in quantities up to 50 pounds (22.7 kilogram). Dehydrated broth is packaged in 50 pound (22.7 kilogram) boxes.

Chicken Fat

Used primarily in industrial food preparation and available in a liquid, frozen or dry-powdered form. Sold in poly-lined fiber boxes and plastic pails, fiber and metal drums or tanker loads up to 40,000 pounds (18,144 kilograms).



Further Processed Products

Further processing refers, simply, to poultry products that require additional processing before they may be consumed. All raw and uncooked products are considered further processed. So do all the cooked, breaded, dehydrated and rendered products offered in the marketplace.

Chicken Wings – cooked, breaded

Pre-breaded
Flavor assortment
Fully cooked

Saves time and labor. Breading coverage is even to prevent fryer fall-off.
Wide variety of flavors to offers customers.
Quick and easy preparation.

Marinated Raw Breaded Wings

Pre-marinated
Pre-breaded
Ready to cook

Chicken holds taste /flavor after frying. Stays tender & juicy even under hot lamp.
Saves time and labor. Uniform breading coverage prevents fryer fall-off.
Short preparation time saves cost.

Unbreaded – Fully Cooked Marinated Wings

Preglazed
Flavor assortment
Fully Cooked

Reduced preparation time. Savory taste appeals to customers.
Wide range of flavors to offer customers.
Preparation is quick and easy – from freezer to plate in minutes!

Ready to Cook Wings

Ice glazed
Ready to cook

Prevents freezer burn.
Short preparation time cuts cost. Product may be used in many menu applications.

Cutlets: Pre-Breaded

Pre-breaded
Fully cooked

Saves time and labor. Uniform breading reduces fryer fall-off.
Short preparation time cuts foodservice costs.

Chicken Breast – Grilled

Fully cooked
Skinless, unbreaded
Marinated

Eliminates risk of undercooking. Saves time and labor.
Low calorie count per serving portion.
Delicious marinade offers a moist and juicy flavor.

Chicken Breast – Breaded

Prebreaded
Flavor assortment
Fully cooked

Saves time and labor. Uniform breading coverage prevents fryer fall-off.
Wide variety of flavors to offer customers.
Eliminates risk of serving raw chicken. Quick and easy preparation.

Nuggets and Tenders

Fully cooked
Variety of styles/seasonings

Saves time and labor. Eliminates risk of serving raw chicken.
Ideal for snack foods or appetizers.

Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) Chicken Pieces

Unbreaded Pieces:

Quick frozen in minutes
Variety of individually frozen cuts
Pre-cleaned
Recipe ready
Birds are computer sized
Long shelf life

Product's natural fresh and tender qualities are preserved. Bacteria growth reduced.
Operator can utilize product on an "as needed" basis.
Reduces preparation time and bacteria risk.
Product can be cooked straight from the freezer. Fits any menu trend.
Guaranteed piece counts & consistent portions help contain foodservice costs.
Easy to inventory. Reduces risk of stock depletion.

Breaded Pieces:

Pre-breaded and marinated
Ready to cook
Premium cut
Individually wrapped or bulk packed
Pre-cleaned and pre-trimmed
Individually frozen, portion controlled
High perceived value
Long shelf life
Pre-marinated

Saves time and labor. Customers enjoy its moist and juicy texture.
Preparation is quick and easy.
No waste.
Choose the packaging you need for retail or foodservice.
Saves time and labor. Reduces bacteria risk.
Eliminates waste – product is used on an "as needed" basis.
Promotes cost control while conveying an upmarket image.
East to inventory. Reduces risk of stock depletion.
Chicken stays tender and juicy even under heat lamps or in the hot case.

Breast Tenders

All natural breast tenderloin
Uniquely seasoned marinade/breading
Lightly breaded
Available in a variety of pack sizes

Customers enjoy the homemade style. Operators enjoy versatility in menu planning.
Plump and juicy texture. Great tasting flavor.
Healthy image. Absorbs less shortening.
Accommodates operator usage and handling requirements. Smaller pack sizes increase distributor inventory turns.



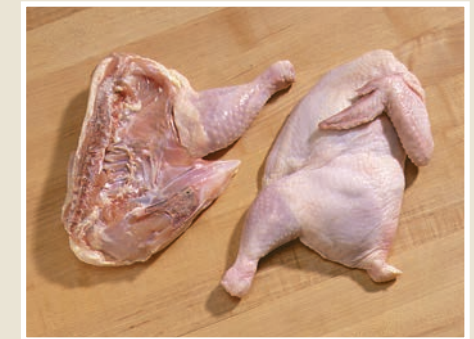
9-Piece Cut Broiler

Broilers may be cut into nine pieces for marketing. The pieces include 1 breast keel portion, 2 breast sides or ribs, 2 thighs, 2 wings and 2 drumsticks. The nine piece cut broiler is marketed primarily through food service outlets and fast food restaurants.



Cornish Hens

A young, immature broiler chicken of either sex, usually less than five weeks of age, weighing not more than 2 pounds.



Broiler Halves

The broiler is split from front to back through the backbone and keel to produce 2 halves of approximately equal weight. Equal parts of backbone are present on each half.



Broiler Split Breast with Back

A broiler breast quarter with the wing removed is marketed as the split breast. They are white meat and weigh from 12 to 15 ounces (340 to 425 grams) each.



Broiler Split Breast without Back

Remove the wing and back portion from the broiler breast quarter to produce the broiler split breast without back.



Broiler Leg Quarter

A leg quarter is the drumstick and thigh portion with one half of the portion of the back attached. Leg quarters may also include attached abdominal fat and up to two ribs.



Chicken Wing Portion Mid Section with Tip
The flat center section and the flipper (wing tip).



Chicken Wing Portion Mid Section
The section between the elbow and the tip, sometimes called the wing flat or mid-joint.



Chicken Wing Portion Drummettes
The first section between the shoulder joint and the elbow.





Broiler Thighs

The broiler thigh is that portion of the leg above the knee joint. The broiler thigh with back portion is produced by separating the broiler leg quarter at the knee joint. The broiler thigh without back portion is produced by separating the whole leg at the knee joint. This cut must contain no rib, or back meat.



Boneless, Skinless Broiler Leg Meat

This cut is produced by removing the skin and bone from broiler leg quarters. Coarse ground chicken is made from boneless, skinless leg meat.



Boneless, Skinless Thigh Meat

This cut is produced by removing the skin and bone from only the thigh portion of broiler leg quarters.



Boneless, Skinless Breast Meat

Breast halves that have been skinned and deboned. Each breast half is considered one serving. The pectoralis major and minor muscles may be separated to produce tenderloin and boneless breast.



Giblets (Gizzard, Heart, Liver & Neck)

A giblet pack includes the gizzard, heart, liver and neck. When included as a part of the whole bird, the pieces are wrapped in paper or sealed in plastic, then stored inside the bird cavity. Giblets may also be sold separately.



Chicken Feet, Chicken Paws

Chicken feet are the lower leg and foot combination with the skin and toe nails removed. Chicken paws are the foot portion only. Chicken feet and paws are packaged bulk in plastic bags. For shipment, the bags are packed into corrugated fiber cartons.

Classes of Ready-to-Cook Chicken

Processed chickens may be classified into one of seven different USDA defined groups:

BROILER

A young chicken usually 6 to 8 weeks of age. A broiler may be of either sex and will be tender-meated. The dressed weight of whole birds will range from 2.85 to 4.50 pounds (1.30 to 2.04 kilograms). Broilers are sometimes referred to as fryers.

ROASTER

They have the same general characteristics as the broiler except their dressed weight will range between 4.75 to 7.50 pounds (2.16 to 3.40 kilograms). Roasters are processed between 8 and 12 weeks of age. Roasters are generally sold as whole birds.

CAPON

A surgically de-sexed male chicken. They are grown to about 15 weeks of age. Dressed weights range from 6 to 9 pounds (2.72 to 4.08 kilograms). Sometimes called "The Christmas Bird", capons are meaty, flavorful, tender and highly regarded for holiday meal celebrations. Capons are marketed as whole birds.

ROCK CORNISH HEN

The cornish hen is a young immature chicken, usually 5 to 6 weeks of age, with a dressed weight of not more than 2 pounds (.91 kilograms).

HEN

A mature female chicken. Chickens in this classification are generally spent hens. Referred to as fowl, hens may be further classified as heavy or light depending on their breed or weight. Hens may be used for stewing, baking or deboned for use in processed meats.

ROOSTER

A mature male chicken with coarse skin and toughened, dark meat. Roosters are generally spent breeders that are deboned for use in processed meats.

Preservation Methods

Dehydration

Dehydration removes most, if not all, moisture from the chicken. Most U.S. chicken is dehydrated by spray vacuum, roller or freeze drying methods. Once dehydrated, the powdered, chunked or granulated product may be vacuum packaged in cans or pouches that may be safely stored for use years later. Dried products, stored in poly-lined boxes and drums, have a shorter shelf life. Dehydrated products are recommended for overseas shipment.

Irradiation

Irradiation reduces pathogens sometimes found in chicken. This process can also increase the refrigerated shelf-life of fresh chicken by one week and reduce the impact of temperature abuse during export operations. Though the process is proven to be safe and reliable, irradiated poultry has not been cleared for sale in all countries. Irradiated chicken frozen and stored at 0° F (-17.8° C) is recommended for overseas shipment.

Bulk Frozen

Typically, these products are frozen together in containers, and individual pieces can only be removed when the entire container is defrosted. The chicken products are chilled to approximately 35° to 40° F (1.7° to 4.4° C), packed in containers and placed in a 0° F (-17.8° C) or below freezer. The chicken products are generally frozen within 24 to 72 hours. Bulk frozen chicken products have a typical shelf-life of up to 12 months if properly shipped and stored at 0° F (-17.8° C) or below. Recommended for overseas shipment.

Individually Frozen

The pieces are not frozen together and individual pieces can be removed while in the frozen state. The processed chicken products are frozen individually to 0° to 5° F (-17.8° to -15° C) before they are packed in the shipping containers and placed in a 0° F (-17.8° C) or below freezer for storage. Individually frozen chicken products have a shelf-life of up to 12 months if properly shipped and stored at 0° F (-17.8° C) or below. Recommended for overseas shipment.

Individually "Quick" Frozen (IQF)

Individually "quick" frozen processed chicken products are quickly frozen individually to approximately 0° to 5° F (-17.8° to -15° C) within 60 minutes or less of the start of the freezing process. The pieces are frozen separately and individual pieces can be removed while in the frozen state. The use of the term "quick" frozen is governed by the United States Department of Agriculture and requires products to be placed in a freezer immediately after initial chilling or held up to 48 hours at a

temperature of 36° F (2.2° C) and then frozen to 0° F (-17.8° C) or lower within 72 hours of the start of the freezing process. Individually "quick" frozen chicken products have a shelf-life of up to 12 months or more if properly shipped and stored at 0° F (-17.8° C) or below. Recommended for overseas shipment.

Frozen Storage

The shelf-life for plant-frozen or commercially frozen chicken products packaged and stored under proper conditions is normally 12 months. However, tests have proven that poultry, especially raw poultry, can be stored for several years with insignificant loss of shelf-life or flavor. Frozen chicken products, however, can experience various stages of damage by freezer burn, dehydration, chemical and nutritional deterioration during shipping and storage. Variables during shipping and storage that affect shelf-life are: maintenance of constant 0° F (-17.8° C) or below temperature, time, protection of products from air and freezer air velocity.

