

Thanksgiving Turkey, Dressing, and Gravy

From commenter JT in KC

My favorite meal is my father's Thanksgiving. The recipe is an amalgam of various twists and turns that he has added over the years. Several years back, I spent a Thanksgiving watching and writing down everything he did. I think this is a recipe that even aficionados can appreciate but it is truly meant for the moron who wants to host their first Thanksgiving but feels overwhelmed by the notion of doing so.

Serves: 15 morons

Prep Time: 3 hours

Non-perishable items that you'll need:

- Large aluminum pan
- Cheese cloth
- cooking pins
- roasting pan and rack
- thermometer (Thermoworks instant thermometer is expensive but it's so damn cool and if you grill then you need one)
- Turkey baster
- Whisk

Perishable shopping list:

- 10 lbs frozen turkey breast (I'm not a big Whole Foods shopper, but there is something to be said for the quality of turkey they put out at Thanksgiving)
- 2-3 packs of frozen pork sausage (get the one with sage)
- 3 heads of garlic
- 2 packages of stuffing (the 14 oz Pepperidge Farm will do)
- ground poultry seasoning
- dried rosemary
- large turkey stock (chicken stock if they don't have it)
- cinnamon sticks
- egg
- butter (Kerry Gold is cheap at Costco, it's grass-fed and leftovers can go into your bullet coffee)
- 3 large onions
- baby carrots
- 2 lemons
- 1 apple
- half and half milk
- flour
- fresh thyme
- fresh bay leaves
- fresh rosemary
- fresh sage
- ginger (fresh – one piece of ginger root)
- olive oil
- package of bacon
- 2 heads of celery
- Worcestershire sauce

For the Turkey:

- 1) Defrost the turkey in the refrigerator on a platter starting 6 days out
- 2) Two days before cooking: mix 3 Tbsp salt with 1 Tbsp dried rosemary. Rub the turkey cavity and outside with the mixture. Then wrap turkey in plastic wrap
- 3) 1 day before cooking: Unwrap the turkey
- 4) On the day of cooking: place garlic bulbs (don't need to peel), onion slices, lemon slices, celery stalks, 1/4 of the apple, a few carrots, fresh thyme, fresh rosemary, bay leaves, 2 cinnamon sticks, and a sprinkle of poultry seasoning within both ends of the turkey cavity
- 5) Use cheese cloth and pins to seal both ends of cavity
- 6) Pour olive oil on top of turkey, squeeze lemon over turkey, sprinkle turkey with salt, pepper and poultry seasoning.
- 7) Have oven at 450 degrees and roast turkey for 45 minutes
- 8) Take out of oven and pour a stick of butter over the turkey
- 9) Place 5 slices of bacon on top of the turkey
- 10) In the bottom of the roasting pan: place some celery stalks, unpeeled garlic, onion quarters, the rest of the apple, chopped ginger, bay leaves, rosemary, thyme, cinnamon sticks, sage, and 8 – 10 carrots
- 11) Lower the oven temperature to 325 degrees and put turkey back in
- 12) Take the turkey out every 20 minutes, baste, and take the temperature
- 13) Once the internal temperature of the turkey is 150 degrees, put foil loosely over turkey
- 14) Cook the turkey breast to 165 degrees (if you are doing a whole turkey then the thighs need to be 185 degrees)
- 15) Once the turkey is done, transfer turkey to aluminum pan, place foil over, use an old blanket to cover it and keep it warm.

For the Dressing:

- 1) Chop one large onion
- 2) Peel the backsides of 5 celery stalks (like a carrot) and chop up
- 3) Brown the onion in frying pan with 1/4 stick of butter
- 4) Then add celery to frying pan until soft
- 5) Add 4 sage leaves, 4 sprigs of thyme and crush in 4 garlic cloves towards the end
- 6) Remove this mixture from frying pan and put on a plate

- 7) Cook 2-3 packages of (thawed) pork sausage in frying pan (use a paper towel to soak up excess fat)
- 8) Once pork is cooked, mix the pork and vegetable mix in a large aluminum pan
- 9) If using the 14 oz Pepperidge Farms stuffing, add about 1 to 1 1/2 packages (to your desired consistency) to the pork and vegetables
- 10) Add 1 to 2 beaten eggs to 1 tsp of salt, 1/2 tsp pepper, 2 tsp poultry seasoning, 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce and 1 cup of stock. Pour this mixture over the stuffing and mix well.
- 11) Bake in oven at 325 degrees while the turkey is cooking. Cover at the start but uncover towards the end to crisp the top. Add some additional stock if looks like drying out.
- 12) Can add 2 Tbsp of honey and 1/2 cup to white wine to mixture while cooking (optional)
- 13) Cover with foil and wrap in an old blanket to keep warm when done

For the Gravy:

- 1) Take the pan juices from the turkey roast and put in a bowl after going through a strainer
- 2) After cool, skim off the top layer of fat
- 3) Take 2 Tbsp of flour and 2 Tbsp of butter. Heat together in pan to make a roux under low/medium heat.
- 4) Add the strained (and skimmed) pan juices to the roux
- 5) Mix in a cup of half and half; add more if needed. Whisk gravy in the heated pan until thick.