Trussing and boning chicken for fancy trade

W. A. Lippincott
Iowa State College

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Trussing and Boning Chicken for Fancy Trade

By Wm. A. Lippincott

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A chicken sold on the general market as dressed has been killed, bled and picked. To be in the best condition for keeping it should be killed by piercing the brain with a sharp knife, bled through the mouth by severing the jugular vein, and dry picked. Such a bird is shown in Fig. 1. It is now ready to be transformed from common chicken into an extra
fancy product that often retails as high as 50 cents a pound. The first thing to do in bringing about this transformation is to singe off the hair-like feathers that cannot be plucked. Wood alcohol makes a good flame for this purpose; it is smoke-

Fig. 2. Inserting Knife to Remove Tendons

less and does not give the meat any taint or odor. Be careful not to sear the skin.

Next remove the tendons that run up in the drumstick and persist in getting in the teeth when it is eaten. Insert the knife close to the shank bone as shown in Fig. 2. Pass the
knife all the way up and down between the hock joint and the foot. In the incision thus made slip a hook as shown in Fig. 3. A bent nail will do. The beginner will find it easier to remove the tendons one at a time instead of all together as shown in the picture. They are easily distinguished and separated. Give a steady pull and they will come out readily as shown in Fig. 4. This leaves the drum stick much more ten-

Fig. 3. Pulling the Tendons.

Fig. 4 The Tendons Removed.
der and palatable, and as desirable as the other parts. Having removed the tendons from both legs the shanks should be cut off at the hock joint. If about half an inch of the yellow shank skin is left as in Fig. 5, the meat is not nearly so likely to slide up the bone as it generally does when roasted. This makes the bird appear much more attractive on the table. In marketing fancy poultry products an attractive appearance often makes a marked difference in the selling price.
To remove the neck make an incision in the skin at the point on the back of the neck where it joins the body as shown in Fig. 6. Cut the skin along the dotted line shown in Fig. 6 and then loosen the skin from the neck. Next cut off the neck itself, but do not cut the skin. This leaves the head attached to the body by the skin to be taken care of in a later operation.

Now slip the knife down close to the base of the neck
as shown in Fig. 7. Cut it on both sides and then across the
top. If the ligaments surrounding the neck are carefully cut
it can be easily pulled off. If an attempt is made to pry the
neck off without properly cutting the ligaments a broken knife
is likely to result. Having removed the neck, loosen the crop
and gullet from the gizzard and also pull out the wind pipe.
Cut the skin as shown in Fig. 8 and remove the head.
Now place the bird on its rump, fold back the loose skin of the neck, scrape the wish bone bare and pass the knife blade under it as shown in Fig. 9. Do the same on the other side, loosening the bone from the shoulder in each case. The more thorough the scraping the easier it is to lift out the bone and the cleaner it leaves the bone. This is important because a great many people have considerable sentiment about the wishbone and desire to keep it. It should always be wrapped up
and sent with the bird when sold.

Then pass the finger along the wish bone and free it from the meat and lift it out as is being done in Fig. 10.

A great many more slices of breast meat may be carved off without striking the bone when the wish bone is out of the way. This adds far more to the attractiveness of the bird than one would suppose before trying it. It also makes possible the drawing of the bird in such a manner that the bird is not torn and the dressing is held in much better shape.

The bird is now ready for drawing. The heart, lungs and
liver can be reached easily from the front. Insert the point of the blade by the side of the vent and cut entirely around it, making the smallest hole possible. Then insert the finger and loosen the intestines and draw them out as shown in Fig. 11. They will break off at the gizzard if they are properly loosened. If they are not carefully loosened before drawing they are likely to break several times and allow considerable fecal matter to escape into the body cavity.

The gizzard can then be pushed out the front way as is
Fig. 12. Pushing the Gizzard out the Front way

being done in Fig. 12. It avoids unsightly tearing at the back. Be sure to remove the oil sack from base of tail.

All that remains to put the bird into condition as an extra fancy roasting bird is to cut a couple of slits in the skin of the abdomen and insert the drum sticks and to fold the loose skin of the neck up over the back and lock the wings over it as shown in Fig. 13.

Fig. 13. Trussed for the Roasting pan.
If it is desired to bone the bird it is unnecessary to go through any of the operations shown in Figs. 11, 12 and 13. Take the bird as it is after the removal of the wish bone and turn back the skin over the wing as shown in Fig. 14. Slip the knife blade in and dislocate the wing from the body, being careful not to cut the skin. As in the case of the neck, the wing loosens easily when all the cords binding it are cut.

After dislocating the second wing in the same manner, stand
the bird on its rump and proceed to cut the flesh from the ribs and back as shown in Fig. 15. Instead of skinning the bird, simply cut the flesh away along the skin, being careful not to cut or break the latter. If the skin is cut it allows some of the dressing to escape and spoils the appearance of the finished bird. In case of a slip the cut or tear should be neatly sewed together with white linen thread. This can often be done so that the opening shows very little. Thread holds as well as
coarse string and looks very much better to the customer. When the hip joint is reached grasp the leg firmly in the right hand and dislocate it by twisting as is being done in Fig. 16. This does not require much strength. There is a cer-

Fig. 16. Dislocating the Drumstick.

tain knack about it that can easily be acquired by a little practice. Care should be taken not to grasp the drum stick in such a way as to bruise the flesh or rub the skin. Bruises are unsightly and make the carcass keep poorly.
Having dislocated both legs, continue to carefully cut away the flesh from the bones surrounding the body cavity until they are all uncovered. Cut a small hole around the vent. The back ribs and keel containing the entrails and giblets may now be easily slipped out. This leaves only the wing bones, drumsticks and thighs. Fig. 17 shows the bird with the body case removed. In some cases it is desirable to leave the carcass in this form for special trade.

It is then a small job to get the bones from thigh and
wing. The wing is cut off at the last joint, as there is not meat enough on the rest of it to pay for the trouble of saving it. The rest of the wing bones and the drum stick are worked out by turning the skin and flesh inside out like the finger of a glove. The finished bird with all the bones removed is shown in Fig. 18.

The boned bird should be stuffed and roasted and served just as the trussed bird shown in Fig. 13 would be. A pigeon,
prairie chicken or even a second chicken cut up and included in the dressing adds greatly to its palatability.

With the boned bird it is possible to cut slices of chicken which include light and dark meat and dressing.

Turkeys and guineas may be boned as readily as chicken. Ducks are a little more difficult, particularly if they are very fat.

The bones in cases make elegant soup stock. They are often demanded by the purchaser for this purpose.