

## Julia Child's Chicken Melon

A 6-7 lb. roasting chicken  
1 whole egg  
1 egg white  
1 ½ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. pepper  
3 T. minced shallots  
A big pinch of nutmeg  
¾ tsp. dried tarragon  
4 T. Cognac (rum or bourbon work in a pinch)  
1 cup heavy cream  
2/3 c. boiled ham or smoked turkey cut into ¼ inch dice  
5 T. shelled pistachios  
3 T. melted butter  
A 20 inch square piece of cheesecloth  
Butcher's twine

Julia's original recipe has a lot more detail, but if you're a decent cook you'll be able to follow along with my instructions.

Step 1 is to remove the skin from the chicken in one piece. Start at either end and slide your hand(s) beneath the skin next to the flesh and separate it, loosening it from all parts being careful not to tear. If you do create a small tear don't fret, it can be mended. Cut off the wings at the joint. Start pulling the skin off as though you were removing a sweater from over the head. Okay, the chicken no longer has a head but you get the idea. It helps to remove the skin from the legs using a dish towel as it will give you a better grip. Put the skin aside for use later.

Debone the chicken, getting off as much meat as possible. Cube 1 breast into ¼ inch dice. Set aside.

Put remaining chicken meat into a food processor and puree. Add the egg, egg white, salt, pepper 2 T of the scallions, nutmeg, ½ tsp tarragon, 3 T Cognac, and heavy cream. Puree for a minute or so until smooth. Place in a bowl and add the diced chicken breast, ham (or smoked turkey), pistachio nuts 1 T of the shallots, 1 T. of the Cognac, ¼ tsp. of tarragon, and an additional ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Mix well.

Soak the cheesecloth in the melted butter, and when cool enough to handle spread out on a cutting board or clean counter. Place the chicken skin on the cheesecloth, with the largest opening on top, making sure the bottom has no openings, like the bottom of a pouch. Fill the pouch with the chicken mixture, using the leg skin to seal any tears in the skin from the inside, and fold over the top skin to close.

Bring the opposite corners of the cheesecloth together and tie in a knot, repeat with the other corners. Cut off any spare cheesecloth close to the knot. Use the butcher's twine to tie the parcel into the shape of a melon. At this point the chicken can be frozen, but thaw before roasting.

To roast - Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a pie dish and place the chicken top side down. Roast for 25 - 30 minutes until top is brown, then flip over so the bottom side is down. Baste occasionally with pan juices, total cooking time is 1 ½ to 2 hours, or until the internal temperature is 170 degrees. Let cool slightly, carefully remove cheesecloth and cut into wedges if serving warm. To serve cold let cool, remove cheesecloth and wrap in plastic until chilled. Cut in wedges before serving. An easy Garlic Aioli - use prepared mayonnaise and add roasted garlic, tarragon, a bit of Dijon mustard, and salt and pepper to taste.