

Classic Oven Roasted Turkey with Cider Gravy

From the Kitchen of [Deep South Dish](#)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (12 to 15 pound) turkey

For the Brine:

- 5 gallon bucket with lid, or small cooler and ice
- 1 gallon filtered water
- 1 gallon vegetable stock, homemade or packaged
- 1 cup kosher salt (if you substitute table salt, use about 3/4 cup instead)
- 3/4 cup light or dark brown sugar, well packed
- Sprig fresh sage, stripped, optional
- Several sprigs of fresh thyme, stripped, optional
- 1/2 tablespoon whole black peppercorns
- Hot pepper flakes, optional

For the Turkey:

- 3 cups chicken stock or broth, *divided*
- 1-1/2 cups apple cider
- 1 instant read or in-oven thermometer (like [Polder](#) this is essential!)
- 3 large carrots, cut into chunks, *divided*
- 3 celery ribs, including the leafy tops, cut into chunks, *divided*
- 2 large onions, *peeled and quartered, divided*
- 1 large lemon
- 1-2 large sprigs rosemary
- 1 large sprig sage, *optional*
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed
- Cotton twine, well soaked with water, if trussing
- 1 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

For the Gravy:

- Defatted drippings from roasting pan
- 3 cups warmed turkey or chicken stock or broth
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour

INSTRUCTIONS

1. You will need several days to thaw the turkey. Place it unopened, breast side up, on a tray in the refrigerator. Factor about 24 hours for every 4 pounds. If not thoroughly thawed when you need it to be, you may finish with a sink thaw to finish the process, changing the water out about every 30 minutes.
2. SEE NOTE BELOW. For brining, you will need a pot large enough to fit your turkey and that will fit into your refrigerator, or you may also use a cooler or a 5-gallon, lidded bucket with lots of ice, if your refrigerator is otherwise occupied. Remove turkey neck and giblets and reserve for giblet gravy. Whisk the brine ingredients together in the container, add the turkey and ice, placing ice into gallon zipper storage bags in order not to dilute your brine. Top with cold water if needed, so that the turkey is fully submerged. I brine all day the morning before I want to roast.
3. Before you go to bed, remove turkey from brine, lightly rinse inside and out to remove excess salt and pat dry all over, inside and out, with paper towels. Set turkey inside a roasting pan or baker, and place uncovered, in the fridge overnight to dry, ensuring that it does not touch the fridge walls, other food or anything else in the fridge. This will help the skin to crisp when roasting. Clean the sink and all around with a bleach cleaner.
4. Trussing, though not necessary, makes the bird more compact, helps it to keep its shape and cook more evenly, and makes it easier to carve. Even if you simply truss the legs and tuck the wings up underneath, it makes a big difference. Find out more about trussing [here](#).
5. To roast, preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Pour 2 cups of chicken stock and 1 cup of apple cider in the bottom of a roaster with a rack, adding half of the aromatics (carrots, celery, and onion and a sprig of rosemary) under the rack. Put turkey on the rack.
6. Combine half stick of butter with the black pepper and rub all over and in the cavity. Loosely fill cavity with remaining carrot, celery and onion, plus the sliced lemon, smashed garlic cloves and a sprig of either fresh sage or rosemary.
7. Roast at 425 degrees F oven for 40 minutes, reduce heat to 350 degrees F, and baste turkey with the drippings. Continue roasting for about 17 minutes per pound, basting every 30 minutes, until the thickest part of the thigh registers 180 degrees F.
8. Halfway through add another cup of chicken stock to the pan along with 1/2 cup of apple cider. Once the turkey gets to the desired color, tent with a piece of aluminum foil that has been sprayed with non-stick spray, to prevent over-browning and to finish cooking.
9. For the gravy, remove turkey from oven and let rest for about 30 minutes before carving while you make the gravy. Have at the ready 2 to 3 cups of additional turkey or chicken stock or broth that you have warmed. Carefully pour the pan drippings from the roaster into a grease separator. Spoon off 1/3 cup of the fat from the top and either return it to the roasting pan or a separate skillet to make gravy.
10. If you don't have a grease separator, pour drippings into a large heat proof glass container, when fat rises to top, spoon all of it off, reserving 1/3 cup for the gravy, heating over medium high heat and gradually stirring in 1/3 cup of all-purpose flour.

11. Cook the roux out for about 3 minutes, stirring constantly, then slowly begin to incorporate the defatted drippings, cooking and stirring until well blended. Add the warmed turkey or chicken stock as needed to correct consistency to your liking. Taste gravy, then add salt and pepper only if needed, transfer to gravy boat.

NOTES

Important Note: If you have a turkey that contains a "baste solution" you probably do not need to brine as those typically contain salt, sugar and flavorings already injected.

About Stuffing: If you are cooking a bird stuffed with dressing rather than the aromatics listed here, do not pack the stuffing in the cavity. Instead, heat the stuffing to warm it, and place it in the cavity of the bird loosely in order to allow room for expansion and for the heat to flow through. Use an instant read thermometer to check for doneness. The stuffing in the deepest, most central part of the stuffing, must reach a temperature of 165 degrees F.

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