

Recipe for Dry-Brined Turkey with Silky Gravy

Turkey stock

2 TBS olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 quart chicken stock
2 cups water
3 stalks celery (with the leaves)
green onion tops and leek tops (if you have them)
mushroom stems
3 garlic cloves
1 sprig rosemary
1-2 thyme sprigs
several whole parsley sprigs
1 tsp salt
2 bay leaves
8 black peppercorns

I made my stock a day ahead.

Sauté the gizzard and the innards in olive oil, add the onion and carrots and sauté several more minutes. Add all the other ingredients, bringing it to a slow simmer and cook for 30-60 minutes, covered. Taste and add more seasoning. When finished, put the stock through a sieve and keep the broth in the fridge.

Herbed salt

Ingredients

1/3 cup coarse kosher salt
1 TBS fresh rosemary, chopped
2 TBS sage, chopped
1 TBS thyme, chopped
1 tsp. black peppercorns, crushed
3 bay leaves, coarsely torn
1 tsp. finely grated lemon peel

Directions

Crush the peppercorns and mix them with the rest of the ingredients. This can be made ahead of time.

Turkey

9-12 pound turkey
2 ounces (or more) butter
3 cups chicken broth
Several layers of cheesecloth
olive oil
salt and pepper

The filling

3 parsley strips
6 sage leaves
1 sprig oregano
1 sprig thyme
1 lemon (cut in half)

The herb flavored compound butter

4 ounces soft butter
1 TBS oregano, chopped
1 TBS sage, chopped
1 TBS thyme, chopped
1 tsp fleur de sal or coarse salt
½ tsp pepper

Mix the soft butter with the herbs, salt and pepper. If you make this ahead of time, roll the butter in Saran wrap into a log and refrigerate.

Rinse the turkey inside out with cold running water (do not pat dry). Cover the bird with the herbed salt mixture and put it in a large plastic bag. Put the turkey on a tray and refrigerate for 12 -24 hours. (I did it for 12 hours.) Remove from fridge and rinse the bird well under running water. Pat dry and put it back on a tray and refrigerate the bird with skin exposed for another three hours. An hour before roasting, take the bird out of the fridge. Gently push your hand under the skin and loosen it above and around the turkey breast. Add pieces of the herbed butter under the skin. Massage olive oil all over the turkey and generously salt and pepper the bird. Add the herbs, the lemon and the rest of the filling ingredients into the cavity. Tie the bird with some thread. Measure and cut the cheesecloth and soak it in 2 ounces of melted butter mixed with 1 to 2 cups broth. Spread about 3 layers over the turkey. Pour some additional broth over the turkey and put on a rack in a preheated 400-degree oven, decrease temperature to 350-degree after 15 minutes.

Baste the turkey every 20 minutes with additional chicken broth. Remove the cheesecloth about 30 minutes before the bird is done to crisp the skin. Remove the turkey from the oven when the internal temperature reaches 160 degrees. My turkey took about three hours to cook at a high altitude. Pour off the accumulated turkey juices and cover the bird with foil and towels. Let it rest for 30 minutes. Take the fat off the juices and discard the fat (not the juice!).

The Gravy

Ingredients

4 TBS butter
4 TBS flour
1 cup pan juices from the turkey
4 cups of turkey and/or chicken stock
a few drops of Tabasco sauce
½ tsp of Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp seasoned salt

salt and pepper
½ -1 cup milk or cream

Melt the butter and add the flour, and stir until the roux starts to change color. Add the pan juices and stir vigorously with a whisk until it is smooth and has no lumps. This is where you produce a lump-free gravy. Slowly add in the rest of the stock stirring with your whisk until you reach the consistency you like. Add the Worcestershire and Tabasco sauces, seasoning with salt and pepper. Add some milk to enrich the flavor. My gravy got most of its flavor from the pan juices.

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