

# *Capon with Oranges and Lemons*

An easy Elizabethan dish for camping

This dish is a combination of two recipes, as the capon with oranges and lemons instructions do not discuss how to cook the chicken itself. Fortunately the book does give several recipes for boiling chickens or capons, and I have used the simplest of those.

## **Original Recipes**

### **To Boil a Capon with Oranges and Lemons**

*"Take oranges or lemons peeled, and cut them the long way. If you can keep you cloves whole put them into your best broth of mutton or capon, with prunes or currants and three or four dates. When these have been well sodden put in whole pepper, great mace, a good piece of sugar, some rose water and either white or claret wine. And let all these seethe together a while. And so serve it upon sops with your capon."*

### **To Boil a Capon**

*"Put the capon into a [heavy] beef pot, and when you think it almost tender take a little pot and put therein half water and half wine, marrow, currants, dates, whole mace, verjuice, pepper and a little thyme."*

**The Good Housewife's Jewel**, Tomas Dawson.  
(Newly set forth with additions. 1596. Imprinted at London for Edward White)  
Published by Southover Press, 1996.  
Pages 12-13

# The Camping Redaction

This interpretation is simplified so that it uses but one pot and very few utensils. It also suits a degree of pre-preparation. Admittedly, the flavours are somewhat less complex, but a summer camping palate seems to prefer that.

As an added bonus, this version is so easy it allows full participation in surrounding conversations, even for a novice camp cook. All amounts are approximate, so taste the dish as you go and adjust the flavours to suit.

## Ingredients:

- chicken 1 leg per diner (portions allow for easy serving)
- chicken stock 1 L per 8 diners
- water
- white wine a good splash (oaked chardonnay works well)
- rose water a dash (optional)
- oranges 1 per 4 diners
- lemons 1 per 4 diners
- prunes 1 handful per 4 diners
- currants 1 handful per 4 diners
- dates 1 handful per 8 diners
- cloves 1 per diner
- ground mace to taste
- black pepper corns to taste
- sugar to taste (optional)
- thyme to taste

## Method:

Place the (fully defrosted) chicken in a heavy pot with the stock, white wine and enough water to cover. Bring to the boil.

While waiting, quarter (or 'eighth') the oranges and lemons long-ways and peel.

Once the chicken is partially cooked, add the spices and fruit and allow it to simmer until the chicken is done and the liquid has thickened somewhat.

**Serving:**

Place the chicken portions in a large serving bowl then ladle the liquid and sunken fruit bits over the chicken. This dish is complemented nicely by a crisp green salad with slices of orange, and sops (better known as the bread left over from lunch).

**Pre-event Preparation.**

If you know how many are going to be dining, you can easily pre-measure the necessary quantities of dried fruit, herbs and spices and bag them up before the event. The same can be done for the chicken portions.