

The Chef's Table

AUNT WITCHY'S TURKEY

MUSTARD BASTE

Mix to make a paste:

4 Egg yolks (or 3 whole eggs)

1tsp. Hot mustard (Coleman's Dry Mustard works well)

1T Onion Juice

1tsp. Lemon juice

1 Crushed garlic clove

2 Pinches Cayenne pepper

Flour to make a stiff paste

Before putting the bird in the oven, and after it has been put in the roasting rack, paint the breast with the mustard baste using a pastry brush. After turning bird over (as explained in the following directions) paint rest of bird using all the rest of the paste baste. While cooking, baste the bird with the following gravy baste until bird is done. (Follow bird cooking directions that follow.)

GRAVY BASTE

In tea ball, gauze bag or tied coffee filter place 1/2 tsp. Coriander, 1/2 tsp. Salt, 1 Garlic clove (mashed, minced, whole or chopped). Place spice ball in pot with 4-6 Cups water, 4 Cups unfiltered natural apple cider and 1 Bay leaf. Add all the giblets and the neck whole to this mixture and bring to a near boil then simmer for the duration. Keep mixture/baste covered and at low simmer during entire cooking of bird. Use this mixture to baste bird after Mustard Baste is all used and the first half-hour of cooking after bird is turned over. You should use most, if not all baste for bird. This will make for very dark drippings from the bird and the drippings make excellent gravy.

(HINT: Use a ladle or other large spoon to spoon this mixture over the bird and use your baster for basting the bird with the pan drippings.) Baste the bird with the gravy mixture, every fifteen to thirty minutes for the first couple of hours. Then alternate between the pan drippings and the gravy mixture for the rest of the cooking time. Be sure to not use all the mixture so you will have some for the gravy and giblet processing. When you have used all but about 1 to ½ cup of the mixture use only your pan drippings for basting.

TURKEY COOKING

Preheat oven to 475°-500°. Place turkey on a roasting rack in roasting pan breast up. After about 20 minutes, when the breast has turned a light golden brown or slightly darker, remove the bird from the oven, turn bird over so the breast is down and cover the wings with tin foil. Place the turkey back into the oven and reduce the heat to 325°. Don't forget to continually baste it, and baste it often. Remove the tin foil from

the wings when the turkey is almost done (about the last 20-30 minutes) so they will brown. This is also a good time to take any giblets you want to eat as a delicacy, from the gravy baste and place in the bottom of the roaster for browning purposes. Cooking time will vary depending upon the weight of the turkey and the efficiency of your oven, but figure about 4 to 6 hours for a 17 to 22 pound turkey.

How can you tell when the turkey is done? There are a couple of ways to test for a done turkey, but remember when the turkey is taken from the oven it will continue to cook as it rests on your platter or cutting board, so taking it out of the oven just short of being done is not necessarily a bad thing. The internal temperature of a thoroughly cooked bird is 180° F. If you are using this as your guide then take the bird out of the oven when the temperature reaches about 170° to 175° and allow the carry over heat to finish the job. (By the way, I do not trust the breast implanted temperature sensors that come with the turkeys in any way! I remove them prior to cooking and seal the hole with the mustard baste.) When testing the temperature of the turkey take it from the inside of the thigh since it is the last part to cook all the way through. Puncturing the breast will allow the juices you so badly want on the inside to run out. You will also want to check the internal temperature of the stuffing. A minimum temperature here is not less than 150°, and will most likely be more if the rest of the bird is properly cooked. Another way to check the bird, if temperature is something you do not thoroughly trust, is to see if the leg or a wing gives or breaks away easily. If they do the bird is done!

When the turkey is finally done, remove it from the oven and carefully turn it over so it is breast up on your cutting board or platter. Cover it with tin foil and allow it to “rest” for at least fifteen minutes and up to thirty minutes. This will allow you to carve the turkey with the least amount of juices being lost. It therefore gives you a much more moist bird than you may be used to.

While the bird is “resting” make your gravy. If you do not like giblets in your gravy simply remove the giblets from the gravy mixture and follow the directions below.

For a true giblet gravy and one that you can probably sneak past those who think they do not like giblet gravy try the following. Instead of simply chopping the giblets into small pieces and incorporating them into the gravy make a puree of the giblets. Be careful, the giblets and neck are hot and may be difficult to handle. Remove all the neck meat from the neck bone and strip the “silver skin” from the gizzard. If you did not take the heart out of the mixture earlier and finish it with the turkey for “the chef’s treat” include it in this portion. Roughly chop all the giblets and neck meat and place them in a food processor. Add enough of the gravy baste to allow the processor to puree the meat. Add this mixture into the gravy at the very end of the gravy making process.

To make the gravy you must first ascertain if there is too much fat in the drippings. You want some, but not a lot. A good way to measure this is to look for about one to two table spoons of fat and the rest should be the drippings and “crispies” on the bottom of the pan. If you do not want to use the roasting pan in which to make the gravy then pour it into a sauce pan, but be sure to get all the scrapings from the bottom of the roaster. I recommend you use the roaster. Heat the pan up and deglaze it with the remaining gravy baste. Then add a flour slurry of water and flour and begin the thickening process. Just as the gravy starts to come up to temperature add the giblet puree and continue heating and thickening. If you do not have the volume you wish simply add a little apple cider, some Kitchen Bouquet, a touch of chicken paste, a dash or two of soy sauce and water to stretch the gravy. If the gravy is too thick simply thin it a little with water, or if it is too thin make more slurry, but make the slurry a little thicker. Bring the gravy to a boil to be sure that it has thickened all the way, and to “cook out” the flour taste and texture. (NOTE: Some cooks use all the drippings and fat. To do this, deglaze the roasting pan first, and then make a roux followed by your liquid and leave out the slurry as mentioned.)

Happy eating!

AUNT WITCHY'S & CRAIG'S TURKEY DRESSING

2 Packages Orowheat, or other seasoned dressing
2 Sweet Onions, chopped

1 Lb. Country Sausage	1 Can sliced water chestnuts (drained)
2 Apples, peeled and chopped	¼ C Chopped Parsley
3 Celery stalks, chopped	2 Cans crushed pineapple, (drained)
½ Lb. Unsalted butter	

Spices:

½ tsp. Basil	¼ tsp. Mace	1 Bay leaf
1T Hot dry mustard	¼ tsp. Thyme	2 Cloves garlic (may be chopped)
1 tsp. Caraway seed	½ tsp. Poultry seasoning	1 tsp. Poppy seed
1/4 tsp. Sage	1tsp. Oregano	½ tsp. Chili powder
1 ½ tsp. Celery seed	½ T Salt	½ tsp. Pepper
Pinch of: Cloves, Turmeric, Marjoram		

In small bowl combine all the dry spices.

Brown sausage over medium heat, just before sausage is fully cooked sauté onions in part of the butter. In a small pan melt rest of butter and set aside.

In a very large bowl (a large stock pot works very well for this) mix the dressing croutons, apples, celery, drained water chestnuts and pineapple. Add to this mixture the browned sausage (including any of the sausage grease) and sautéed onions with the butter left in the skillet. Now add, slowly, the remaining melted butter to thoroughly coat all ingredients. Then add all combined spices into dressing and gently mix.

Now, STUFF THAT TURKEY! The stuffing should be firmly packed into the interior cavity of the turkey, including the neck cavity. Do not over pack the stuffing as it will become too dense and not cook properly. Remember, the neck cavity will hold more stuffing than you think. Be sure to truss both the rear and neck cavity openings closed to encase the stuffing and retain the moisture of the bird. You will most likely have some stuffing left over. Following is a suggestion on how best to prepare and cook it.

Left over stuffing can be cooked in a covered casserole dish. The stuffing should be packed in the dish much like it was in the turkey. Add to the stuffing some melted butter, and little chicken or turkey stock made from chicken or turkey paste. Add a little sage, thyme, poultry spice, soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce, also a little apple cider. You must judge the amounts by how much stuffing you have and the size of the dish. Remember, all you are trying to do here is mimic the interior flavor you have in the turkey. Place covered dish in a 325° oven for about 45 minutes to an hour.