

CHICKEN THIGH CASSEROLE W/ NEW POTATOES & TOMATOES

A recipe by **FoodNouveau**

INGREDIENTS

Serves 4-5

1¼ lb [800 g] new potatoes, scrubbed
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ cup [125 ml] diced pancetta (or unsmoked bacon)
12 boned skinless chicken thighs
1¼ lb [560 g] cherry tomatoes
¼ cup [60 ml] picked leaves of fresh oregano
¼ cup [60 ml] extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp [15 ml] red wine vinegar
Fresh chives, to serve (optional)



METHOD

Put the potatoes into a large saucepan of salted boiling water and boil until cooked (10-15 minutes, depending on their size).

While the potatoes are cooking, preheat the oven to 400°F [200°C]. Cut each chicken thigh into three strips and place in a bowl. Sprinkle the meat all over with salt and pepper. Heat a large frying pan and fry the diced pancetta until golden brown and crisp. Scoop out the pancetta with a slotted spoon and transfer to a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Keep the pancetta fat in the pan, and add chicken, fitting all the pieces snugly in one layer. If the pan is not big enough to cook all the chicken at once, cook it in two batches. Toss and fry over high heat for about 10 minutes, until almost cooked, then remove with a slotted spoon to a large ovenproof pan or dish.

Prick the cherry tomatoes with a sharp knife. Place them in a bowl, cover with boiling water and leave for a minute or so. Drain and, when cool enough to handle, pinch off their skins. You could leave the skin on, but removing it intensifies the flavor and infuses the potatoes with their sweetness. Add the tomatoes to the chicken.

Drain the potatoes in a colander, then lightly crush them with a fork and add to the chicken and tomatoes. Blend ¾ of the oregano leaves, a pinch of salt, freshly ground black pepper, the extra-virgin olive oil and red wine vinegar together. Drizzle this mixture over the chicken, potatoes and tomatoes, add the fried pancetta and the remaining oregano leaves and toss everything together. Bake for 40 minutes until golden.

Sprinkle with chives and serve immediately. Leftovers are also lovely the next day, when flavors have intensified even more.