

A man with short brown hair, wearing a white shirt and a dark apron, is pouring olive oil from a bottle onto a whole raw turkey. The turkey is resting on a bed of white paper in a metal tray, surrounded by some fruit and herbs. The background shows a kitchen with white cabinets and a brick backsplash.

TALKING TURKEY

MAKE THIS HOLIDAY MEAL
YOUR BEST EVER

LESS TIME,
MORE FLAVOR

FOLLOW THE STEPS
TO A DELICIOUS
SMOKED TURKEY

HARDONS OUTDOOR

EBOOK | THANKSGIVING 2021

THE WEEK BEFORE THANKSGIVING

PLAN AHEAD FOR PERFECTION

1. A great bird starts before Thanksgiving Day. It sounds easy, but you must remember to thaw the bird. The USDA says to allow 24 hours of thawing time for every 4 - 5 pounds of turkey. Check the weight on your frozen turkey and figure out how many days it will take to thaw. Then add an extra day so you have time for step 2. (Your cooking day does not count as a thawing day.) Set a reminder on your phone so you remember to take the bird out of the freezer on time! If your bird is 12 pounds, it needs three days to thaw before the day you plan to brine it.

2. On Thanksgiving Eve Day, send your thawed bird to the spa. Letting your turkey bathe in a salty, flavorful brine such as Kosmos Turkey Brine is always a good idea. If you're using a Traeger turkey kit, the brine mix is included in the pellet bag. Follow package directions. For a 12 pound turkey using Kosmos Turkey Brine, the turkey should soak for 12 hours in the refrigerator.

3. Take 10 minutes to clean your pellet grill. You want your Traeger to be free of ash. Put on a clean drip tray liner and drip bucket liner. Fill your bin with pellets such as Traeger Signature Blend.

4. Late on Thanksgiving Eve, rinse off your brined turkey and place it on a sheet or roasting pan in the fridge overnight. This step is important to dry out the turkey skin so it isn't rubbery. Don't dry out the bird for more than about 6 hours.



5. After the turkey skin has dried, it's time to spatchcock. This simple step can cut your cooking time in half!

Early Thanksgiving morning, lay the turkey on a cutting board on its chest and, using a good pair of poultry shears, cut the backbone out of the turkey. You'll do this by making small snips first up one side of the backbone from tail to neck, and then the other. The backbone should come out in one piece. Now flip the bird chest up. Place one hand on each turkey breast and push down firmly. The turkey will flatten out. Voila - you just spatchcocked a turkey!

By simply flattening the turkey, you'll shave off at least an hour of cook time. The turkey will also cook more evenly and you won't have to worry about the meat drying out! Make sure you make the small investment in a good pair of poultry shears, as regular kitchen scissors are likely to break when cracking through bone. Also look for shears with blades that come apart for thorough cleaning.



6. Light your Traeger pellet-fired grill. Set the grill to 200. If you have an Ironwood model grill, turn on the Super Smoke feature to enhance your turkey with extra smoke flavor.

7. While the smoker pre-heats, it's time to season your turkey. Fat is essential to getting a crisp, golden skin. Rub the outside of the turkey with olive oil or smear it with softened butter, being sure to get all sides of the turkey.

8. Season your turkey generously. For a bright, herbal flavor, you can't beat Herky Perky by Saltlickers. Heath Riles' Garlic and Butter Rub is great on poultry. If you like a little kick to your Thanksgiving turkey, try Kosmos' Sriracha Dirty Bird rub. The Gospel by Meat Church would be another flavorful choice.

9. Don't forget to season UNDER the skin! Use your finger to separate the skin from the breast meat and create a pocket. Push some seasoning into the pocket so the breast meat will be full of flavor.



10. If your turkey came with a cheap plastic pop-up timer, pull it out and throw it away. Put your grill's temperature probe in the thickest part of the breast meat to ensure you cook to exactly the right temperature. (Alternatively, you could check the temperature manually during the cook using a Traeger digital instant read thermometer.) Put the turkey, breast side up, directly onto the grill grate. Let the turkey smoke for an hour. No need to flip.

11. Now it's time to accelerate the cooking and get a beautiful golden skin. Turn the temperature up to 400°. Cook until your probe reads 160°F in the thickest part of the turkey breast, being careful that the probe is not touching the bone. Take the turkey off the grill using an oversized spatula such as the Traeger XXL and let it rest, loosely covered with foil, coming up to 165°F. Resist the urge to carve your turkey as soon as it comes off the grill. Let it rest while you make gravy, reheat sides and set out the rolls.



TRAEGER

DON'T FORGET DESSERT!

BAKE PIE ON YOUR
TRAEGER THANKSGIVING
MORNING, BEFORE YOU
COOK THE TURKEY!

