

Smoked Wild Turkey Breast

You'll notice that I truss and trim my wild turkey breast here. I do this to get a more compact shape that cooks and slices easily. To trim, I slice off the thin triangle of turkey breast that lays over the tail end of the breast – you will notice that all bird breasts have a thick and a thin end, and you are trimming the turkey's breast so you have, more or less, a big cylinder of meat that you can truss properly. If you don't trim, you can't truss very well. Can you still smoke your turkey breast? Sure. But it won't be as pretty as this one.

Course Cured Meat
Cuisine American

Prep Time 20 minutes
Cook Time 4 hours
Total Time 4 hours 20 minutes

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Ingredients

- 1 skinless turkey breast, trimmed (see note above)
- 2 quarts water
- 1/2 cup kosher salt
- 4 teaspoons Instacure No. 1 (optional)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup honey, maple syrup or other syrup

→ 2 cups = 16oz 32oz = 1 QUART

ALTERNATE BRINE (MY FAVORITE)

- 1 cup kosher salt
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 2 QTS. APPLE JUICE
- 1 to 2 QTS. WATER

Instructions

1. Mix together the salt, curing salt, water and sugar until the salt and sugar dissolve. Submerge the turkey breast in the brine and make sure it is totally covered; you might need to weigh down the turkey to do so. Cover and put in the fridge for 2 days.
2. Take the turkey breast out and truss it like a roast with kitchen twine. If you don't know how to do this, check out this video. Why do this? You get a more compact piece of meat that cooks more evenly and is easier to slice when you are done.
3. Dry the turkey breast to form the pellicle, a sheen that allows the turkey to take on smoke better. You can leave the breast on a rack uncovered in the fridge overnight, or you can put it on a rack in a cool, breezy place for a couple hours. Either way, turn the turkey over a few times while you do this. Don't skip this step!
4. Smoke the turkey slowly at about 200°F until it reaches an internal temperature of about 160°F – this takes about 4 hours with my smoker. Let the turkey smoke undisturbed for an hour, then paint it with honey every 45 minutes or so until it's done. When the turkey is ready, take it out of the smoker and set it on a rack. Paint it one more time with the honey and serve any way you like it: Warm for dinner, or cold for sandwiches.

Once made, the smoked turkey will keep in the fridge for a week or so, and can be frozen (vacuum-sealed is my preference) for up to a year.

