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Broasted chicken

Der Dutchman specializes in amish-style cooking and pressure-fried poultry

By *Joyce Rosencrans*
 Post food editor

WAYNESVILLE, Ohio -- The first time I had broasted chicken from proprietary Broaster machinery was in Wyoming or South Dakota. I can't remember exactly which state because the meal was part of my Dad's Rocky-Mountain roadtrip that summer, during which his fondest wish was racking up at least 700 miles a day by blowing across Kansas or Montana.

I was only 10 and eager to escape the back seat as often as possible. The Black Hills and the Badlands had made quite an impression the day before my first taste of broasted chicken. For next day's lunch, I found myself seated at a roadside diner where the big sign outside and the paper placemats inside were boasting about broasting.

I read my placemat word-for-word and learned that broasted chicken is fried under pressure. It's not broiled or roasted at all, as one would suppose from the word combination. At the tender age of 10,

I guessed that "broasted" chicken sounded better to the company than "fried" chicken.

I do vividly recall biting into a hot, golden-brown drumstick that was juicy inside and covered with crackling-crisp skin. There was no thick breading, and the broasted chicken wasn't so salty that it rivaled movie popcorn. It was delicious chicken, but lunch was over too soon, and then it was back-seat time again.

Happily, I can enjoy broasted chicken more often these days, without driving through Jackson Hole, Wyo., or dusty Kadoka, S.D.

Der Dutchman, the same large and welcoming restaurant that attracts busloads of people and serves up an Amish-style buffet -- just 40 miles northeast of Cincinnati at Waynesville on U.S. 42 -- has a strip of kitchen space reserved for Broasters.

The broasted chicken at Der Dutchman is just as I remembered: extra juicy on the inside, especially the dark meat, with crispy-coated, golden-brown skin without excess salt.

Der Dutchman general manager Dan Yoder showed us the broasting machinery in the multi-aisled commercial kitchen. He called over his chief cook, Verna Stoltzfus, to demonstrate. Yoder hauled out a tub

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of raw chicken parts, pre-marinated by injection by the Broaster Co. He said a single layer in one of the broasting wells is 32 pieces or about 10 pounds.

Verna donned plastic gloves and started to load the chicken, which is lightly breaded at Der Dutchman, into the broaster's deep-fry baskets.

Solid metal lids, big round ones, are latched over the filled baskets and pressure-frying proceeds for just 11 to 12 minutes.

Yoder said the white-meat chicken pieces sell best, but he prefers the more flavorful dark meat. Ditto for this taster. The dark meat takes longer to cook than white breast meat, so broasting never dries out the drumsticks or thighs.

Der Dutchman is open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday, serving the buffet continuously lunch through dinner. Yoder says the restaurant's "big day" is Saturday, when it's not unusual to serve more than 2,500 pounds of broasted chicken.

This week in particular will be extra-busy at Der Dutchman, which is part of a corporate chain of Amish-country inns and restaurants in Plain City, Ohio, Holmes County, Ohio, and Waynesville, an antiques town in Warren County, about a 10-minute drive northeast of Lebanon, which offers more shops.

During the anniversary of Amish Days, about 600 fourth-graders will be hosted by Der Dutchman this week to see Amish cultural displays and to listen to Amish citizens talk about the challenge of living without electricity, phones or autos.

A table of Amish women were enjoying broasted chicken at Der Dutchman on Monday afternoon. They had been driven to Waynesville by a non-Amish driver from their homes in Holmes County, site of the largest Amish population. They will be speaking to the school kids the rest of this week, said Yoder, and "the kids are always fascinated to hear about living with no electricity."

The students will be treated to horse-and-buggy rides in Der Dutchman's huge parking lot, too.

The Amish Days displays will remain in place for restaurant customers Friday evening and Saturday afternoon, and the usual Friday and Saturday buggy rides will resume in April for regular restaurant customers, weather permitting.

In case of rain, a black-roofed Amish buggy on cut-down wheels on the inside of the restaurant houses two benches and a tabletop in between for some adventurous family to dine. Don't expect to find too-cool teenagers in there.

The roomy restaurant lobby features a large hearth and fireplace, a comfy couch and plenty of items for browsing. A gift shop next door is part of the same chain.

A bakery features such things as chocolate eclairs as big as a loaf of French bread, huge cinnamon rolls and sticky pecan rolls (both new), and pies hand-made and baked in the Der Dutchman kitchen. The menu offers such rare flavors and black raspberry pie and custard pie, even date pudding served with sliced bananas, cream and a stemmed cherry.

Of course, Der Dutchman is not the only place in this area to buy broasted chicken. Another spot is the Kwik Shoppe, 3520 J Ivor Road at the AA Highway, California, Ky. The barriers on Route 8 east are still up, in effect closing the route just short of reaching California, at least for strangers too timid to ignore the road-closed-for-480-days sign.

But broasted chicken may be a stone's throw from wherever you travel this spring and summer. It's perfect for picnics during road trips and sold in groceries, supper clubs, convenience markets and family restaurants. Just enter a ZIP code at www.broaster.com to locate all the operators of the pressure-fryers within 30 miles.

Here's some chicken recipes:

Avocado Chicken Salad

Ingredients:

1 whole rotisserie chicken, cubed (about 3 cups of meat)

1/2 cup celery, finely chopped

2 avocados, peeled and diced

2 hard-cooked eggs, finely chopped

Dressing:

3/4 cup mayonnaise

1 small shallot, minced

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1/2 teaspoon garlic salt

1/2 teaspoon hot sauce

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1 tablespoon capers, drained, chopped

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Yield: 4 servings

Instructions:

Place chicken in a large bowl and add the celery. Set aside.

Prepare the dressing by combining in a small bowl the mayo, shallot, lemon juice, garlic salt, hot sauce, parsley, capers, salt and pepper. Pour over the chicken and toss well to coat.

Divide the chicken salad among four plates. Sprinkle half of each chopped avocado on each salad. Add diced egg to garnish. Also good served with corn muffins.

Chicken Salad Verde Anna Teresa

Ingredients:

2 whole rotisserie chickens, cut into cubes (about 7 cups of meat)

10 large red lettuce leaves

Dressing:

1 cup loosely packed parsley

1/2 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves

1 garlic clove

1 tablespoon capers, drained

1 small sour pickle

1 rib of celery, coarsely cut

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar

1 teaspoon salt

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Yield: 6 servings

Instructions:

Place chicken pieces in a large bowl and set aside.

In a food processor or blender, make the dressing by combining parsley, basil, garlic, capers, pickle, celery, olive oil and vinegar. Puree until very smooth. (If dressing becomes too thick, add 1 tablespoon water.) Add salt and lemon juice and blend well.

Spoon dressing over chicken and toss to coat. Arrange lettuce leaves on a large platter and mound the salad in the middle. Garnish with tomatoes or roasted red bell pepper slices, if desired. Serve this chicken salad at room temperature, but don't allow it to sit longer than 20 minutes to take off the refrigerator chill.

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