

Schmaltz and Gribenes

- 1 pound of chicken fat and skin
- 1-2 onions

chop the fat and skin into small pieces.

Put a large heavy-bottomed pan over a medium to medium-high heat. Place the fat into the pan, with a cup or so of water. Stir occasionally, as the water heats up and evaporates, and the fat is slowly rendered.

The whole time you are cooking, stay nearby so that nothing starts cooking too fast.

While the water is still evaporating, turn down the burner to medium, to avoid having things stick or burn. Dice the onions.

Once the water is mostly evaporated the fat which is already rendered will get up to heat, and the remaining chicken fat and skin will begin to brown and shed more fat. At this point, add the onions, and reduce the heat just a bit.

Continue stirring and paying attention. Once the remaining chicken scraps and onions are turning dark brown, start paying very close attention – you want the rendered fat to remain golden yellow, so you don't want to over-cook anything.

Eventually, the scraps of remaining chicken and onions have the consistency of thoroughly cooked bacon bits, very dark brown but not black, and the rendered fat still golden.

Remove the pan from the heat. Get a metal colander, and place a glass jar or container for collection below the colander. Then line the bottom of the colander with clean muslin or doubled-over cheesecloth. Slowly pour the contents of the pan through the cloth, collecting all the scraps into the cloth. Squeeze and twist the cloth, to get as much of the rendered fat out as you can.

Store the rendered fat in the refrigerator; it will congeal into schmaltz, and be usable in cooking for up to a week. The remaining scraps are gribenes, and are tasty as a garnish.

Makes: 6-8 ounces of schmaltz, and 1/4-1/2 cup of gribenes.

Preparation time: about 1 hour, plus some time to sit in the fridge.

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