

Holiday Turkey

For the time challenged



Frequently I am asked how we cook turkey for large parties and have it come out hot, golden, and juicy. We have limited oven space, so we cannot have turkeys roasting for several hours, I need them in and out quickly. Here is a method I use that results in a great turkey, with stuffing, in under two hours cooking time.

Ingredients/Supplies:

- 1 Turkey (12 - 14 lb)
- Favourite stuffing recipe
- 2 medium onions, 3 celery stalks, 2 carrots, 1 bulb garlic
- Roasting pan with rack
- Baking sheet
- Cooling rack
- Casserole dish
- Spice blend: 1/3 cup paprika, 1 tbsp. dry rosemary, 2 tsp. each of: garlic powder, celery salt, onion powder, salt & ground black pepper.
- 1/3 cup olive oil, clarified butter or vegetable oil

Method:

Turn on your oven to 425° F. Rinse turkey under cold running water and pat dry. Cut through the knuckle on the ankle about ¼ inch from where the skin meets the cartilage, this will allow the tendons to retract during cooking, resulting in more tender drumsticks. Cut vegetables into large chunks no smaller than a thumb, cut the onions into 8 and cut the garlic in half, across the cloves so each individual clove is halved. Toss these in oil, place on the baking sheet and caramelize in the oven until deep gold - almost black.

Combine the spice blend and oil to make a slurry and rub the bird inside and out. Allow to sit while you prepare your stuffing recipe and wait for vegetables to caramelize. Put the stuffing in the greased casserole dish and cover with foil.

When vegetables are ready, transfer them into the seasoned turkey cavity, adding some more garlic cloves (this is an option at any stage, but this is your last chance). Tie the legs together to cover the cavity, place the turkey into the roasting pan on the rack.

Note: If you do not have a rack cut up a little more carrot, onion, celery blend and use it as a bed. You do not want the turkey resting on the pan. Put it in the oven at 425° F for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 350° F and cook for an additional 30 minutes.

Next, baste the turkey, adding a squirt or two to your stuffing, and put the stuffing in the oven and cook for an additional 30 minutes. Check the bird with a thermometer or by piercing the joint where the leg meets the hip, juices should run clear and leg should feel loose. If the temperature is still low or juice is not clear, keep the turkey in the oven and check every 15 minutes.

Remember to check on the stuffing as well.

Once turkey is done, remove from the oven and place on a cooling rack. Be sure to have the sheet pan underneath catching drips.

Take roughly half the juice, or 1 to 1 ½ cups of the fat and pour it over the stuffing, cover and keep warm. Remove the vegetables from the cavity and place back in the roasting pan with remainder of the turkey juice. Add ½ cup of water or stock with ½ cup white wine to remaining turkey juice and simmer for 10 -15 minutes. Strain and thicken with cornstarch or flour slurry. ([YouTube](#))

This method does two things:

1. Roasting the turkey without stuffing reduces the time needed to cook.
2. Cooking the stuffing separately reduces the risk of under-cooked stuffing and allows for more even cooking as the air inside the turkey cavity heats up quickly, roasting from the inside as well.

Tips:

I work with well calibrated commercial ovens and even then, cooking times may vary between the ovens I have. With household ovens this will be more likely. It is almost guaranteed. So, if after the first 30 minutes there is no juice, turn up the oven to 375° F and continue following the method. You may need to add 30 minutes to the time. If the skin is dark and the juice is evaporating and there is evidence of dark sticky stuff bubbling on the bottom, add 1 cup of water and reduce to 325° F, and follow the method.

Bon appétit!

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