

# “Spatchcocking”

What I called *butterflying* in [this recipe](#) I posted in July is apparently really called *spatchcocking*. It’s basically cutting a whole bird down its back, removing the backbone (which I reserve for stock) and flattening it to a relatively even thickness for even, fast cooking. Whether you use a grill, or your oven, you can cook a 3-pound chicken in 45 minutes or less. I confirmed my misnomer when I was thumbing through [Martha Stewart’s new cookbook](#), although she takes it a step further and grills the bird with a foil covered brick on it.

I can’t abide by that method. I think a quarter-inch more or less contact to the grill surface isn’t going to make such a huge difference, and I’d be worried that pressing the bird down, like pressing down on a hamburger patty, would cause essential juices to dribble out onto the fire.

Jacques Pepin demonstrated the method on his new series, [More Fast Food My Way](#), on PBS. He adds a few refinements that will cut off even more cooking time.

(Before you proceed, either get your grill going, or preheat your oven to 425°.)

Same as before, using shears, cut down either side of the backbone of the bird, then open it up like a book, helping it flatten by snapping the cartilage near where the wishbone is, up by the neck with a knife. Now, using your knife, nick the bird in all the places where you’ve ended up with raw chicken when you’ve roasted before – right at the knee of the drumstick and the thigh, up in the “arm pit” between the wing and the breast, as well as the crotch, where the thigh meets the torso. Cut a small gash, less than an inch long, but all the way to the bone. This will supposedly allow heat to get into the spots that take the longest to cook. (He also chops off the tips of the drumsticks, which causes the meat to

contract up, exposing the thin, white leg bone when it cooks.)

He used a very assertive, mustard-based recipe for coating the bird.

*2 tablespoons **dijon mustard***  
*1 tablespoon **soy sauce***  
*1 tablespoon **herbes de Provence***  
*5 cloves of **garlic**, minced*  
 *$\frac{1}{2}$  cup **olive oil***  
***salt & pepper***

Mix all of these together in a bowl, and slather this sauce all over the bird, on both sides.

He prepared his in the oven, and so his method has you first put the chicken, skin-side down, in a very hot oven-proof skillet, and cook it for 5 minutes, then turning it, and putting it in the oven to cook for 30-40 minutes.