

How to Spatchcock a Turkey (or any poultry)

Cut Out the Backbone

Put the turkey breast side down. Use poultry shears to cut along both sides of the backbone, beginning at the tail end. When it gets hard to cut use just the tip of the shears. This process is not super simple. It takes some “oomph” to cut through the rib bones. Have lots of towels handy to keep your hands from getting slippery. This picture shows my initial cuts in the skin along the sides of the backbone.

Open the turkey

Take hold of edges, and open the turkey. Turn the turkey breast-side up.

Break the Breastbone

Place your hand on one side of the breast, close to the breastbone, and push down firmly until you hear a crack then do the other side. (You may want to have someone tall do this part or stand on a step stool to give you better leverage. I seriously had to stand on a stool and press hard. I am 5'7".)

Flatten the Turkey

Pull the thighs outward so the turkey lies flat. Tuck the wing tips under to secure.

Brush with Oil or Butter and Roast

Place the turkey on a rimmed baking sheet. Let stand for 30 minutes. This is a good time to preheat the oven. Apply oil or butter and seasonings to turkey skin. To roast turkey, follow the directions below.

To Roast:

- Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
- Roast, rotating the sheet halfway through, basting twice. Continue to cook until a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh reaches 165 degrees, about 1 hour and 20 minutes. Let stand for 20 minutes before carving.
- These instructions are based on a 12-pound bird. A larger bird may require a bit more time. Please use a meat thermometer to check if the meat is cooked fully. (Mine was a 16-pound bird and it took just under 2 hours.

The skin is super crispy and even the breast meat is nice and juicy!

Use for the giblets:

- If you don't choose to use them in your Thanksgiving preparation please don't throw them away! Use the giblets, neck bone, and the backbone you removed in the spatchcock process to make stock. (The picture on the left is just the neck, back, and giblets simmering. The right is that plus the carcass being made into stock.)
- I like to use the giblets for Thanksgiving day in both my stuffing and gravy. To prepare them. When I remove the giblets and neck-bone from the bird I put them straight into a saucepan, cover them with water, and set the covered pot to simmer on low for at least an hour. After the giblets are cooked I remove the meat from the neck-bone and then chop that meat and the giblets into tiny pieces, removing any fat. I put a little over half of this into the stuffing and the rest into the gravy.

Now for the gravy:

- Take the drippings from the roasting pan and put them in a saucepan on medium to medium-high heat.

- Add enough chicken or turkey stock to bring the amount of liquid up to 1-2 cups depending on how much gravy you want.
- Taste your liquid. Your seasoning requirements are going to vary based on the amount of seasoning you put on your turkey that is transferred to the drippings. You will probably want to add about 1/2 tsp [salt](#), 1/4 pepper, and a TBSP [nutritional yeast](#). Alternatively, you can add a TBSP of [THM. Bouillon](#) (That link will take you to a recipe for stuffing AND the bouillon). It is very important to taste and season to your liking.
- Once you have the flavor you like you will add [glucomannan](#), whisking rapidly as you add to prevent clumping. The amount you add will depend on the amount of liquid you are using. You will want to start with 1/4 tsp per cup of liquid. Allow the gravy to simmer at a low boil, stirring occasionally. After about 5 minutes of simmering, if the gravy is not thick enough add another 1/8-1/4 tsp at a time, every 5 minutes, until it is as thick as you'd like. Do not add too much at a time.
- Taste again to make sure your seasoning is still correct. Sometimes glucomannan can “dampen” flavors, making it necessary to add more seasoning. Once the seasoning is correct, add the giblets if desired.