

# Diana Henry's chicken with leeks, apples and cider



Diana Henry's simple chicken recipe is the ultimate comfort food made with cider, thyme and double cream.

Hands-on time 20 min, simmering time about 1 hour

Serves 4

## Ingredients

8 skin-on, bone-in British free-range chicken thighs, or a mixture of joints

40g unsalted butter

700g leeks

2 eating apples

1 tbsp plain flour

500ml dry cider

6 fresh thyme sprigs, plus leaves from 2 more sprigs to garnish

150ml double cream

1 tsp caster sugar

## Method

**1** Season the chicken pieces with salt and pepper and heat 25g of the butter in a large sauté pan with a lid or a wide casserole. Brown the chicken on both sides, about 3-5 minutes each, then transfer to a plate while you cook the leeks. Make sure not to burn the butter (take off the heat if necessary).

**2** Remove the tough outer leaves from the leeks. Trim the bases and cut off the tough, very dark leaves at the top. Wash the leeks really well, making sure you get rid of any soil, then cut into 3cm lengths. Add the leeks to the butter in the chicken pan and sauté without browning for about 10

minutes. They should soften but not become sloppy.

**3** Meanwhile, peel one of the apples, halve and cut into wedges. Melt the remaining butter in a small frying pan, then add the apple pieces and gently brown the edges on each side.

**4** Add the flour to the leeks, turning the leeks over in the juices, and continue to cook for a couple of minutes. Take the pan off the heat and slowly add the cider, stirring all the time. Return to the heat, bring to the boil, then add the chicken, thyme sprigs and sautéed apple (don't wash the apple pan). Immediately reduce the heat to a simmer, put the lid on and leave to cook over a low heat for about 35 minutes. The chicken should be cooked through with no trace of pink.

**5** Lift the chicken pieces out of the casserole and simmer the cooking juices until reduced by about one third. Add the cream, bring to the boil and cook for a couple of minutes, then season to taste.

**6** Peel and cut the other apple into wedges and put in the frying pan in which you cooked the first apple. Sauté gently, adding the caster sugar to help the apples caramelise, until tender. Return the chicken to the sauce and heat gently. At the last minute, add the newly sautéed apples, sprinkle with the extra thyme leaves and serve.