



## Stuffed Game Hen With Figs and Swiss Chard Leaves

This recipe shows off the great combination of meat and fruit often used with birds or game. Cornish game hens can be regularly found in the freezer section of your local supermarket and are often tasty and plump. In this recipe, the game hens are stuffed with whole figs wrapped in prosciutto, roasted and served on Swiss chard and couscous. Figs are seasonal but can always be purchased either fresh or dried at International Delights Café. The hens in this recipe can be prepared 2 to 3 hours in advance and the Swiss chard and couscous can be cooked 15 to 20 minutes before serving.



### Serves 4 | *Ingredients*

12 small mission figs (ripe in season or dried\*)  
2 slices thin prosciutto, cut into 8 equal pieces  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Ground cardamom  
2 Cornish game hens  
Juice of 1 lemon and zest of 1 lemon cut  
julienne-style (matchstick size)  
1 pound Swiss chard (red), leaves only  
4 cups chicken stock  
1 cup cooking sherry  
1 cup instant couscous  
¼ cup olive oil  
½ cup onions, peeled and sliced  
4 cloves of garlic – peeled and crushed  
2 tablespoons sliced almonds, lightly toasted

\* If you are unable to purchase fresh figs, dried figs are acceptable. Just poach the dried figs slightly in port or sherry wine and let cool to room temperature. They will soften nicely.



### *Preparation of Game Hens and Sauce*

Wrap 8 figs with the pieces of prosciutto. Season the inside cavity of each game hen with salt, pepper, and a pinch of cardamom. Stuff each game hen with 2 wrapped figs and two cloves of crushed garlic. Lightly coat the exterior of each hen with extra virgin olive oil. Season the exterior of each game hen with salt, pepper, thyme and a pinch of cardamom.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. On top of the stove, heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a roasting pan over high heat. When hot, place the game hens breast side down in the pan and brown the skin. Turn and brown the other side. Add a cup of chicken stock and the cup of cooking sherry to the roasting pan and place the hens in the oven for 35 to 40 minutes. Add the 4 remaining figs during the last 3 to 4 minutes of roasting.

When the game hens are cooked, remove them from the roasting pan and let stand covered at room temperature. To check the doneness of the meat, you can use an oven thermometer or place a slit at the thighbone to make sure the juices run clear. Place the roasting pan on the stovetop burner and bring the pan juices to a simmer. Thicken the pan juices with a cornstarch slurry or use a little *Wondra* flour. Strain the slightly thickened pan juices and set aside for service. (see below)

### *Preparation of Swiss Chard and Couscous*

Bring 3 cups water to a boil in a small pot over high heat. Add the lemon zest and boil for 10 minutes. Strain out the zest and finely chop half of the zest. Set aside.

Bring 3 quarts water with 2 tablespoons salt to a boil in a pot over high heat. Blanch the Swiss chard for 4 to 5 minutes, until the leaves are tender. Drain and cool under cold running water. Drain excess water and set aside.

Bring the chicken stock to a boil in a pot over high heat. Remove from heat and add the couscous, chopped lemon zest, a pinch of cardamom, salt and pepper. Mix well, cover, and let sit for 5 minutes.

Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a pan over high heat. Add the onions and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the blanched Swiss chard, salt, pepper and a pinch of cardamom and toss well for 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

### *Presentation For Service*

Place a bed of couscous in the center of each plate, hollowing the center to accommodate the game hens. Cut the game hens in half and place a half in the center of the couscous. Surround the other edge of each plate with sautéed Swiss chard. Drizzle a few tablespoons of the thickened pan juices over each half hen. Garnish the plate with toasted almonds and two figs wrapped in prosciutto.

*Bon Appetit!*



*Chef Bob Skolnick is a 1966 Graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and has worked as the Executive Chef for Marriott Corporation. He has also worked as a culinary arts instructor.*

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*Flavorful*



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