

Herb Crusted Chicken with Braised Celery

When I was in culinary school, I was in the last class of the day in a shared kitchen. By the time we got to class, all the good veggies were almost always gone, so we were often left with a lot of carrots, onions, and celery to make side dishes with. It was a challenge, but I learned that sometimes, you can turn a boring vegetable into something amazing, and that's what I'm going to share with you today.

I know, I know. Celery is not a side dish. It's something you chop and add to tuna salad, or to flavor a soup. But a side dish? Yes. I was skeptical at first too. I don't even love celery, but I promise, it makes an amazing side dish, and it's simple too. This is the perfect way to use up a bunch of celery that you don't know what to do with after you've chopped a few stalks for a recipe.

In school, we served it alongside a roasted chicken, and it worked well, but I wanted to make it work for a weeknight meal, so I picked up some chicken breasts. To flavor them, I coated them with the Nana's Italian Seasoning I got from Ava Jane's Kitchen. You may think Italian seasoning is only used in pasta sauces, but it works beautifully here. And this one has salt, making it easy to measure out one thing for a quick meal.

When braising the celery, you want to use a flavorful liquid. Chicken broth is key, but you should use the best tasting broth you can — if you have homemade on hand, now is the time to use it. This penetrates the celery as it cooks, and really turns into a flavorful glaze that lightly coats the celery. Serve this with mashed potatoes or a green salad, and you've got yourself a healthy, unique meal that will surprise even the celery haters out there.

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Serves 4

Prep time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 4 chicken breasts
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 tablespoons Nana's Italian Seasoning
- 2 tablespoons Ava Jane's Kitchen Avocado Oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 8 stalks celery, cut into 2 inch pieces
- 1/2 cup chicken broth

Directions:

Pound the chicken breasts to an even thickness. Coat with flour, dip in the beaten egg, and coat liberally with the seasoning. Heat the oil in a heavy skillet over medium high

heat. Cook the chicken until it's browned and cooked through, and transfer to a plate. Cover loosely with foil.

Add the butter to the same pan, and add the celery. Cook until lightly browned and add the broth. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer and cover. Cook for 5 minutes, uncover, and cook for an additional 5 minutes, until the liquid has reduced to a glaze. Serve with the chicken.