



Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Oven Roasted Quail

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Tips, Variations, and Time Savers

- You can skip the grits if you want and serve this with fluffy, buttered rice.
- Don't overcook this small bird it dries the meat out. Done right (and by right I mean my way) the succulent meat of this little game bird will be buttery-melt-in-your-mouth-omg tender.
- When roasted quail is done the meat is still going to be a little pink.
- No need to marinate but if you really want to you can either brine it for an hour or marinate it in a little olive oil and orange juice with a few slices of fresh ginger and maybe some fresh thyme. Don't leave it longer than an hour - the fibers in the meat can break down and get mushy. Ew.
- I like to put a little slice of citrus or fresh thyme (or both) in the cavity just to give it a little more flavor. Rosemary is also good for this.
- Salt it a little more than you think you should. The salt will balance out the sweetness of the meat. Mine were a tad under-salted for most of my family's tastes.
- I truss the birds to maintain their shape. You don't have to.
- Keep in mind that grits are bland and they'll diminish the flavor of anything you add to them. The Camembert makes them creamier and milder than my Cheddar Cheese Grits. Get a Camembert that's good and ripe or the flavor will be lost completely.
- Of course, you know the old adage, don't use a wine for cooking that you wouldn't drink!

Storage

This easy quail recipe is best eaten fresh from the oven. Leftovers should be covered and refrigerated promptly. They'll be fine for 3-4 days.

Since the birds were frozen I wouldn't refreeze any part of this dish. And really, it's so easy to make that there's no reason to. If fresh you can freeze them for up to 3 months.

FAQs

What temp should quail be cooked to?

150F then remove it from the oven and let it rest for 5 to 10 minutes.

What is quail?

Quail is a small game bird that is most often found in the freezer section of your store. Most quail nowadays is farmed and only people who hunt get the wild kind. The brand I used was a Texas brand - that raises their quail responsibly and sustainably.

How big is quail?

Each bird is about 4-5 ounces, which is fancy-speak for “you’ll want two if you’re really hungry.” They’re small, but mighty—and roasted right, they’re pure magic.

What does quail taste like?

Rich, buttery, and slightly sweet. It’s like if chicken had a glow-up and started vacationing in France. Not gamey, not weird—just elegantly extra.

Is it hard to cook quail?

Not even a little. If you can roast a chicken, you can handle quail. It’s just smaller, sassier, and faster. The hardest part of this recipe is pronouncing Camembert with confidence.

How many quail to serve per person?

Plan on 1 per light eater, 2 per hungry soul. They’re small but rich—don’t skimp if you’ve got big appetites at the table.

Where can I buy quail?

Check the freezer section at grocery stores, specialty butcher shops, or your local wild game supplier (yes, that’s a real thing). If you’re in Texas, most grocers have it - HEB and Brookshires both do. Besides, you probably already have some in the back of the freezer next to the brisket and dreams of deer season.

Nice to have

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Worried about overly pink quail?

Relax. Grab an instant-read digital thermometer and stop second-guessing dinner. Stick it in the thigh—when it hits 150°F, you’re golden. Let it sit for 10 minutes and it will be cooked perfectly. No more poking, cutting, or hoping. I use [this one on Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B075G8Y8Y8) because it’s fast, cheap, and keeps me from serving “quail tartare.”