

Dry-brined turkey

<http://www.latimes.com/features/food/thanksgiving/la-fo-calcook18-2009nov18,0,3107976.story>

Wash the turkey inside and out, pat it dry. Measure 1 TB of kosher salt or 1.5 TB of bay and sage salt (see below) for every 5 pounds of turkey.

Sprinkle the inside of the turkey lightly with salt. Salt the entire outside of the turkey, concentrating the salt where the meat is thickest.

Place the turkey in a 2 1/2 -gallon sealable plastic bag, press out the air and seal tightly. Place the turkey breast-side up in the refrigerator. Chill for 3 days, leaving it in the bag but turning it and massaging the salt into the skin every day.

Remove the turkey from the bag. There should be no salt visible on the surface, and the skin should be moist but not wet. Wipe the turkey dry with a paper towel, place it breast-side up on a plate and refrigerate uncovered for at least 8 hours.

On the day it is to be cooked, remove the turkey from the refrigerator and leave it at room temperature at least 1 hour. Brush the skin with oil before roasting.

Bay and sage salt

This makes enough for a 20-pound turkey. Allow a scant 1 1/2 tablespoons per 5 pounds of turkey weight.

1/4 cup kosher salt
10 dried bay leaves, crumbled
3/4 teaspoon ground sage
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Pulse together the salt, bay leaves, ground sage and black pepper in a spice grinder or mash them in a mortar and pestle to make a fine powder. Makes 1/3 cup. The mixture can be stored in a tightly sealed jar for up to 2 weeks.