Chapter 1

Select, prepare and cook poultry

There is an excellent range of high-quality poultry and feathered game available to the professional cook. The term ‘poultry’ refers to all birds farmed domestically for human consumption. Poultry farming is a highly regulated industry and, as a result, the quality and consistency of the product available is very high.

Feathered game traditionally refers to birds, such as pheasant, quail, guinea fowl and pigeon, that are harvested or taken from the wild. Because of the regulations in place for the supply of foodstuffs, the breeds of birds listed as feathered game are generally now only available from domestic game-bird farms and producers. For culinary and menu purposes, these birds are still referred to as ‘game’ but are included here with poultry as they are rarely harvested from the wild for consumption in a commercial setting.

The term ‘giblet’ in relation to poultry refers to all offal, such as liver, heart and feet. A full list of giblets is included later in this chapter.

The quality and structure of poultry allows most dishes to be prepared, cooked and served quickly. Enjoying a beautifully prepared and perfectly cooked breast of chicken served with lardons, pearl onions and sautéed mushrooms, for example, is a wonderful dining experience. The subtlety that can be achieved through the slow cooking of a Chicken Maryland in good quality stock with fine herbs is hard to match.

This chapter covers selecting, preparing, cooking, presenting and storing poultry in a commercial kitchen.

On completion of this chapter you should be able to:

Select and purchase poultry
- select and purchase poultry according to quantity and quality required

Handle and store poultry
- handle poultry efficiently and hygienically to minimise risk of food spoilage or cross-contamination
- thaw frozen poultry correctly and safely
- store poultry ensuring storage conditions and optimal temperature for poultry are maintained

Prepare, cook and present poultry
- use poultry preparation techniques correctly
- prepare and cook a variety of poultry dishes according to standard recipes and to enterprise standards, using appropriate cookery methods
- serve poultry according to enterprise standards, including carving, slicing or leaving whole
- present poultry using suitable sauces, garnishes and accompaniments.
Select and purchase poultry and feathered game

As with the supply of all fresh produce, the quality of poultry is dependent upon the integrity and reputation of the supplier chosen. It is crucial, therefore, to build an ongoing business relationship with a quality poultry supplier. The ordering of poultry is based on a sizing scale that applies a numerical code to each bird based on units of 100 grams of weight. For example, a size 14 chicken will weigh 1.4 kg, a size 20 duck will weigh 2 kg and a size 40 turkey will weigh 4 kg.

Table 1.1 includes poultry and feathered game types, commercial names, sizes, age and a general description of the bird.

Table 1.1 Poultry classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Commercial name</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Age in weeks</th>
<th>General description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatchcock or poussin</td>
<td></td>
<td>2–7</td>
<td>5–7</td>
<td>Young juvenile birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capon</td>
<td></td>
<td>16 &amp; over</td>
<td>12–16</td>
<td>Fattened, castrated male birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broiler</td>
<td></td>
<td>14–18</td>
<td>8–10</td>
<td>Fattened hens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roasting chicken</td>
<td></td>
<td>8–24</td>
<td>8–52</td>
<td>Mature hens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiling fowl</td>
<td></td>
<td>14–32</td>
<td>Over 52</td>
<td>Older, mature hens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duck</td>
<td>Duckling</td>
<td>15 &amp; under</td>
<td>Young juvenile birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duck</td>
<td>16–24</td>
<td>Mature birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large duck</td>
<td>25 &amp; over</td>
<td>Older, mature birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Young turkey</td>
<td>15–30</td>
<td>Young, juvenile birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>30–50</td>
<td>Mature birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large turkey</td>
<td>50 &amp; over</td>
<td>Older, mature birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose</td>
<td>Gosling</td>
<td>16–32</td>
<td>Young, juvenile birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goose</td>
<td>30–50</td>
<td>Mature birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large goose</td>
<td>50 &amp; over</td>
<td>Older, mature birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feathered game</td>
<td>Guinea fowl (farmed)</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>Mature birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guinea fowl (wild)</td>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>Mature, wild birds; usually hunted in autumn and sold whole with the head on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pheasant</td>
<td>Pheasant (farmed)</td>
<td>10–20</td>
<td>Mature birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pheasant (wild)</td>
<td>10–20</td>
<td>Wild birds; hunted in season</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Due to the competitive, service-oriented nature of the commercial food industry, poultry is available for purchase in a wide range of commercially cut, prepared and processed forms. The options can be overwhelming, ranging from whole birds and traditional cuts (such as Maryland, legs, breasts, crowns and thighs) to minces and diced meats, sausages, marinated cuts and kebabs, smoked breasts and even reduced or jellied stocks.

Each supplier will have a range of poultry products available. Some suppliers will specialise in certain products. Product and price listings are available on request from all good suppliers. Figure 1.2a and b show examples of two suppliers’ product and price lists. The following list includes a range of commonly available poultry products and commercially available items.

**Chicken**
- whole fresh
- whole frozen
- whole boned
- drumstick
- drumstick (Frenched)
- drumstick (skinless)

### Table 1.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Commercial name</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Age in weeks</th>
<th>General description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pigeon</td>
<td>Squab (farmed)</td>
<td>2–4</td>
<td>2–4</td>
<td>Young, juvenile birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pigeon (farmed)</td>
<td>4–8</td>
<td>4 &amp; over</td>
<td>Mature birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pigeon (wild)</td>
<td>2–10</td>
<td>2 &amp; over</td>
<td>Mature birds; hunted year-round; tend to be larger and stronger in flavour than farmed birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quail</td>
<td>Quail (farmed)</td>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>4 &amp; over</td>
<td>Mature birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duck</td>
<td>Duck (wild)</td>
<td>15–25</td>
<td>6 &amp; over</td>
<td>Mature birds; hunted in season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose</td>
<td>Goose (wild)</td>
<td>30–50</td>
<td>10 &amp; over</td>
<td>Mature birds (rarely available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partridge</td>
<td>Partridge (farmed)</td>
<td>10–20</td>
<td>14 &amp; over</td>
<td>Mature birds; hunted in season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutton-bird</td>
<td>Mutton-bird (wild)</td>
<td>2–4</td>
<td>6 &amp; over</td>
<td>Mature birds; hunted in season</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TERMINOLOGY**

Maryland – a term used to describe a leg and thigh portion of chicken.
- drumstick (boneless)
- carcase
- spare rib
- diced meat
- mince
- thigh
- thigh steak (if bone removed)
- thigh fillet
- thigh (skinless)
- wing
- wing points
- wing (two-piece; pointless)
- double Maryland on bone (half chicken)
- drumette
- wingette
- smoked whole

**Chicken giblets**
- feet
- liver
- neck
- parson’s nose

**Duck**
- whole fresh
- Maryland (leg)
- whole frozen
- breast fillet
- whole Peking (head on)
- whole roasted
- mince
- sausage

**Duck giblets**
- neck
- feet
- beak
- lung

**Turkey**
- whole fresh
- whole frozen
- rolled boneless (uncooked)

- smoked fillet
- marinated
- maize-fed
- barley-fed
- corn-fed
- breast (skin on)
- breast (skinless)
- breast Kiev-cut (drumette on)
- breast Kiev-cut (Frenched)
- breast quarter (whole wing on)
- double breast (on crown)
- double breast (boneless)
- kebabs
- sausage
- chicken stock

- comb
- heart
- kidney
- stomach

- minced fat
- rendered fat
- duck fat
- duck stock
- duck skin
- duck glaze
- confit leg

- liver
- heart
- kidney
- stomach

- rolled boneless (cooked)
- buffet (raw)
- buffet (cooked)
• buffet (smoked)  
• breast supreme (boneless)  
• breast fillet (wing on)  
• breast steak  
• leg steak  
• hindquarter  
• diced meat  
• leg (bone in)  

• thigh (bone in)  
• thigh steak  
• mince  
• wing  
• drumette  
• wingette  
• neck

**Goose**  
• whole fresh  
• smoked breast  
• whole frozen  

• liver (foie gras)  
• breast

**Guinea fowl**  
• whole fresh  
• whole frozen  

• breast

**Pheasant**  
• whole fresh  
• whole frozen  
• breast  

• Maryland  
• smoked

**Pigeon**  
• whole fresh  
• whole frozen  

• corn-fed

**Quail**  
• whole fresh  
• whole frozen  
• whole boned  

• whole boned (marinated)  
• breast fillet (medallion)

**Partridge**  
• whole fresh  
• whole frozen  

• whole frozen

**Mutton-bird**  
• whole fresh  
• whole frozen  

• salted
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Free Range Price</th>
<th>Corn Fed Price</th>
<th>Chemical Free Price</th>
<th>Barn Reared &amp; Hormone Free, Grain Fed Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Kiev Fillet Frenched Skin on</td>
<td>25.50 per kg</td>
<td>20.90 per kg</td>
<td>14.95 per kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Kiev Fillet Skin off</td>
<td>26.15 per kg</td>
<td>21.75 per kg</td>
<td>13.90 per kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Breast Fillet Skin on</td>
<td>25.15 per kg</td>
<td>21.75 per kg</td>
<td>13.90 per kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Breast Fillet Skin off</td>
<td>18.50 per kg</td>
<td>14.95 per kg</td>
<td>13.90 per kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Thigh Fillet Skin on</td>
<td>15.45 per kg</td>
<td>10.50 per kg</td>
<td>6.00 per kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Maryland</td>
<td>9.25 per kg</td>
<td>5.50 per kg</td>
<td>5.00 per kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Drumstick</td>
<td>8.45 per kg</td>
<td>6.95 per kg</td>
<td>5.50 per kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Wings</td>
<td>7.60 per kg</td>
<td>5.40 per kg</td>
<td>5.00 per kg</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Drummettes</td>
<td>5.70 per kg</td>
<td>5.40 per kg</td>
<td>5.00 per kg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicken Wingettes</td>
<td>5.40 per kg</td>
<td>5.00 per kg</td>
<td>5.00 per kg</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Bones 15kg box</td>
<td>1.45 per kg</td>
<td>1.00 per kg</td>
<td>1.00 per kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Size 12</td>
<td>11.75 per bird</td>
<td>9.85 per bird</td>
<td>7.00 per bird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicken Size 13</td>
<td>12.60 per bird</td>
<td>10.50 per bird</td>
<td>8.00 per bird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicken Size 14</td>
<td>13.45 per bird</td>
<td>11.40 per bird</td>
<td>9.00 per bird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicken Size 15</td>
<td>14.30 per bird</td>
<td>12.15 per bird</td>
<td>9.00 per bird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicken Size 16</td>
<td>15.15 per bird</td>
<td>12.85 per bird</td>
<td>9.50 per bird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duck Size 15</td>
<td>12.95 per bird</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duck Size 17</td>
<td>13.85 per bird</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duck Size 19</td>
<td>15.45 per bird</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duck Size 22</td>
<td>17.80 per bird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duck Fillet Skin On 4 pcs – 1kg pkt</td>
<td>25.40 per kg</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duck Maryland Backbone Out 4 pcs – 1kg pkt</td>
<td>19.50 per kg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duck Fat Rendered 2kg tub</td>
<td>41.60 per 2kg</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duck Livers 2kg bag</td>
<td>8.55 per 2kg</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duck Bones 15kg box</td>
<td>2.50 per kg</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosling 2.5–3.5kg</td>
<td>22.90 per kg</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Fowl Size 10</td>
<td>27.30 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Fowl Size 11</td>
<td>28.30 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Fowl Size 12</td>
<td>32.40 per bird</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscovy Duck</td>
<td>19.70 per kg</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pheasant Size 10</td>
<td>27.30 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pheasant Size 11</td>
<td>30.85 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pheasant Size 12</td>
<td>32.40 per bird</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quail 150gm 6 per tray</td>
<td>3.40 per bird</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quail 200gm 6 per tray</td>
<td>4.20 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quail Butterfly 6 per tray</td>
<td>5.50 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quail Eggs 18 eggs per pkt</td>
<td>4.20 per pkt</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Silkie Chicken Size 4</td>
<td>17.10 per bird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silkie Chicken Size 5</td>
<td>17.50 per bird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spatchcock/Poussin Size 4</td>
<td>5.60 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatchcock/Poussin Size 5</td>
<td>6.10 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatchcock/Poussin Size 6</td>
<td>6.60 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatchcock/Poussin Butterfly (5 per tray)</td>
<td>8.35 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatchcock/Poussin Tunnelboned (5 per tray)</td>
<td>9.05 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatchcock/Poussin Supreme (8 per tray)</td>
<td>21.00 per kg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatchcock/Poussin Maryland (8 per tray)</td>
<td>9.15 per kg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squab Pigeon Size 3</td>
<td>11.95 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squab Pigeon Size 4</td>
<td>16.65 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squab Pigeon Size 5</td>
<td>18.10 per bird</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey – Deutcher Frozen 4–8 kg</td>
<td>13.90 per kg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey – Leadoux Frozen 4–8 kg</td>
<td>17.90 per kg</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CB Chicken Bones 15 kg boxes $1.45 per kg
CFE Chicken Feet 15 kg boxes $2.50 per kg
CGIB Chicken Giblets $5.40 per kg
CL Chicken Liver $5.00 per kg
CMIN Chicken Mince $12.40 per kg
DB Duck Bones 15 box $2.50 per kg
DFAT Duck Fat Rendered 2 kg tub $41.60 per 2kg
DL Duck Livers 2 kg bag $8.55 per 2kg
DMUSL Muscovy Duck Liver 200 gm tray $22.50 per kg
FRCKS Free Range Wing Bone in $8.30 per kg
GOH Gosling Heart 200 gm tray $22.50 per kg
GOL Gosling Liver 200 gm tray $22.50 per kg
Muscovy Duck Heart 200 gm tray $22.50 per kg
QE Quail Eggs 18 eggs per pkt $4.20 per pkt

**ACTIVITY 1.1**

From the Wangara Poultry & Game product list in Figure 1.2a, identify 10 products that you regard as high-cost products, 10 moderate-cost and 10 low-cost products.

**QUALITY POINTS OF POULTRY**

In general, the price of frozen poultry is marginally cheaper than that of fresh product. It is, however, preferable to use fresh produce as it is easier to ascertain the quality of the bird.

**Fresh poultry**

The following points of quality should be used to purchase and check fresh poultry.

- The **odour** should be pleasant, fresh and mild.
- The **flesh** should be firm, fine in texture and show no bruising, blood marks or other damage.
- **Skin** should be unbroken, free of feathers or quills and glossy without being sticky or slimy. There should be no yellowing or discoloration. It should be the appropriate colour and have slight elasticity.
- The breast bone should be firm yet pliable in older birds and soft and pliable in younger birds.
- The **breasts** should be plump, firm and well structured and sit above or level with the top of the breast bone.
• The **legs** should be well shaped, firm, plump, compact and positioned close to the carcase.
• **Fat** should be minimal in chicken and turkey and white in colour. It should be more plentiful in duck, goose and game birds and range in colour from creamy white to golden yellow, depending on the feed used to rear the bird.
• The **bone structure** should be solid in the carcase with no marks, broken bones, clotting, bruises or damaged joints.
• **Use-by dates** should be checked and closely adhered to.

**ACTIVITY 1.2**

For this exercise you will require a fresh chicken. Remove the chicken from the wrapping and examine it closely, considering the previously listed quality points. Write your observations about the appearance of the bird and conclude whether the bird is of good or poor quality.

**Frozen poultry**

• **Temperature** – poultry should never be delivered at a temperature above –18°C.
• **Packing** – frozen produce should be individually wrapped in undamaged plastic wrap free of holes or tearing, with the bag’s clip or tie intact.
• **Appearance** – should be free of freezer burn, excessive ice crystals or discoloration.
• There should be no evidence of **thawing**. This is usually seen as excess liquid or pockets of frozen liquid in the bag or cavity of the bird.

**Handling and storage of poultry**

Poultry is a high-risk food to handle and store, particularly whole birds because of the cavity. The following handling and storage guidelines should be adhered to at all times.

**FRESH**

Fresh birds should be:
• received chilled (below 4°C) and refrigerated immediately
• prepared quickly to minimise time out of refrigeration
• prepared on a cleaned and sanitised board
• used as quickly as possible to avoid spoilage
• stored for no longer than three days refrigerated. If longer storage is required, then birds should be individually frozen, then correctly defrosted
• stored separately from any cooked or ready-to-consume food.

Fresh birds to be stored before use should be removed from their packaging and cavity washed, dried and stored on a draining rack under food-grade plastic at 4°C or below.
COOKED
Cooked birds should be:
• cooled quickly after cooking and never stacked on top of each other. Once cooled, birds should be wrapped in food-grade plastic and stored at below 4°C
• used as quickly as possible to avoid wastage and spoilage (cooked birds should not be stored for more than three days)
• stored away from raw or uncooked foods
• worked on upon clean and sanitised boards.

FROZEN
• Frozen poultry should be received frozen at –18°C or below and immediately placed in a freezer.
• Fresh birds to be frozen should be removed from their original packaging, cavity washed, dried and individually wrapped and bagged, sealed free of excess air. They should be correctly labelled, dated and frozen in single layers. Once completely frozen, they may be stacked.
• Birds should never be thawed or semi-thawed and re-frozen.

ACTIVITY 1.3
In this kitchen scenario, how should the following situation be handled? Because the supplier is only able to deliver once a week, you receive an order of 24 fresh guinea fowl (the supply for an entire week) on a Thursday. The restaurant will use half the birds on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The restaurant is closed on Sunday. The remainder of the birds will be sold early the following week. Describe how the guinea fowl delivery should be handled and stored to maximise the quality of the produce for the week.

THAWING POULTRY
Thawing birds from their frozen state needs careful monitoring to ensure the integrity and safety of the produce. While thawing birds, the following guidelines should be adhered to:
• birds should be completely thawed in a refrigerator at 4°C
• birds should be thawed over a rack and drip tray to minimise spillage
• adequate time should be allowed to thaw the birds completely
• birds should never be thawed in water or at room temperature, as the risk of spoilage or contamination from microorganism activity is too high
• if quick thawing of birds is required, a microwave oven can be used but this is not a preferred option
• birds should be completely thawed before being prepared or cooked. If birds are not completely thawed prior to cooking, there will be structural tissue damage and excessive moisture loss during cooking and an overly dry end result.
Prepare, cook and present poultry

The goal in the preparation of whole bird carcases is to maximise the yield of usable meat, with as little as possible wastage or loss.

Remember this

The preparation of poultry is an essential handling skill for any kitchen professional. The ability to cut, clean, portion, truss and farce poultry and game birds can add much variety to the presentation of poultry dishes.

Figure 1.3 Poultry knives and equipment

1. Polyurethane chopping board – colour-coded yellow for raw poultry use
2. Paring knife
3. Boning knife – long blade
4. Boning knife – short blade
5. Utility knife
6. 25 cm cook’s knife
7. Meat cleaver
8. Larding needle
9. Pair of meat skewers
10. Kitchen scissors
11. Poultry shears
12. Steel
13. Meat bat
PORTIONING

There are a number of basic poultry and feathered game portioning techniques that need to be accomplished with confidence. These include:

- two-piece portioning: half bird (for smaller birds)
- four-piece portioning: two Marylands, two breast portions
- eight-piece portioning: four breast portions, four leg portions
- preparation of a boneless breast portion and Kiev cut breast
- preparation of a Maryland
- preparation of a ballotine
- preparation of a boneless thigh fillet
- boning of a whole bird for a galantine
- preparation of a drumstick (bone in)
- preparation of a boneless leg
- preparation of a wing: three-joint portion, two-joint portion, drumettes, wingettes
- preparation of a spare rib.

Each enterprise, chef or chef instructor may have slightly different requirements for the preparation and portioning of whole birds. It is therefore important to clarify the particular requirements, so as to meet the individual enterprise standards.

All of these cutting and portioning techniques are best achieved using a boning knife.

Figure 1.4 Procedure for cutting a bird in half. 1. Square up the bird by placing it on its back and pressing on the legs and breast to create a more uniform appearance. 2. Place the bird on its breast and hold the tail tightly with the thumb and forefinger of one hand. Using a rigid boning knife and in a single swift movement, cut alongside the backbone from the bird’s tail to the head. 3. Lay the bird flat on the cutting board and remove the backbone by cutting through the ribs connecting it to the breast. 4. Bend the bird back, breaking the breast bone free. 5. Run your fingers along the bone to separate the breast meat from it; pull the bone completely free. Be sure to remove the flexible cartilage completely. 6. Cut through the skin to separate the bird into two halves. The halves are ready to be cooked; for a more attractive presentation, follow Steps 7 and 8. 7. Trim off the wing tips and the ends of the leg bone. 8. Make a slit in the skin below the leg and tuck the leg bone into the slit.
Figure 1.5 Procedure for cutting a bird into four pieces. 1. Remove the leg by pulling the leg and thigh away from the breast and cutting through the skin and flesh toward the thigh joint. 2. Cut down to the thigh joint, twist the leg to break the joint and cut the thigh and leg from the carcass. Be careful to trim around the oyster meat (the tender morsel of meat located next to the backbone); leave it attached to the thigh. Repeat with the other leg. 3. To split the breast, follow Steps 2 through 6 for cutting a bird in half. Cut the breast into two halves. 4. The bird is now cut into four quarters.

Figure 1.6 Procedure for cutting a bird into eight pieces. 1. After cutting a bird into four quarters, separate the thigh from the leg by making a cut guided by the line of fat on the inside of the thigh and leg. 2. To cut the bird into eight pieces, separate the wing from the breast by cutting the joint, or split the breast, leaving a portion of the breast meat attached to the wing.

Figure 1.7 Procedure for preparing a boneless breast. 1. Remove the keel bone from the bone-in breast, following Steps 4, 5 and 6 for cutting a bird in half. 2. With the chicken breast lying skin side down, separate the rib bones, wing and wishbone from the breast. Leave the two tender pieces of meat known as the tenderloins attached to the breast. Repeat the procedure on the other side, being sure to remove the small wishbone pieces from the front of the breast. 3. The skin may be left intact or removed to produce a skinless boneless breast.
TRUSSING

In order to maintain a compact whole-bird shape during roasting, as well as to assist with even cooking, the bird may need to be trussed or tied. Trussing is also used to secure a stuffing or farce in the cavity of a whole bird. A number of trussing or tying methods can be used to secure a whole bird for roasting, pot-roasting or braising.

Figure 1.8 Procedure for preparing a Maryland and supreme from a whole bird. 1. Place the chicken on its back. Remove the legs following Steps 1 and 2 for cutting a bird into four pieces. Remove the backbone following Steps 2 and 3 for cutting a bird in half. Remove the keel bone from the bone-in breast, following Steps 4 and 5 for cutting a bird in half. 2. Cut along one side of the breast bone, separating the meat from the bone. 3. Following the natural curvature of the ribs, continue cutting to remove the meat from the bones. 4. When you reach the wing joint, cut through the joint, keeping the wing attached to the breast portion. Cut the breast free from the carcase. 5. Make a cut on the back of the joint between the first and second wing bones. 6. Break the joint and pull the meat and skin back to expose a clean bone. Trim the wing bone. 7. The supreme can be prepared skin-on or skinless.

Figure 1.9 Procedure for boning a leg and thigh. 1. Carefully cut through the skin, meat and tendons at the base of the leg. Be sure to cut through completely to the bone. 2. Pull the skin off the leg with your hands, then break the joint between the leg and thigh. Twist and pull out the leg bone. 3. Working from the inside of the thigh bone, separate it from the meat. 4. Cut around the cartilage at the joint between the leg and thigh and remove the thigh bone and cartilage.

Video
View the video clip about preparing a Kiev cut breast of chicken.


click to view the video

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 2 3 4
Preparing a whole bird for trussing

Prior to trussing or tying a bird, the following things need to be done to the carcase:

- wash cavity and dry completely
- remove excess fat
- turn the wing points under the neck of the carcase to secure and avoid over-browning during cooking
- remove any feathers or quills
- trim any excess skin from the neck end
- place on a clean dry work board
- dry the surface skin of the bird
- assess which method of trussing will best suit the application.

Trussing should be done with an undyed, heat-resistant, cotton-based kitchen string or twine to avoid shrinkage or breaking during the cooking process.

Trussing with a needle

This is the best method to use to secure a stuffing or farce inside a whole bird. A long butcher's needle is required for this method of trussing.

1. Thread trussing needle with sufficient string to complete the task.
2. Insert the needle through the side of the drumstick, pass it through the point of the breast and exit through the opposite drumstick at the same point as the entry.
3. Insert the needle through the midpoint of the wing, pass it through the end of the breast and neck skin and exit through the opposite midpoint of the wing.
4. Bring the two string ends together with enough pressure to bring the bird into a compact plump shape then tie off.
5. Bring the drumstick ends together with a figure-of-eight loop and tie off.
Figure 1.18 Continued. S. Grilled squab. T. Turkey scallopine. U. Sautéed chicken livers. V. Sautéed foie gras.
Summary

In this chapter we addressed a number of aspects of poultry and feathered game, including the sizing, classifications, cookery methods and preparation techniques. The crucial aspect of matching appropriate flavours with poultry is important due to its subtle nature and flavours.

The use of culinary terms when listing menu items containing poultry, especially chicken, needs to be accurate due to the quick growth patterns and the speed with which the quality of the bird changes as it ages.

From a food safety perspective, poultry is a high-risk food, so it is crucial that the raw product is handled with the utmost care to avoid the possibility of cross-contamination.

Feathered game dishes are often more successful when classical culinary standards are observed and tried-and-tested flavour combinations are utilised.

The correct level of cooking or ‘doneness’ is vital to the success of poultry dishes as the product has a tendency to overcook and the quality of the finished item can deteriorate quickly if overexposed to heat.

Revision questions

1. Compared with the price of beef, lamb and seafood, is the price of poultry comparatively high or low?
2. What does the term ‘poultry’ refer to?
3. What does the term ‘giblet’ refer to?
4. How much will a size 22 duck weigh?
5. What is the difference between farmed and wild pigeon?
6. A Kiev-cut chicken breast has which bone on?
7. List five types of chicken giblets.
8. What is a pair of turkey breasts still joined at the bone called?
9. In culinary terms, what is goose liver known as?
10. What colour range of fat is considered normal for poultry?
11. The breast bone in fresh poultry should have what qualities?
12. At what temperature should frozen poultry be delivered?
13. What are the quality points of frozen poultry?
14. What is the recommended refrigerated storage time for fresh poultry?
15. What is the appropriate storage temperature for poultry?
16. What is achieved by stuffing poultry?
17. List 10 different stuffings that can be used to stuff poultry.
18. True or false: Marinades can be cooked or uncooked.
19. A size 16 bird will yield how many portions?
20. List three sauces suitable to be served with poultry.