

Here is a batch of recipes that we serve at my Thanksgiving table. Enough and reach out if you have any questions! [chefric@ricorlando.com](mailto:chefric@ricorlando.com)

Also follow me on all socials at [chefricorlando](https://www.instagram.com/ricorlando)

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<https://ricorlando.substack.com/>

Ric Orlando's Turkey 101



*The secret is in the brining!*

When you are done frying, grilling and otherwise messing around with that big bird, try my tested, tried, and true method for brining and roasting! Brining and the high/low cooking technique is the trick to making the perfect turkey.

### **Ric's Turkey Brine**

Use a cooler to hold the turkey so that you can brine it overnight. Clean the cooler really well and line it with a trash bag.

After you put your turkey in the cooler, put some frozen icepacks or ziplock bags of ice in the cooler and cover to make sure it stays cold enough. (Using a really big cooler? Increase ice accordingly to keep that bird at a safe temperature.)

- 1 gallon cold water
- 1 cup kosher salt
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3-4 allspice berries
- 8-10 peppercorns
- 2 fresh bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon dry thyme
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest

Stir the salt into the water to dissolve. Add all other ingredients and you've made the brine. Cover the turkey completely with brine for as short as two hours or as long as 24 hours. Remove from brine and dry that bird well. (You should ratio up to make enough brine to cover the bird entirely.)

### **Ric Orlando's Basic Turkey Roasting Recipe**

Massage the turkey with melted butter, olive oil, duck fat or grapeseed oil before seasoning. Then rub turkey with the following mix. You may not use all of it, but this rub makes for great skin!

- 1/4 cup kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 2 tablespoons dry thyme
- 1 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon dry sage, crumbled or "rubbed"

Mix well and massage into the entire bird.

Fill the cavity with the following:

- 1 Apple, split in half
- 1 Lemon, split in half
- 1 onion, split in half
- 1 head of garlic, split in half
- 2-3 sprigs each of thyme, sage and parsley

Let the turkey stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before cooking.

Preheat the oven to 500 F. Have a quick read thermometer and a kitchen timer handy.  
This method should take about 12 minutes per pound or about 4 total hours for a 20 pound bird.

Put turkey in a roasting pan set directly in the bottom of the oven—not on a rack or mirepoix.  
Set the timer for 30 minutes. When the timer goes off, check the turkey. You are looking for a golden brown skin and a nice sizzle in the pan. If it is still pale, reset the timer for 15 more minutes. If it is still not golden, do it again. The goal at this stage is to have a turkey that looks perfectly cooked, though we know it is raw inside still.

When the skin does look golden brown (and the pan is doing that nice sizzle), reduce the oven to 300 F and loosely cover it with aluminum foil or parchment paper. Pour enough water into the pan so there's a 1/4 inch of liquid covering the bottom of it.

Set timer again, for about 12 minutes per pound.

When the timer goes off, check the internal temperature of the bird by putting the probe thermometer between the thigh and breast. When it reads 168-170 the bird is done. It will continue to cook as it rests and its internal temperature will increase by about 7%. Woo hoo!

Let the turkey stand for 30 minutes. Remove to a cutting board and use the juices in the pan to make amazing gravy!

### **Ric's CIDER ACCENTED GRAVY- Gluten Free!**

To enhance your gravy, try this simple and spectacular variation on the usual suspect. The essence of the apple cider is subtle, but it makes a drinkable gravy!

1/4 cup cider vinegar  
4 cups turkey or chicken broth - Homemade is best but boxed will do fine  
fresh thyme, rosemary and/or sage  
2 minced shallots  
cups apple cider  
4 tablespoons cornstarch

2 sprigs

While the bird is cooking, prepare the following.

Put all ingredients except apple cider, arrowroot or cornstarch in a heavy non-reactive pot. Simmer and reduce by one-third. Remove sprigs. Cool and reserve. This can be done well in advance and stored refrigerated.

After your bird has finished cooking let it rest about 20 minutes then remove the bird and any roasted mirepoix from the pan to a serving platter or grooved cutting board.

Pour off most of the fat from the pan.

Whisk the cornstarch into the cider.

Put the pan on the stovetop.

Add the cornstarch-apple cider mix to the roasting pan and turn on the burners under the pan to low. Use a wooden spoon to scrape up the remaining browned bits from the roasting pan.

Add the reduced stock a little at a time, whisking. until it is all added. Let it boil a minute to thicken and remove to a gravy boat---it won't be gloppy thick---if you like real thick gravy use more cornstarch.

### **Roasted Garlic Bread Pudding**

I know mashed potatoes are THE THING on Thanksgiving, but this dish will become a family favorite!

This recipe uses a lot of mellow, roasted garlic, is easy and affordable to make and is a great alternative to potatoes, rice or pasta. Serve it as a side dish to hearty meat, game or poultry dishes.

Serves 6-12

Grease a 9 x14 Pyrex baking pan with olive oil

The method

24 cloves peeled garlic cloves

To roast garlic, preheat oven to 425.

Toss the cloves with a touch of olive oil, Wrap in parchment paper ( they will stick to foil)

Bake for 20-30 minutes or until softened.

Mash the cloves with the back of a

fork and put them in a mixing bowl with...

2 cups milk

2 cups cream

5 eggs

1 oz. Bourbon or Brandy (optional)

1 tsp kosher salt

a generous cracking of black pepper

1 tsp fresh thyme leaves (or a small pinch of dry)

1 tsp fresh rosemary, minced (or a small pinch of dry)

1/3 cup grated Romano cheese

Whisk together real well, making it appear slightly fluffy.

now prepare....

12 cups Italian white or French bread, torn into pieces

Arrange the bread in a buttered baking pan evenly.

There should be some space for

the custardmix to fill in. Pour the mix over the bread, shake it gently to settle.

Let it rest for about ten minutes so the bread can soak up the custard and get soft and creamy.

Optionally, top with 1 cup sliced, blanched almonds

Bake in 350 over for 40 minutes or until the top gets golden brown.

To test for doneness, give the pan a shake. It should jiggle a bit but not be wet. It will tighten up as it cools.

### **Three Brussels Sprouts Recipes**

Brussels sprouts are one of the kitchen item, like anchovies, fish sauce and cilantro, they conjure strong feelings on both sides of the isle. When I was growing up in the '60's, I hated them. We didn't have them often, but like Lima beans, when we saw them on our nightly blue plate, they sent waves of dread through the souls of my little sister and me. They were always cooked from frozen until soft and mushy, buttered, salted and that's it. I am now enlightened! Properly cooked brussels sprouts are an autumn treat. I have taught my kids to get excited about them, and when purchased from a farm stand on a stalk, they are often the star of the meal!

Remember that strong and bitter green vegetables can handle more salt than delicate veggies.

This dish used quartered sprouts with lots of garlic. This gives them a balanced firm yet tender texture.

### **Garlic Walnut Brussels Sprouts**

serves 4 as a side

1 lb fresh medium to large sized Brussels sprouts

2 cloves garlic, minced

¼ cup walnuts, chopped small

1/4 stick butter

1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves, roughly minced

kosher salt and black pepper to taste

Put in a pot of salted water big enough to hold the Brussels sprouts.

Prepare Brussels sprouts by trimming off any dry or loose leaves. Cut off the brown end off of the stem to expose the white core of the stem. Cut in quarters lengthwise.

This is about timing and fun cooking. Is everything prepped? The sprouts need to blanch for two minutes to get cooking.

Good. Now go!

Drop the Brussels sprouts in the boiling water.

Heat a big heavy skillet on the stove on medium-high heat.

Add the butter to the skillet.

When the butter foams, add the garlic and walnuts and turn the pan to high.

Once the garlic begins to get golden, Turn of the heat under the pan. Use a slotted spoon or skimmer and begin to remove the brussels sprouts from the water and carefully add them to the hot butter. When they are all in he pan, crank the heat back up and swirl the pan to coat the brussels with the hot garlic-walnut butter. Salt and pepper generously, and let cook to absorb any water that followed the sprouts into the pan. Sprinkle with the thyme leaves, roll around to coat one more time and serve hot.

### **Shaved Brussels Sprouts with Bacon and Onions**

This is a simple stir fry, utilizing the smokey bacon and sweet onions to accent the earthiness of the brussels sprouts. This dish should be served immediately after cooking, to keep the vibrant color and texture of the sprouts intact. It is particularly good paired with trout, chicken and turkey dishes.

serves 4 as a side

4 oz good quality smoked bacon, sliced against the grain into thin strips

1 large Spanish onion, quartered and sliced thinly

1 lb Brussels sprouts

1 tbsp grapeseed oil

2 tbsp apple cider vinegar

a few fresh sage leaves, roughly chopped (optional)

water or stock as needed

salt and pepper to taste

Trim stems from Brussels sprouts and cut in half lengthwise. Now slice, almost shave, crosswise very thinly, This is called a chiffonade..

Heat a heavy skillet or stainless wok to medium heat. Add the bacon and the oil. Cook over medium heat until the bacon is browned and crispy. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and reserve. Add the onions to the pan, and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until they begin to caramelize. When the onions are fully amber colored, prepare to add the brussels sprouts. If you are using the sage, add it now. Add the Brussels and turn up the heat. Stir from the bottom up, or "Chow" while cooking until the sprouts begin to soften. When they're bright green and shiny, add the cider vinegar let cook another two minutes. Add a few drops of water or stock ; stir well and season with salt and pepper. Serve hot, garnished with the reserved bacon.

*This dish can be made vegetarian by simply omitting the bacon and increasing amount of the oil just a bit. There are vegan bacon substitutes available that can be added at the last minute to generate the smokiness that the bacon gives to the dish.*

### **Balsamic Roasted Brussels Sprouts**

Roasted, caramelized, luscious!

Some sprouts are wound tighter than others, so the roasting time may vary , depending upon the particular batch of sprouts you are cooking. Make sure they are lightly browned, but not black, or you will have bitter sprouts.

Serves 4

1 lb medium brussels sprouts  
2-3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil.  
4-cloves of garlic, unpeeled  
2 medium shallots, cut in half  
6 tablespoons good quality balsamic vinegar  
2 sprigs rosemary  
salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350.

Prepare Brussels sprouts by trimming off any dry or loose leaves. Cut off the brown end off of the stem to expose the white core of the stem. Cut an "X" into the bottom of the core of the stem, about 2 or three millimeters deep.

In a mixing bowl, toss all ingredients to coat well. Let marinate at least 15 minutes or up to 1 hour. Put everything in a roasting pan and loosely cover with parchment paper or foil. Bake for about 30 minutes, and then check the sprouts. They will begin to soften and become golden. Poke a big one with a skewer or toothpick. It should be tender. If they need a little more time, let it happen. When they are just tender, remove the covering and allow to cook 10 more minutes until lightly browned. They should be very tender when done. Serve them right in the roasting dish and make sure everyone gets a piece of shallot and a clove of garlic.

### **Quick Wokked Kale**

If you live in the Northeast and want to eat local, now is the time to enjoy kale! This works like a charm..always delish and always easy—This is the “greens” technique we use in both of my restaurants. No wok? No Problem, use a big heavy skillet with a snug fitting lid.

2 lbs kale, stripped of stems  
peanut oil or olive oil  
1 cups onions, sliced thinly  
salt and pepper  
water for steaming

In the wok, add oil and onions. Sizzle but don't brown. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Add the greens. Add a scant ½ cup water. Cover snugly and cook for 3-5 minutes or until just done. Remove the lid and toss well to mix. Easy and quick!

Cranberries Cranberries Cranberries!

Here are three different cranberry relishes that add brightness, color and flavor to your thanksgiving table, or anytime!

NOTE: In Any of these recipes you can use fresh or frozen cranberries. If using frozen, place them in a colander and run cool water on them to remove any ice crystals. Drain well.

### **Cranberry-Balsamic Compote**

This sweet and sour relish is my family's favorite. The maple and balsamic tame the cranberries just enough, while the chunky texture is delicious with everything on that Thanksgiving plate, from turkey and stuffing to sweet potatoes and brussels sprouts

## **ingredients**

2 tablespoons butter  
1 cups pearl onions, peeled (or small diced onions)  
1 12 oz bag cranberries  
1 cup dried cranberries or raisins  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
½ cup maple syrup  
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar  
1/4 cup red wine  
1 tablespoon garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, minced  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon pepper  
2 cups water

## **Instructions**

1. Saute the onions in butter until just golden around the edges. Add the garlic and cook just a minute to release the aroma.

Add the brown sugar, maple syrup, balsamic, red wine and water and bring to medium boil.

Stir in the cranberries, dried cranberries and rosemary

Cook at medium heat for about 15 minutes, until it all begins to caramelize.

Stir, remove from heat and allow to cool before serving. Stays fresh, refrigerated and covered for up to two weeks.

## **Cranberry-Apple Chutney**

This is a nice seasonal twist for you 2020 cranberries and beyond. This is also great on sandwiches! Just saying.

## **Ingredients**

1 12 ounce bag cranberries  
2 tart apples, peeled and finely diced  
2/3 cup packed light brown sugar  
Zest of one orange  
½ cup apple cider  
6 tablespoons apple cider vinegar



Pinch ground cinnamon  
pinch ground dried ginger  
pinch ground cloves  
pinch salt

Mix all the ingredients together in a large saucepan.

Cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until the cranberries pop and begin to break down and release their juices, and the apple pieces are cooked through, about 10 minutes or so.

Remove from heat and cool before serving

### **Basic Home Made Cranberry Sauce**

This is not going to hold that “can” shape but ... it’s really good! You can make it smooth by pureeing once it’s cooled a bit. It’s a simple family favorite.

#### **INGREDIENTS**

1 c. sugar  
1 c. water  
1 (12-oz.) package fresh cranberries  
3 heaping tbsps apricot jam  
Pinch of salt

#### **DIRECTIONS**

In a small saucepan over low heat, combine jam, sugar and water until sugar dissolves. Add cranberries and cook until they burst, 10 minutes. Stir in orange zest and a pinch of salt. Remove saucepan from heat and let cool completely, then transfer to a resealable container and refrigerate.

### **James Beard’s Apple Cake**

This is NOT my own recipe. I am not ashamed to admit that. But it is the BEST apple cake recipe I have ever encountered. I found it in the New James Beard cookbook and it is called Don Farmer’s Fresh Apple Cake. I served it at the James Beard House “Hudson Valley in the Big Apple” dinner that I cooked back in 2012.

James Beard was absolutely one of the biggest influences to my cooking career. If you don’t know him, you are missing out on the best. He was the best cook, educator and personality of his time.

If you haven’t watched the PBS American Masters documentary on him, here is the link

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/james-beard-documentary/8505/>

It is a great watch.

When I began cooking in real kitchens back in the early '80s the personal computer was still a few years from hitting the market. There was obviously no google, no Chatgpt, no, not even the internet. But there were books, lots of books, many incredible books. When cooks needed inspiration and instructions, books and magazines are where we found them. If my chef assigned me to make something I may have been unsure of, I snuck off to the cluttered little alcove between the staff bathroom and the coffee storage room called the Chef's office and pulled a book from the makeshift milk crate shelves to get the answer I needed. Many of the books were grease stained, some had stringy torn binders, pages were dog eared or notated with pencil, pen and crayon. The book I referred to most often was The New James Beard. It was a brand new release in 1981. I brought together his wealth of gastronomic knowledge in one essential guide. It is filled with about a thousand recipes and indispensable tips for getting your cooking right. I still recommend this book for aspiring chefs. If you need to walk before you can run, this book will teach you to crawl first. Every recipe is solid and correct.

When I started my first executive chef job, the New James Beard was on my desk. When I opened my first restaurant, the New James Beard was on the shelf in the prep station. For all of the talk of my reputation for being an innovator, I am only able to innovate because I learned the fundamentals, and many of those came from James Beard.

So here is the recipe. You can make it in a bundt pan, a 9 or 10 inch cake pan, in a 9x14 pyrex rectangle pan or a muffin pan.

The glaze below is great, but you can make it without it too.

### **Don Farmer's Fresh Apple Cake**

Whatever pan you use, prepare it by dabbing a paper towel in some oil and wiping the interior surface to leave a very thin coating of oil. Add ¼ cup of sugar and shake the pan around until there is a light coating of sugar on the interior of the pan. Discard any sugar that didn't stick. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 325F. Conventional Bake setting, not convection.

#### Ingredients

2 cups cane sugar plus ¼ cup for the pan

1 ½ cup neutral flavored oil ( I recommend sunflower or safflower)

3 large eggs, room temperature

2 tsp vanilla extract

3 cups all purpose flour, unbleached is best

2 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp nutmeg

½ tsp salt

3 cups tart-sweet apples, Cortland, Granny Smith and Fujis are perfect

Optional- 1 cup chopped walnuts, black walnuts or pecans

Peel and chunk the apples into roughly 1 inch pieces, reserve.

In a stand mixer or with a hand beater whip the sugar and oil until fully emulsified, about 5 minutes.

With the mixer running, add the eggs one at a time until each disappears into the sugar-oil mix.

Add the vanilla and let the machine mix at medium high speed until it begins to appear fluffy.

Meanwhile sift the flour, baking soda, salt and spices. This is important.

Turn the mixer off and add the sifted flour mix.

Turn the machine back to medium low and incorporate the flour, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed, until it is fully integrated.

With the machine still running add the apples a little bit at a time to mix in well. If adding nuts, now is the time to do it.

Pour into the prepared pan, tap the sides to settle it in well and bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Let the cake cook for about 15 minutes then apply the glaze. Allow to cool fully before cutting

While the cake is baking, make the topping.

#### Ingredients

¼ cup butter

¼ cup heavy cream

¼ cup cheap bourbon

¼ cup cane sugar

¼ cup brown sugar

Put all ingredients in a small pot and bring to a simmer, stirring as needed to make a smooth caramel like glaze.

Pour over the cake, using a spatula to smear it around to cover the top completely.

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### **Leftover TG Gumbo**

The Day After...

Turkey Sandwiches are always nice, but they are usually *power eaten* Thanksgiving night in my house, just after the edibles have kicked in, and of course after my wife's *power clean-up*. For me, the thought of starting a broth from that turkey carcass starts from the minute it fogs my glasses as it emerges from the steamy oven. The deep, intoxicating aroma of cooking turkey penetrates my brain and gets day dreaming of how long I could extend the delicious experience. Stock and Broth!

The difference between a stock and a broth is simple. Stock is long cooked liquid made by slowly extracting flavor and nutrients from bones and aromatic vegetables, broth is a simple flavored liquid made from meat and bones that require shorter cooking time and a little salt. Either way, your house will smell bewitched.

Once you have made delicious turkey broth or stock, you can make any kind of soup, you can freeze some for later use, and/or you can make GUMBO!



### **Making Cajun Roux, my way.**

There are plenty of ways to make dark, chocolaty roux.

Most are a pain but this is a pretty simple technique.

1 ½ cups flour

2 cups pork lard, duck fat, clarified butter or vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 475 F.

**\*Remember that dark roux is as hot as caramel, reaching 400-500 degrees. Don't touch it!\***

In a heavy, oven-safe skillet, melt the fat (Cast iron is the way to go.)



Add the flour and whisk in until smooth.

Cook over medium high for a few minutes to make sure all of the flour is amalgamated with the fat.

Now put the entire pan in the hot oven and set a timer for 20 minutes. When the



timer goes off, carefully whisk the mix. It should be getting golden. Repeat this

procedure, cutting back the time by 5 minutes each time until your roux resembles chocolate.

Once you've made the roux, you should carefully add some of it to the warm stew.

Bring the stew back to a boil. Add a little more of the roux until you have reached

the desired thickness. The stew will thicken as it boils. Be patient.

You can and should reserve any leftover roux, refrigerated, for up to 3 months.





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## Leftover Thanksgiving Turkey Gumbo

This is more of a country style stew that will stick to your ribs! It can be served as a thick soup or over rice as a meal.

Serves 4 with leftovers

For the BROTH

1 Turkey Carcass, scraped of ny meat ( reserve that meat)

2 tbsp salt

10 cups water

3 cloves garlic, unpeeled, smashed

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For the GUMBO

2 links andouille sausage (about 8 oz), cut in half lengthwise then cut into ¼ inch thick slices.\* If you don't have Andouille, use what you have—Italian, Kielbasa, Chicken-Jalapeno, just don't use breakfast sausages

2-3 roughly chops leftover turkey meat (dark meat is best)

1 each: medium dice — bell peppers, celery, and onion

1 bunch scallions, chopped

1/2 cup parsley, chopped

3 tablespoons [Ric's BEST "CAGE"](#) Cajun seasoning (or another brand, tsk tsk)

1 teaspoon dry thyme

8 cups Turkey broth from above ( or chicken stock or even boxed broth)

2 cups okra, sliced (frozen works)

salt and pepper to taste

Tabasco

Worcestershire sauce

2 cups long grain white rice

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### **Make the broth.**

Here we go.

Use a pot big enough to fit you turkey carcass. If can can, break it up a little with your hands or a cleaver.  
Put the carcass pieces in the pot.

Cover with water, leaving at least 1 inch of room at the top so the pot doesn't overflow when it boils.

Add 1 tablespoons of salt and give it a stir to dissolve.

Now drop in the garlic and chicken and bring it to a boil.

Once it boils, skim any scum that may accumulate.and reduce heat to a simmer.

Simmer for one hour .

Strain, Reserving that broth.

### **Build the gumbo.**

In a heavy casserole pan, add a enough oil to coat the pan.

Add the sausage and lightly brown over medium heat.

Add the veggies and wilt until soft but not brown.

Add the thyme and Cajun seasoning and stir to coat.

Cook a few minutes Turkey broth.

After 20 minutes of cooking at a moderate boil, add the okra and turkey meat and cook for another 30 minutes gently.

Now stir in 1 cup of roux. Cook gently for another 15-20 minutes to thicken.

Pick up the palate by adding dashes of Worcestershire and Tabasco to taste.

Serve in bowls. Try dropping a poached egg on top for brunch!

\* Ric's Best CAGE Cajun seasoning is available at <https://shop.ricorlando.com>

Find out more about me, my sauces and spices, my Sicily tours and pop up dinners at <https://ricorlando.com>

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