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# Ways to cook

# RABBIT



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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Ways to cook

## ... RABBIT

Domestic rabbit is a meat that is becoming increasingly available in retail markets. Fresh or frozen, it is sold all year round.

Rabbit meat can be used in most of the ways in which chicken is used. It is fine-grained and mild-flavored, and practically all of it is white meat. Like other lean meats, poultry, and lean fish, rabbit meat is a good source of high-quality protein.

### Buying rabbit

Rabbits are sold live or ready-to-cook. Like poultry, ready-to-cook rabbits may be government inspected for wholesomeness.

Most commercially produced rabbits are marketed when they are 8 to 12 weeks old. These young rabbits are known as "fryers" and weigh not less than 1½ pounds and rarely over 3½ pounds, ready-to-cook. Rabbits known as "roasters" usually weigh over 4 pounds, ready-to-cook, and are ordinarily 8 months or older.

A large volume of the ready-to-cook rabbit is marketed in frozen form—usually pieces of one rabbit are packaged and frozen together. The giblets—heart, kidneys, and liver—are often included.

### Thawing frozen rabbit

A 2½-pound frozen rabbit packaged in pieces needs about 3 hours to thaw under cold running water, about 6 hours at room temperature (75° F.), or 8 to 10 hours, or overnight, in the refrigerator.

Large rabbits—over 3 pounds—should not be thawed at room temperature unless they are to be cooked immediately.

### Pointers on cooking

Small young rabbits (fryers, 1½ to 2 pounds ready-to-cook) may be fried satisfactorily in much the same way that chicken is fried. Or they may be stewed and the meat used in various recipes.

Larger fryers and roasters need long, slow cooking in a covered pan to make them tender. Best methods of cooking them are stewing—that is, simmering in a small amount of water—and braising—first browning in a little fat and then cooking slowly, with or without added liquid, on top of the range or in the oven. Liquid used in braising may be a sauce that adds flavor to the dish.

Recipes on the following pages give directions for frying and stewing rabbit, for braising it, plain and with different seasonings and sauces, and also for using the meat from cooked rabbit.

For most recipes, the rabbit is cut in serving pieces before it is cooked. Dealers usually cut large rabbits into 9 or 11 pieces—the 2 forelegs, 4 pieces from the 2 hind legs, and 3 or 5 sections of back.

The kidneys are usually attached inside the lower back and are cooked and served with this piece. The liver and heart may be cooked with the rest of the rabbit in any recipe you are using, or stewed separately and used in gravy.

### Yield of stewed rabbit meat

From a small rabbit 1½ to 3½ pounds, ready-to-cook, you may expect 2 to 4½ cups of cooked meat. From larger rabbits you may count on about 1½ cups of cooked meat per pound of ready-to-cook weight.

## Fried rabbit

Small young rabbit (1 ½ to 2 pounds ready-to-cook) cut in serving pieces      Flour, salt, pepper  
Cooking fat or oil

Roll rabbit in mixture of flour, salt, and pepper. Heat fat or oil about ¼-inch deep in a heavy fry pan large enough to hold the pieces without crowding.

Use moderate heat for frying. Put in the large meaty pieces of rabbit first and cook about 10 minutes before adding the smaller pieces and giblets. Turn the pieces often for even cooking, and cook until well browned and tender (30 to 35 minutes total time).

Three to four servings.

## Braised rabbit with gravy

Young rabbit (2 to 2½ pounds ready-to-cook) cut in serving pieces      ¼ cup hot water  
2 tablespoons flour  
2 cups milk  
Flour, salt, pepper  
3 tablespoons cooking fat or oil

Roll rabbit in mixture of flour, salt, and pepper. Heat fat or oil in a heavy fry pan and brown the rabbit slowly, turning to brown on all sides. Add water and cover pan tightly.

Reduce heat and cook slowly until meat is tender (about 1 hour), adding a little more water if needed. Uncover and cook 5 minutes longer to recrisp surface. Remove rabbit from the pan and keep it hot.

Remove fat from pan and pour back 2 tablespoonfuls. Stir in the 2 tablespoons flour and cook until mixture bubbles. Add milk slowly, stirring constantly. Cook until thick, stirring occasionally, then cook a little longer. Add salt and pepper if needed.

Four servings.

To braise a large rabbit (about 4 pounds), use ⅓ cup fat or oil for browning and ⅓ cup water. Cook about 1½ hours, or until tender. Make gravy with 3 tablespoons flour, 3 tablespoons fat, and 3 cups milk.

Eight servings.

## Rabbit fricassee with vegetables

Rabbit (about 3 pounds ready-to-cook) cut in serving pieces      4 cups raw vegetables—peas and coarsely chopped carrots, onions, and celery  
Flour, salt, pepper      1 teaspoon salt  
⅓ cup cooking fat or oil      ¼ cup sifted flour  
2 cups hot water

Roll rabbit in mixture of flour, salt, and pepper.

Heat fat or oil and brown the rabbit slowly, turning often. Add water and cover pan.

Cook slowly on top of range about 1 hour, or until rabbit is almost tender. Add water if needed during cooking. Add vegetables and salt and cook about 20 minutes longer, or until vegetables are done.

Or, after browning, bake the rabbit at 325° F. (slow oven) about 1½ hours, add vegetables, and bake about 30 minutes longer.

Mix the ¼ cup flour with a little cold water, add a few tablespoons of hot liquid from the pan, and stir the mixture into the liquid in pan. Cook 15 minutes longer, or until sauce is smooth and thick.

Eight servings.

To fricassee a smaller rabbit (about 2 pounds ready-to-cook), use ¼ cup fat or oil for browning, and half the quantity of the other ingredients in the recipe above. Cooking time on top of range before adding vegetables is about 30 minutes; in oven, about 45 minutes.

Four servings.

## Creole rabbit

Rabbit (about 3 pounds ready-to-cook) cut in serving pieces  
1/4 cup milk  
Flour, salt, pepper

3 tablespoons cooking fat or oil  
Creole sauce (see recipe below)

Dip rabbit in milk and roll it in mixture of flour, salt, and pepper.

Heat fat or oil and brown rabbit lightly on all sides. Pour sauce over rabbit; cover pan.

Bake at 325° F. (slow oven) 1 1/2 hours, or until meat is tender. Uncover and bake 30 minutes longer to brown top.

Six servings.

## Creole sauce

2 medium onions, sliced  
1 clove garlic, finely chopped  
1 tablespoon chopped parsley  
3 tablespoons butter, margarine, or oil

3 1/2 cups tomato juice (No. 2 1/2 can)  
1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
Salt and pepper to taste

Cook onions, garlic, and parsley in the fat or oil until onion is golden brown. Add other ingredients except salt and pepper and cook gently for 15 minutes. Season to taste.

## Rabbit in barbecue sauce

Rabbit (about 3 pounds ready-to-cook) cut in serving pieces  
Flour, salt, pepper

3 tablespoons cooking fat or oil  
Barbecue sauce (see recipe, p. 7)

Roll rabbit in mixture of flour, salt, and pepper. Heat the fat and brown rabbit on all sides over moderate heat (about 20 minutes). Pour sauce over rabbit; cover pan.

Bake at 325° F. (slow oven) about 45 minutes, or until meat is tender. Uncover pan and place under broiler. Broil 15 minutes, or until meat is brown. Six servings.

## Barbecue sauce

2 tablespoons brown sugar  
1 tablespoon paprika  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon dry mustard  
1/4 teaspoon chili powder  
Few grains cayenne pepper

2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
1 cup tomato juice  
1/4 cup chili sauce or catsup  
1/4 cup vinegar  
1/2 cup chopped onion

Combine ingredients and cook over low heat 15 minutes.

## Rabbit with dumplings

Stewed rabbit (about 4 pounds ready-to-cook) (see recipe, p. 9)  
4 cups rabbit broth  
1/3 cup fat (skimmed from broth, plus butter or margarine if needed)

1/3 cup sifted flour  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Dumpling mixture (see recipe below)

If rabbit and broth are cold, heat them together until meat is hot.

Blend fat and flour and stir in several tablespoons of the hot broth. Pour the mixture gradually into the rest of the broth, stirring constantly. Cook until thickened. Season with salt and pepper.

Drop dumpling mixture by spoonfuls on the pieces of rabbit in the boiling gravy. Space so that dumplings will not run together in cooking.

Cover pan tightly and cook 15 minutes without lifting the cover.

Eight servings.

## Dumpling mixture

3/4 cup sifted flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt

1 egg, beaten  
1/3 cup milk

Sift flour, baking powder, and salt together. Combine egg and milk and add to dry ingredients, mixing just enough to moisten.

## Hassenzpfeffer

1/2 cup vinegar	Small rabbit (about 2 1/2
2 cups water	pounds ready-to-cook)
2 teaspoons salt	cut in serving pieces
1/4 teaspoon pepper	Flour
1/2 teaspoon whole cloves	3 tablespoons fat
2 teaspoons sugar	2 teaspoons Worcestershire
4 bay leaves	sauce
1 medium onion, sliced	3 tablespoons flour

Make pickling mixture by combining the vinegar, water, salt, pepper, cloves, sugar, bay leaves, and onion in a glass or enameled-ware bowl.

Add pieces of rabbit and sliced giblets and cover the bowl. Let stand in refrigerator 8 to 12 hours, turning the pieces occasionally so that they will absorb the flavor evenly.

Remove the rabbit pieces. Save liquid and onions but discard bay leaves and cloves.

Roll the rabbit in flour. Heat fat or oil in a heavy pan and brown the rabbit in it, turning to brown all sides.

Pour the pickling mixture over the rabbit. Cover pan and cook over low heat about 1 hour, or until rabbit is tender.

Take rabbit from pan and keep it hot. Add Worcestershire sauce to the liquid. Mix the 3 tablespoons flour with a little cold water, add a few tablespoons of hot liquid to it, and pour the mixture back into the pan. Stir and cook until the sauce is thick and smooth, then cook a little longer.

Pour sauce over rabbit.

Four servings.

To use a large rabbit (about 4 to 5 pounds ready-to-cook), double the amounts of ingredients for the pickling mixture. It is important to have enough to flavor all of the meat. Use 1/3 cup fat to brown the rabbit and 1/3 cup flour to thicken the sauce. It may be necessary to skim off part of the fat before thickening the sauce.

Eight to ten servings.

## Sweet-sour rabbit

Small rabbit (about 2 1/2	1/2 teaspoon salt
pounds ready-to-cook)	1 cup pineapple pieces
cut in serving pieces	1 medium green pepper, cut
Flour, salt, pepper	in thin half slices
2 tablespoons cooking fat or	1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
oil	1/4 cup sugar
1 cup pineapple juice	1/2 cup water
1/4 cup vinegar	

Roll rabbit in mixture of flour, salt, and pepper.

Heat fat or oil in a heavy pan, and brown the rabbit over moderate heat, turning to brown on all sides.

Add pineapple juice, vinegar, and salt. Cover pan; cook over low heat 40 minutes, or until meat is tender. Add pineapple and green pepper; cook a few minutes longer.

Mix cornstarch and sugar and stir in the water. Stir this mixture gradually into liquid in the pan and cook slowly about 5 minutes.

Six servings.

## Stewed rabbit

Rabbit (about 4 pounds	1 1/2 teaspoons salt
ready-to-cook) cut in serv-	Hot water
ing pieces	

Put rabbit into a pan large enough to hold the pieces without crowding. Add salt and enough water to half cover the rabbit.

Cover pan and cook over low heat about 1 1/2 hours, or until meat is very tender. Add more water during cooking if needed.

Serve hot with gravy made by thickening the broth and seasoning as desired, or use meat and broth in other recipes.

If not used at once, meat and broth should be cooled quickly by setting the pan in cold water, and stored in the refrigerator. Meat stored in the broth may be somewhat juicier than meat stored separately.

Eight servings.

## Rabbit pie

1/4 cup butter or margarine	3 cups coarsely cut cooked rabbit meat
1/4 cup chopped onion	Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup chopped green pepper	Pastry (see recipe below)
1/4 cup sifted flour	
2 cups rabbit broth (or water with 4 chicken bouillon cubes)	

Heat butter or margarine in a large fry pan. Add onion and green pepper and cook about 5 minutes over low heat.

Blend in the flour and cook until the mixture bubbles. Pour in the broth gradually, stirring constantly. Cook until thick and smooth, stirring frequently. Add salt and pepper.

Add meat to the sauce and heat thoroughly. Pour mixture into a shallow baking dish or pan.

Roll out the pastry and cut slits for steam to escape. Fit to top of dish or pan, crimping the edges of the crust.

Bake the pie at 425° F. (hot oven) 15 to 20 minutes, or until crust browns and sauce bubbles.

Four to six servings.

### Pastry

1 cup sifted flour	1/3 cup shortening
1/2 teaspoon salt	About 2 tablespoons cold water

Sift flour and salt together and cut in the shortening. Mix in just enough water to hold ingredients together.

For variety. Use 1 cup of cooked diced vegetables (potatoes, carrots, celery) with 2 cups of rabbit meat. Make the topping of tiny baking powder biscuits.

## Browned rabbit

Stewed rabbit (about 4 pounds ready-to-cook) (see recipe, p. 9)	1/3 cup cooking fat or oil
	3 tablespoons flour
	3 cups rabbit broth (or broth plus milk)
Flour, salt, pepper	

Remove rabbit from the broth and save broth for gravy. Drain the rabbit and roll it in mixture of flour, salt, and pepper.

Heat the fat and brown the rabbit, turning to brown all sides and make the outside crisp. Browning will take 20 to 30 minutes. Remove rabbit from pan and keep it hot.

Remove fat from pan and pour back 3 tablespoons. Stir in the 3 tablespoons flour and cook until the mixture bubbles. Add broth gradually and cook over low heat until thick and smooth, stirring occasionally. Cook a little longer and season to taste.

Eight servings.

## Baked rabbit hash

2 cups finely chopped cooked rabbit meat	1 1/2 teaspoons salt
	Pepper
2 cups finely chopped raw potatoes	1/2 cup rabbit broth (or water with 1 chicken bouillon cube)
2 tablespoons chopped green pepper	1/4 cup fine dry crumbs
3/4 cup finely chopped onion	mixed with butter or margarine

Mix all ingredients except the crumbs. Pile lightly into a greased baking dish or pan. Cover and bake at 350° F. (moderate oven) about 40 minutes.

Remove cover and sprinkle crumbs over the hash. Bake uncovered 20 minutes longer to brown.

Four servings, 1 cup each.

## Rabbit chop suey

2 cups coarsely cut cooked rabbit meat	1½ cups rabbit broth (or water with 3 chicken bouillon cubes)
¼ cup sliced mushrooms	2 cups canned bean sprouts, with liquid
2 tablespoons butter or margarine	3 tablespoons cornstarch
1 cup thinly sliced celery	3 tablespoons soy sauce
1 small carrot, cut in thin strips	Salt and pepper to taste
1 medium onion, thinly sliced	1½ cups hot cooked rice (½ cup raw)

Cook rabbit meat and mushrooms in the fat over low heat a few minutes, until lightly browned. Add celery, carrot, onion, and broth.

Cover the pan and boil gently 10 to 15 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. Add the bean sprouts and liquid, and heat to boiling.

Mix the cornstarch and soy sauce; add gradually to the boiling mixture, stirring constantly. Cook 2 minutes, or until slightly thickened; add salt and pepper. Serve over rice.

Six servings, about 1 cup each.

## Creamed rabbit

3½ tablespoons butter or margarine	2½ cups coarsely cut cooked rabbit meat
3½ tablespoons flour	2 teaspoons lemon juice
2½ cups milk (or milk plus rabbit broth)	1 teaspoon grated onion
Salt and pepper	1 hard-cooked egg, finely chopped

Melt butter or margarine and blend in the flour. Add milk gradually and cook over very low heat, stirring frequently, until smooth and thick. Add salt and pepper.

Add rabbit meat and heat thoroughly, stirring occasionally.

Stir in lemon juice and onion. Sprinkle egg over the top.

Four servings, ¾ cup each.

## Rabbit a la king

⅓ cup chopped celery	¼ cup butter or margarine
3 tablespoons finely chopped onion	¼ cup sifted flour
3 tablespoons finely chopped green pepper	2½ cups milk (part rabbit broth may be used)
3 tablespoons sliced mushrooms	Salt and pepper to taste
⅓ cup water	2 cups coarsely cut cooked rabbit meat

Cook vegetables and mushrooms gently in the water in a covered pan until just tender (about 20 minutes). Drain, and save the liquid.

Melt butter or margarine; blend in the flour. Add cooking liquid to milk and pour gradually into fat-flour mixture, stirring constantly. Cook over low heat, stirring frequently, until thick and smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

Add vegetables, mushrooms, and rabbit meat to the sauce and heat thoroughly.

Four servings, ¾ cup each.

## Curried rabbit

2 cups rabbit broth	2 cups coarsely cut cooked rabbit meat
¼ cup finely chopped onion	Salt and pepper to taste
1 clove garlic, cut in half	1½ cups hot cooked rice (½ cup raw)
1 teaspoon curry powder	
¼ cup milk	
⅓ cup sifted flour	

Boil broth, onion, garlic, and curry powder in a covered pan for 20 minutes. Remove garlic.

Stir the milk into the flour. Add a few tablespoons of the hot broth, and stir mixture into the rest of the broth. Cook over low heat until thick and smooth; stir frequently.

Add the rabbit meat and salt and pepper. Heat thoroughly and serve over rice.

Four servings, 1 cup each.

## Rabbit-ham croquettes

2 tablespoons butter or margarine	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup ground cooked ham
2½ tablespoons flour	1 teaspoon chopped parsley
$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon dry mustard	1 teaspoon chopped green pepper
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk	Beaten egg
1 teaspoon onion juice or grated onion	Fine dry crumbs
1½ cups chopped cooked rabbit meat	Fat or oil for deep frying

Melt butter or margarine and stir in the flour and mustard. Cook until mixture bubbles.

Add the milk gradually, stirring constantly. Add onion and cook over low heat until thick and smooth, stirring occasionally.

Blend the meat, parsley, and green pepper into the sauce. Cool. If the mixture is very soft, chill it until it is firm enough to handle easily.

Shape into eight croquettes. Dip them in the egg and roll them in the crumbs.

Fry in deep fat at 350° F. about 4 minutes, or until golden brown.

Four servings.

## Rabbit sandwich spread

1 cup finely chopped cooked rabbit meat	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped celery
2 tablespoons finely chopped onion	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped sweet pickle or pickle relish
2 tablespoons finely chopped green pepper	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup mayonnaise or other thick salad dressing
	Salt to taste

Mix all ingredients well. Keep cold and use within a week.

Makes 1½ cups, enough for 6 sandwiches,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup each.

## Rabbit salad

2 cups coarsely cut cooked rabbit meat	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped sweet pickle	1 tablespoon liquid from sweet pickles
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped celery	$\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon chopped onion	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayonnaise or other thick salad dressing
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup diced cooked potatoes	

Mix first six ingredients lightly but thoroughly. Blend pickle liquid and lemon juice into dressing and mix with the other ingredients. Chill for an hour to blend flavors.

Four servings,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup each.

## Rabbit salad loaf

1 envelope unflavored gelatin (1 tablespoon)	1½ tablespoons vinegar or lemon juice
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold water	1 hard-cooked egg, sliced
1½ cups hot rabbit broth (or water with 4 chicken bouillon cubes)	6 stuffed olives, sliced
Salt to taste	1½ cups diced cooked rabbit
1 teaspoon grated onion or onion juice	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup cooked peas
	3 tablespoons finely chopped celery

Soften the gelatin in the cold water a few minutes and dissolve in the hot broth. Add salt, onion, and lemon juice.

Pour a layer of the gelatin mixture  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch deep in the bottom of an oiled 3- or 4-cup loaf pan or mold, and cool until firm. Let the rest of the gelatin mixture thicken but not set.

Press a design of the sliced egg and olives lightly into the firm gelatin in the pan.

Add the rabbit, peas, and celery to the thickened gelatin-broth mixture, and pour it carefully over the sliced egg and olives. Chill until firm. Unmold and slice for serving.

Four servings, about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup each.



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