



## Chicken in Half Mourning

This is my version of poulet demi-deuil, a classic French dish made by placing shaved black truffles under the skin of a chicken, resembling the veil of a woman in mourning. It seems that the appearance is only 'half mourning' because some of the bird's white flesh is still seen; full mourning would be entirely black. Traditionally the chicken is braised, however I prefer the flavour and look of roast chicken, so this is my variation. While truffles are indulgent, a little goes a long way and you can buy a small one online for around \$75.

**Serves 4-6**

### METHOD

1. Finely slice the truffle, add it to the Cognac and set aside for 10 minutes or so.
2. Meanwhile, wipe out the belly cavity of the chicken to remove any blood and pat the skin dry with paper towel.
3. Place the chicken on its back with the legs facing you and gently slide your hands under the skin of the breast and thighs to loosen it, taking care not to tear it.
4. Finely slice half the butter, reserving the rest for later.
5. Drain the truffle, leaving any small bits of truffle in the liquid and set it aside.
6. Arrange all except 2 of the truffle slices between the skin and the flesh of the breast, with a sliver of butter underneath each piece of truffle.
7. Place the final 2 pieces of truffle under the skin of each thigh with a sliver of butter.
8. Truss the chicken (see video at [beinspired.au/chicken-in-half-mourning/](http://beinspired.au/chicken-in-half-mourning/) for details) and place on a large plate, cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.
9. About an hour before cooking, remove chicken from the fridge, remove plastic wrap, cover with a clean, dry tea towel and set aside to come to room temperature.
10. Preheat oven to 200°C.
11. Add chicken stock, onion, bay and thyme to a flameproof baking dish and place a cake rack into the dish so that it sits above the liquid.
12. Sprinkle chicken generously with salt and pepper.
13. Combine reserved butter with garlic and rub it all over the chicken.
14. Place chicken on the rack, breast side up. Cover chicken with baking paper, tucking any overhanging inside the dish.
15. Cover dish tightly with foil and place in the oven for about an hour, until the juices run clear when the thickest part of the thigh is pierced with a skewer.
16. Increase oven to 220°C, remove the foil and baking paper and cook for a further 10-15 minutes, until skin is crisp and golden.
17. Remove from the oven, transfer chicken to a lipped plate, cover loosely with foil and set aside in a warm place.
18. Place baking dish on the stove top over high heat, stir in reserved Cognac and boil for about 5 minutes until reduced to a light sauce consistency.
19. Remove bay leaves and thyme stems, stir in crème fraîche and transfer to a sauce jug.
20. Carve chicken and serve with steamed rice and sauce on the side.

### INGREDIENTS

- 30g black truffle
- 1 tablespoon Cognac
- 1 x 1.7kg chicken
- 50g cold butter
- 500ml chicken stock
- 1 brown onion, sliced
- 2 fresh bay leaves, crushed
- 6 sprigs thyme
- Salt flakes and freshly ground white pepper, to taste
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ¼ cup crème fraîche
- Steamed rice, for serving

