

Safety & regulatory note: home meat processing involves food safety and hygiene considerations, and requirements vary by state and by whether meat is for personal use or sale. Check with your state's food safety authority before proceeding. See our [Terms of Use](#) for more.

HOLLY'S HOMESTEAD – MEAT PROCESSING & BUTCHERY

Processing a Chicken

From bird to table-ready, cleanly and efficiently

DIFFICULTY Moderate
TYPE One-off task per bird
TIME 20–30 min per bird once practised



DIFFICULTY
Moderate



TIME
20–30 min



COST
Low



BEST SEASON
Any time



FREQUENCY
As birds reach processing age

01 Pluck or skin, then joint

Chickens can be plucked (skin on, better for roasting) or skinned (faster, less mess) — the choice comes down to how you plan to cook the bird.

02 What you'll need

- A sharp knife and sturdy shears/scissors
- A scalding pot if plucking (not needed if skinning)
- A clean work surface and running water
- Ice or a cooler for rapid chilling afterward

04 Troubleshooting

- **Feathers not releasing easily** — scald water too cool or too brief; adjust temperature and timing slightly (too hot can start cooking the skin).
- **Punctured intestine during evisceration** — rinse thoroughly and proceed carefully; this is a food safety consideration, not just a mess.
- **Bird not chilling fast enough** — use an ice water bath rather than just refrigerating whole; this is important for food safety.
- **Torn skin while plucking** — pluck in the direction feathers grow where possible, and don't rush the process.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

[Home Slaughter — Process & Regulations](#)

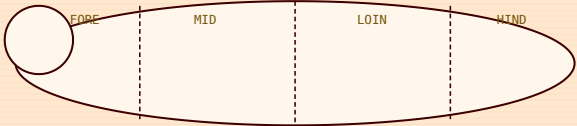
COMMON MISTAKES

Skipping the rapid ice-water chill, leaving the carcass too warm for too long

Scalding water too hot, partially cooking the skin and making plucking harder

PRO TIP

Chilling in an ice slurry rather than just cold water dramatically speeds up bringing the carcass to a safe temperature.



broken down into primal sections first

03 Method

1. Process using a humane method appropriate to the bird, then bleed thoroughly.
2. If plucking: scald briefly in hot water (around 60°C) to loosen feathers, then pluck promptly while warm.
3. If skinning: this can be done directly without scalding, and is faster if the skin isn't needed.
4. Eviscerate carefully, removing organs without puncturing the intestines.
5. Rinse thoroughly, then chill rapidly in ice water before refrigerating or freezing.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Any time the bird has reached your target processing age.
DURATION	20–30 minutes per bird once you're practised; longer for the first few attempts.
MAINTENANCE	Not applicable per event.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	A clean carcass, properly chilled, ready for immediate use, freezing, or short-term refrigeration.