

Tuscan Chicken Under a Brick Recipe

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In Tuscany, there's a beloved way of cooking chicken known as *Pollo al Mattone* – literally, “chicken under a brick.” Traditionally, the chicken is flattened and pressed beneath hot bricks while it cooks, creating crisp golden skin and juicy, flavorful meat. Since I don't keep bricks in my kitchen, I use a heavy cast iron pan instead, which delivers the same beautiful results with a touch of rustic Italian charm. This method transforms simple ingredients like garlic, rosemary, thyme, and lemon into a dish that feels both traditional and effortless.

Things to Know About Tuscan chicken under a brick

- **What does *Pollo al Mattone* mean?**

In Italian, it translates to “chicken under a brick.” The brick's weight helps press the chicken flat, ensuring even cooking, golden crisp skin, and juicy meat.

- **Do I need a brick?**

Traditionally, yes – the brick is wrapped in foil and heated. But a heavy cast iron skillet or Dutch oven works just as well and is easier to manage in a home kitchen.

- **Why spatchcock the chicken?**

Removing the backbone and flattening the chicken helps it cook faster and more evenly. It's the key to achieving that irresistible crisp skin without drying out the meat.

- **Flavor profile.**

This dish is all about simplicity. Olive oil, garlic, rosemary, thyme, and lemon are classic Tuscan ingredients that let the chicken shine.

- **Cooking method.**

While it can be made on the stovetop or in the oven, it's equally delicious grilled over wood or charcoal – the way it's often enjoyed in Tuscany.

- **Serving ideas.**

Pair with roasted potatoes, Tuscan white beans, or a peppery arugula salad. Keep the sides rustic and simple, just like the dish itself.

- **Love this Tuscan-style chicken? Try my [Oven-Roasted Spatchcock Chicken](#) next for another easy way to get juicy, golden chicken at home. Ch**

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Servings: 4

Cook Time: 40 minutes (plus resting)

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken (about 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ –4 lbs), backbone removed and butterflied (spatchcocked)

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary, finely chopped
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves removed
- 1 lemon (zest and juice)
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt (or to taste)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

1. Prepare the Chicken

- Place the chicken breast-side down on a cutting board. Using sharp kitchen shears, cut along both sides of the backbone and remove it. Flip the chicken breast-side up and press firmly to flatten. Pat dry with paper towels.

2. Season the Chicken

- In a small bowl, mix together olive oil, garlic, rosemary, thyme, lemon zest, lemon juice, salt, and pepper.
- Rub the mixture all over the chicken, making sure to get under the skin where possible for maximum flavor.

3. Heat the Pan

- Preheat a large cast iron skillet over medium-high heat for 5 minutes until hot. Lightly oil the pan.

4. Cook the Chicken

- Place the chicken skin-side down in the hot skillet.
- Carefully place another heavy cast iron skillet (or a Dutch oven) on top of the chicken to press it flat.
- Cook for about **12–15 minutes** without moving, until the skin is deeply golden and crispy.

5. Finish Cooking

- Remove the top skillet and carefully flip the chicken over.
- Return the weight on top and cook another **20–25 minutes**, or until the thickest part of the thigh registers 165°F (74°C) on a meat thermometer.

6. Rest and Serve

- Transfer chicken to a cutting board and let rest for 10 minutes before carving.
- Serve with lemon wedges, roasted potatoes, or a crisp green salad.