

BUTTERFLIED CORNISH HENS with APRICOT-PISTACHIO DRESSING

(adapted from Pam Anderson)

2 Cornish hens
1 cup kosher salt
salt and pepper for seasoning
2 T olive oil
1 large onion, diced
1 cup dried apricots, diced
1/4 cup apricot jam (I substituted fig jam)
1/8 cup balsamic vinegar
1/2 cup pistachio nuts, chopped
1/2 cup minced parsley



Heat the oven to 450F.

Butterfly the hens but cutting through the middle of the backbone and removing it. Lay the hens on a cutting board, breast side up, and flatten them using the palm of your hand.

Dissolve the kosher salt in 2.5 quarts of cold water to make a brining solution. Brine the birds in the fridge for 1.5 hours. Remove them from the brine, rinse, and dry them.

Sautee the onions in oil until very soft. Stir in the apricots, then spread the apricot-onion mixture in a baking dish. Season the hens with black pepper, and lay them on top. You may tie the legs together to keep them in a nice shape.

Mix the jam and balsamic vinegar in a small bowl, then brush most of the mixture on the hens. Place them in the oven, add a little water to the baking dish to prevent burning the apricot mixture. Bake for about 45 minutes, brushing with the leftover jam mixture as well as the liquid accumulating in the roasting pan. After 45 minutes turn on the broiler to crisp the skin, but watch closely, because the sugar in the jam will easily burn.

Remove the hens, tent them with aluminum foil, and if you find the apricot mixture too watery, then return it to the oven or transfer it to a pan and reduce it slightly on top of the stove. Stir in the pistachios and parsley, and serve with the hens.