

The Benefits of Dark Meat



Dark meat has long been enjoyed as an indulgent alternative to white meat. The richer flavour and higher moisture content of dark meat makes it the perfect choice for many recipes, including such decadent classics as fried chicken or coq au vin. You may worry that these perks come at the cost of greater calories, but fret not! The difference between white and dark meat is not as big as you might think. A 100 g portion of skinless chicken thigh has only 29 more calories than the same size portion of skinless chicken breast. And while the fat content of dark meat is higher than white meat, fats aren't the culinary villains they once were, and in moderate quantities are part of a healthy diet. In fact, dark meat has many health benefits and offers some nutrients in quantities that white meat can't match. Let's take a closer look.

First off, let's examine what makes dark meat dark. Why should it be different than the white meat portion of the chicken? The difference stems from the amount of myoglobin present in different parts of the chicken. Myoglobin is an oxygen-carrying protein that gives dark meat its trademark reddish colour. The more myoglobin present, the darker the meat and the richer the nutrients. Myoglobin provides muscles with the oxygen required for exercise and movement, and since chickens are flightless birds, they use their legs and thighs to get around, making those parts darker than the breast or wings.

So what benefits does dark meat offer? Chicken legs and thighs are an excellent source of many essential nutrients. Iron and zinc, which are important for a healthy immune system, are present in much higher quantities in dark meat than in white meat. Dark meat also has higher quantities of B vitamins, like thiamine, niacin, and B12, all of which help regulate the body's metabolism.

And those are just the health benefits! Dark meat is also a treat to cook with. Its higher fat content keeps the meat juicy and tender during cooking and adds a richness in flavour that can't be beat.

Try this amazing dark meat recipe!

RECIPE - Air Fryer Maple Dijon Thighs with Green Beans

Sweet and savoury notes lend lots of flavour to this easy, delicious dish. And dinner is made easy with the help of a trendy new kitchen gadget.

Ingredients

3 tbsp maple syrup
2 tbsp Dijon mustard
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme
1 tbsp chopped fresh rosemary
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
1 lb boneless chicken thighs
1 lb green beans
2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Steps

1. Preheat air fryer to 375°F (180°C). In large bowl, whisk together maple syrup, mustard, olive oil, soy sauce, thyme, rosemary, garlic, salt and pepper; add chicken thighs, tossing to coat well.
2. Transfer to well-greased air fryer tray; cook for 15 to 20 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and juices run clear. Remove chicken and set aside.
3. Add green beans to air fryer tray; cook for 5 to 8 minutes or until tender-crisp. Arrange chicken on serving platter; top with green beans. Sprinkle with parsley.
4. **For a regular oven:** preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Arrange chicken thighs in heatproof 13- x 9-inch (3.5 L) casserole dish. Bake for 18 minutes, turning chicken halfway through. Top chicken with green beans; cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until beans are tender-crisp, chicken is golden brown and internal temperature of chicken registers 165°F (74°C) on instant-read thermometer.

Helpful Tip

Some air fryer models may not require preheating. Check manufacturer's instructions for proper use.