

# Bob's Brined Rock Cornish Game Hens

## The Brining

### Ingredients

- 1 gallon water
- 1 cup kosher salt
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 bunch fresh tarragon
- 1 bunch fresh parsley
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 head garlic, halved horizontally
- 1 onion, sliced
- 3 tablespoons black pepper corns lightly crushed
- 2 lemons, halved
- 3 to 6 rock Cornish game hens (3-8 pounds)

### Process

Combine all the brine ingredients in a pot large enough to hold the water; give the lemon halves a good squeeze as you add them. Place over high heat and bring to a simmer, stirring to dissolve the salt and sugar. Remove from the heat and let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate the brine until it's chilled.

Find a container or several containers to contain the hens without much extra space, then add the brine to each or the one container. Weight them down with a plate or other object to keep them completely submerged and place in the refrigerator for 3 hours.

Remove the hens from the brine, rinse well, and pat dry. Truss the hens with kitchen twine and place them on a grid with a pan below to catch any small drips then put them in the refrigerator for 3 to 24 hours.

## The Roasting

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 tablespoons fresh ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon poultry seasoning (see my recipe for making your own)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

### Process

Preheat the oven to 375°

Whisk all the ingredients for the roasting. Pat the hens dry if necessary then coat the entire bird with the seasoning oil mix. Place the hens on a baking sheet with plenty of room between each one. Depending upon the number you are cooking, you may need two pans.

Roast the hens in the preheated oven for about 1 hour. Check to see that the thickest portion of the thigh reaches 165° and the juices run clear.

Remove the hens from the oven and loosely cover with foil. Let stand for 10 minutes.

Remove the trussing string. Using a large knife or cleaver, cleave the birds in half lengthwise and place them on a platter or individual plates cavity down. They may be served on a bed of rice or dressing if you wish.

Depending upon the size of your hens, one-half hen will serve one person. However, if they are small (less than one pound each) or your guest has a large appetite, you may need to provide three-quarters to a full bird for them.