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The Mouth-Watering Benefits of Rotisserie Cooking

Indirect heat makes it easy to prepare moist and succulent foods



Brisbane, Calif. ----Besides producing exceptionally moist and succulent meats, poultry and fish, rotisserie cooking has the advantage of being very simple and practically foolproof.

That's according to Larissa Taboryski, culinary director for Purcell Murray, exclusive North American distributors of the La Cornue Flamberge rotisserie. She regularly conducts classes in the showroom here and instructs homeowners on a variety of culinary techniques.

She likes cooking on the Flamberge because it's easy and accessible, no matter what the user's level of cooking expertise. The Flamberge is ideal not only for chicken, but also for turkey, beef or pork tenderloin, boneless leg of lamb, game hens and sirloin roasts. "The prime rib is amazing and the turkey is like nothing you've ever had before," she notes. And fish cooks quickly in the basket provided with the unit.

Why does the rotisserie deliver such mouth-watering results? Food scientists have recently discovered that initial exposure to high heat bursts open flavor molecules in food, making it taste delicious. “That is what the rotisserie does,” Taboryski notes, “but it must be very hot, otherwise the meat will be a bit flabby.”

The Flamberge is pre-heated for about 10 to 12 minutes, just like an oven. “It’s always better to put food into a hot environment,” the chef recommends. Then the spits are loaded and the food roasted for about 15 minutes.

“It takes that long for flavor molecules to open up,” Taboryski says. “The sizzle becomes more powerful.” Then the temperature can be reduced to cook the food evenly without drying out.

Food remains moist because it self-bastes. And it does not char, although it browns, because the flame never touches the food. Instead wicks pull the flame up and keep the concave cast iron back of the Flamberge very hot. So everything cooks indirectly.

The Flamberge can roast three small chickens (about three pounds) at a time, or two larger birds. Timing for a small bird will be about an hour. The Flamberge will also roast up to a 12-pound turkey, which, like the chickens, should be trussed so the weight is evenly distributed.

Food is loaded onto one of three spits with clamps that hold it in place. A porcelain tray underneath catches any juices.

The Flamberge rotisserie can be very forgiving. “If guests are late, you can slow it down, by another half or three quarters of an hour without food drying out because of the self basting,” Taboryski points out. Either the heat can be turned down, or the easily adjustable spits can be pulled forward.

Clean up is easy, too. The spits and clamps go into the dishwasher, as does the porcelain dish.

Taboryski especially likes the Flamberge rotisserie for Thanksgiving and other holiday cooking because of the control the cook has in terms of timing and never drying out the food. “It’s easy to watch the cooking. But at the same time, once something is on the Flamberge, you don’t have to monitor or worry about it,” the chef says. So the cook can concentrate on preparing all the sides and enjoying the company of guests.

Finally, there’s the irresistible ambiance the Flamberge brings to the kitchen. For entertaining, there is nothing like the conviviality inherent in the age-old ritual of being drawn together by the sight and aroma of an anticipated feast.

For more information visit www.purcellmurray.com

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