



PAN-ROASTED CHICKEN THIGHS

with Lemon-Thyme Chardonnay Pan Sauce

PAIRED WITH KEENAN 2023 SINGLE VINEYARD CHARDONNAY



SERVES
4

PREP
10 min

BRINE
2 hrs

COOK
35 min

DIFFICULTY
Easy

FROM THE KITCHEN

This vintage of Keenan Chardonnay arrived in my wine club shipment, and the second I opened the box, I knew exactly what I was making. The pairing was spot on.

Keenan Chardonnay is always a treat, but this vintage is something else. Gorgeous acidity, deftly balanced fruit and texture, and just enough oak to draw out fruit and nut notes without burying them. Skipping malolactic conversion keeps the acidity bright — exactly what makes this dish sing.

Simple to source, simple to prep, and simple to cook. The whole thing comes together in under 45 minutes, with no special equipment — a good stainless pan and a Microplane will do it.

THE PAIRING

Keenan 2023 Chardonnay

Single Vineyard • Napa Valley • Spring Mountain District

Bright acidity holds the line against butter and cream. No malolactic conversion means the wine stays vivid and lifted — a deliberate counter to the buttery, oak-heavy California Chardonnay convention. Just enough oak to draw out fruit and nut notes, never enough to flatten them.



Keenan 2023 Single Vineyard Chardonnay • Estate bottled, Saint Helena, California • 13.1% alc/vol



INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (about 8)
- Kosher salt, ample, for dry brining
- 1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup Keenan Chardonnay (for deglazing)
- ½ medium shallot, sliced (not minced)
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed (15–20 g)
- 3 cloves garlic, microplaned
- 4–6 sprigs fresh thyme
- ⅓ cup fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- Zest of 1 whole lemon
- 6 Tbsp salted butter, divided (3 + 3)
- ¼ cup organic heavy cream
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 tsp cornstarch, dissolved in 2 Tbsp filtered water (slurry)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Fresh parsley, for garnish (optional)

NUTRITION

PER SERVING (2 THIGHS)

~705
CALORIES

52 g
PROTEIN · 30%

52 g
FAT · 66%

4 g
CARBS · 2%

EQUIPMENT

- Large stainless steel sauté or fry pan (12-inch)
- Wire rack set over a sheet tray (for dry brining)
- Microplane / fine zester
- Fine-mesh sieve
- Tongs
- Sharp paring knife

METHOD

1. Two hours before cooking, set the thighs on a wire rack so air can circulate underneath. Coat liberally with kosher salt. The dry brine pulls moisture, then re-absorbs it as a salt solution — more flavor, more tender meat, and dramatically crispier skin. I leave it on my counter top. You may chose the refrigerator. I never cook “cold protein.” Always room temperature.

2. Heat the olive oil in a large stainless pan over medium-high. Salt the skin side of the thighs and lay them down skin-side first. Cook 8–10 minutes. Don't fuss with them. You're looking for deep golden-brown, not mahogany. When the skin releases from the pan on its own, it's ready to flip. Flip and cook another 5–6 minutes.
3. Pull the thighs and rest them on the wire rack while you build the sauce.
4. Pour the wine into the pan to deglaze, scraping up the fond. Reduce by about half, until the wine takes on a golden hue.
5. Add 3 Tbsp of butter, the smashed garlic, thyme sprigs, and sliced shallot. Cook 5 minutes until the shallot wilts and the garlic turns golden, swirling to release the flavors.
6. Add the lemon juice. The moment you smell it bloom, pour in the chicken broth. Simmer 5 minutes.
7. Strain the liquid through a fine sieve to remove the thyme, garlic, and shallot. Return the strained liquid to the pan.
8. Add the remaining 3 Tbsp of butter, the heavy cream, microplaned garlic, and lemon zest. Stir until fully incorporated, then whisk in the cornstarch slurry. The sauce will thicken in under a minute. Return the thighs to the pan, keeping the skin above the liquid line so it stays crisp. Cook 5–7 minutes.
9. Plate. Spoon sauce underneath the thighs — not over them — to keep the skin crackling. Garnish with parsley if you like.



Step 2 — Skin golden, crisp, and released.



Step 5 — Butter, shallot, garlic, thyme.

NOTES FROM KING STREET KITCHEN

Heat management is the entire game on the sear. If your skin is heading past golden into burnt, your pan is too hot — and the fond will scorch when you deglaze. Pull the heat sooner than feels natural. Stainless gives you the visual cue that nonstick won't.

The conventional move with Chardonnay is to lean into oak and butter on the plate to match oak and butter in the glass. The Keenan 2023 doesn't go that way, and neither does this dish. Bright acidity in the wine wants a fresh acidic counterpoint — that's the lemon's job. Pair against the grain of the wine, not with it.

If you aren't a member of the Keenan Wine Club, what are you waiting for?
