

# One-Pot Chicken with Caramelized Lemon and Dates

Serves 4

This one-pot chicken is a true treasure. It's saucy, sweet, tangy and a little spicy and just downright special. It's got the kind of bold flavors you wouldn't expect from such few ingredients, which I guess is part of what makes it special, but it's also a rather flexible dish, able to be made with a whole chicken or chicken parts (bone-in, skin-on thighs/legs, if you please) for a more weeknight-friendly vibe. The whole lemon slices are meant to impart some bitterness as well as juiciness/tanginess/all the other hits you expect from lemon, so give them a chance, which is to say: please eat them!

**1 3 ½ - 4 lb. chicken or 3 lbs. Bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs**  
**Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper**  
**1 tablespoon canola oil**  
**1 lemon, cut into thick slices crosswise (about 1/4" thick), seeds removed**  
**2 shallots, peeled if you want, halved lengthwise (or one red onion, peeled and cut into wedges)**  
**4–6 medjool dates, pitted**  
**4 sprigs thyme or oregano, plus more for serving**  
**1–2 teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes**

1. Preheat oven to 425°.

2. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large (at least 5.5 qt) dutch oven over medium–high heat. Place chicken, legs side down\* and using tongs or your hands (be careful!) press lightly to make sure the skin comes into even contact with the pot. This is your chance to brown the legs! Rarely offered in whole chicken recipes, so take advantage.  
\*If using parts, just sear the chicken skin side down, working in batches if you need to.

3. Cook, without moving, until chicken is nice and browned, 5– 8 minutes. Seriously, no peeking! Nothing exciting will happen before 5 minutes, I promise you.

4. Add lemon slices, maneuvering the chicken however you need so that the slices come into contact with the bottom of the pot.  
\*If using parts, you may need to remove the chicken so that you can get the lemon slices nicely browned.

5. Let the lemons sizzle in the chicken fat until caramelized on one side, about 2 minutes. Add shallots, dates, thyme and 2 cups of water. Sprinkle the top of the chicken with crushed red pepper flakes and place the lid on.  
\*If using parts, you can leave the lid off.

6. Place dutch oven in the oven and roast until the dates are plump, the lemon is jammy and the chicken is almost but not totally cooked through, 20–25 minutes (it will look mostly cooked through and a little anemic from getting covered with the lid).  
\*If using parts, the chicken will be done now, no need to keep roasting.

7. Remove the lid and continue to cook until the liquid has reduced by ½ and the top of the chicken has an illustrious golden-brown color, another 20–25 minutes.

8. Remove from oven and let chicken rest in the dutch oven for 10 minutes before transferring it to a cutting board and carving. Serve alongside shallots, lemons, and dates with some more thyme sprinkled over.