

# T-Day (Day Of)

Serves 1 | Active Time: 2 hours 45 minutes | Total Time: 5 hours 30 minutes

*Swick*

## Chef's Notes

### Roasted Turkey with Gravy

#### Purchasing the Turkey

If you can, buy a fresh turkey. The flavor is great and it's worth the extra cost. If buying frozen, thaw it properly in the fridge, on a tray and in its plastic. For every pound of turkey, plan for about 5 hours of thawing.

10 pound turkey: Approximately 50 hours (just over two days)

15 pound turkey: Approximately 75 hours (just over three days)

20 pound turkey: Approximately 100 hours (just over four days)

A thawed turkey can be kept in the fridge for up to two days before cooking.

#### What is brining?

Brine is a salty solution. The salt deeply penetrates the meat tissue, opening the pores and actually unlocks the fibers. Not only does it trap water molecules and keep the flesh juicy and moist, it seasons the flesh throughout, adding a lot of flavor.

#### How much salt should I use?

A moderate brine is approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of Kosher salt per 3 quarts of water.

#### Salt equivalents

Table Salt (without iodine) – 1 cup (10 ounces)

Morton Kosher Salt – 1-1/2 cups (about 8 ounces) so you'll need to use 1.5 cups in total

Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt (half as potent as regular table salt) – use 2 cups (5 ounces per cup)

When using other salts, such as sea salt, pickling salt, or other brands of Kosher salt, simply weigh out 10 ounces on your kitchen scale to find its equivalent of table salt.

Create different brines by adding herbs, spices, and brown sugar, honey or molasses. Apple juice, cider, apple cider vinegar, rice wine vinegar, stock, tea, beer, wine, or other liquids can replace some or all of the water.

#### Always start with a cold brine

For food safety reasons, the brine must be cold (40° degrees Fahrenheit, 4° degrees Celsius) to ensure the meat stays at proper refrigerator temperature. If you need to heat the brine mixture to dissolve the salt, make sure you cool the brine down before using. The food must be completely submerged. Refrigeration is absolutely required during brining. The meat and brine solution must be kept below

40° degrees Fahrenheit at all times. If you can't find a large enough container, fill a cooler with ice.

### Brining time

The turkey should sit in the brine for at least 10 hours. It can process for as much as 24 hours but the turkey will have absorbed all the brine it needs in 10 hours. The amount of brining time is not set in stone. Even a little brining is better than none. Brining for too long can ruin the flavor as well and make it too salty. If you are using a small turkey, cut down on the brining time, or reduce the amount of salt in the brine.

Once the meat is removed from the brine, you can rinse off the excess salt from the surface and pat dry. You can also air-dry poultry in the refrigerator overnight. Place a cooling rack over a baking sheet and rest the poultry on top. By letting the moisture evaporate, it is easier to achieve crispier skin.

Make sure to discard used brining liquid. It has been contaminated with raw food and cannot be reused.

### Stuff or not to stuff?

Don't stuff your turkey. Stuffing acts as insulation and makes cooking the turkey that much longer, creating dry breast meat. Hot air cannot get inside the turkey and can't cook the meat closest to the bone, which is the area that takes the longest to cook. Simply season the turkey extremely well with salt and pepper and let the hot oven air do its work.

### Preparing your turkey

Season the cavity and underneath the skin. Rub butter underneath the skin and make sure to start with a short stock for added flavor. Place the turkey on a V-rack, so it's not in contact with the juices in the pan. The steam from the juices will keep the turkey nice and moist during the slow, long cooking time. A V-rack guarantees a moist turkey and the beginnings of a delicious gravy.

Make sure you don't put a cold turkey in the oven. It will take that much longer to cook, and longer cooking time means dry meat. Let the turkey sit at room temperature for up to one hour before roasting.

### Ideal oven temperature

The ideal oven temperature is 350° degrees Fahrenheit.

### To baste or not to baste?

If you over-baste, you lower the oven temperature and the temperature of the turkey, making the cooking time longer. You create a baste by slipping butter underneath the skin. Baste another 1-2 times, but don't get carried away.

### Which way is up?

If you brine your turkey, it will be juicy any way you place it. However, if you don't brine, start with the breast side down. The gentle steam from the pan will keep the breast meat nice and moist. At half way point, turn it over so you end up with crispy skin.

When is it done?

Turkey needs to reach an internal temperature of 165° degrees Fahrenheit; higher than this will produce dry meat. Use a thermometer, and insert it into the thickest part of the thigh. Test both thighs for accurate readings. If you don't have a thermometer, stick a skewer into the thickest part of the thigh, making sure you hit bone; if the juices run clear, it's time to take the turkey out.

Why rest?

Resting any kind of meat, before carving, is essential. It allows the muscles to relax and heat distribute evenly. It makes it easier to carve, and the meat will be nice and juicy. Rest a large turkey for at least 20 to 30 minutes. Tent with foil and make sure to poke holes in the top. The steam must be able to escape so the skin doesn't get soggy.

For additional information, visit:

USDA Poultry Preparation and The National Organic Program

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### **Buttery Mashed Potatoes**

Two important things when cooking potatoes: 1) don't over cook them; and, 2) drain them right away. If they are left to sit in the water, they'll become waterlogged and you will end up with watery mashed potatoes.

Feel free to put them through a ricer or food mill. The reason we don't here is there are simply too many. It would take a long time to rice them all, and they would cool down considerably. By all means, rice potatoes when making them for a smaller crowd. Ricing ensures light, fluffy and ultra-smooth mashed potatoes.

The options for flavoring mashed potatoes are endless. Add different spices and things like bacon bits, minced chives or green onions, truffle oil, different cheeses, cream-cheese, sour cream, and cream; or keep them low-fat and use skim milk.

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### **Traditional Stuffing**

To reduce the cooking time for the stuffing, simply put it into a shallow and wide baking dish.

Add your own flair and favorite flavors to this simple stuffing, by incorporating items such as Italian sausage, chestnuts, mushrooms, and different vegetables. Just make sure the ratio is about 1 part vegetables/meat to 2 parts bread.

For a vegetarian version, simply use vegetable stock instead of chicken stock.

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### **Garlic-Proscuitto Baked Brussels Sprouts**

These Brussels sprouts can be prepared in advance, then covered and stored in the refrigerator until the next day. Just take them out of the refrigerator at least 30 to 45 mins. before cooking so they are not so cold going into the oven.

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## **Cassis Cranberry Sauce**

This cranberry sauce gets substantially thicker as it cools and can be made up to a week in advance.

It's best served at room temperature, so be sure to take it out at least an hour before dinner.

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## **Pumpkin Pie with Maple Whipped Cream**

Break the tradition of having raw dough in your pumpkin pie, by fully blind-baking the crust.

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## **Spiced Pumpkin Cheesecake**

It is important to have all of your ingredients at room temperature. Mix the cream cheese just until there are no lumps. If you try to cheat and use cold cream cheese, you will wind up incorporating too much air by overbeating. This may form unattractive air bubbles on the surface of your cake. Once the eggs are added, mix just until combined. Again, don't overbeat the mixture and incorporate too much air. This could make the cheesecake fall during baking. If you do wind up with lumpy batter, press the mixture through a sieve to obtain a smoother batter, rather than overbeating.

## **Turkey – Remove from Brine**

To start, remove the turkey from the brine and let it drain briefly before placing onto a tray. Discard the brine and pat the turkey dry. Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat it to 350° degrees Fahrenheit. Let the turkey sit at room temperature for one hour.

Meanwhile, you can prepare the short stock. Also, now is a good time to take the compound butter out of the fridge.

## **Step 1: Turkey – Remove from Brine**

## Turkey – Making the Short Stock

To make the short stock, first prepare your mise en place. Chop the onions, carrots and celery. Place into a bowl and set aside.

Using a heavy knife, carefully chop up the bones, including the reserved turkey neck. You could also ask the butcher to do this for you.

Preheat a large, stainless-steel fry pan over high heat. Once hot, add the oil and half of the bones. Let the bones brown and caramelize before adding half of the vegetables. Let the vegetables caramelize slightly. Deglaze with half of the white wine, scraping up any bits from the bottom. Transfer to the roasting pan and repeat with the second batch.

Once done, add the stock to the roasting pan. Place the V-rack over top and cover with foil. Poke a few holes to let the juices run through. Coat the foil with a bit of oil then set the pan aside while you prepare the turkey.

## Step 2: Turkey – Making the Short Stock

- 1 onion
- 1 carrot
- 1 rib celery
- 2 lbs chicken bones
- 4 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 6 cups stock (turkey or chicken)

## Turkey – First Hour of Roasting

To season the bird, have your mise en place ready. Season the cavity with the salt and pepper and add the vegetables and herbs. Rub the outside skin with a bit of oil. Then add about a third of the compound butter just underneath the skin. Place the turkey, breast-side-down onto the v-rack, and transfer to the oven. Set your timer for one hour.

Now, you have a whole hour to prep the potatoes.

### **Step 3: Turkey – First Hour of Roasting**

- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 onion
- 1 small carrot
- 1/2 head garlic
- 6 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

### **Potatoes – Prepping**

To start the potatoes, peel and remove any eyes. Rinse the potatoes, cut in half lengthwise and dice into 1 1/2" -inch cubes.

Place the potatoes into a pot. Cover with cold water.

Now that the turkey has been in the oven for one hour, let's flip it over.

### **Step 4: Potatoes – Prepping**

- 8 lbs Yukon gold potatoes (or russets)

### **Turkey – Second Hour of Roasting**

Before you remove the turkey from the oven, melt the compound butter. Then, using two cloths, carefully flip the turkey over. Brush the top with some of the melted butter and return to the oven. Set the timer for hour number 2.

Now, we have an hour to make the stuffing.

### **Step 5: Turkey – Second Hour of Roasting**

## Stuffing – Preparing

To prepare the stuffing, first finely dice the onions. Melt the butter in a large fry pan over medium-low heat. Start to sweat the onions while you finely dice the celery and carrots. Add these to the onions. Chop the fresh sage and thyme. Add all of the herbs and spices and let cook until the onions are translucent.

Once done, add the vegetable mixture to the bread. Toss to combine. Whisk the eggs and stock together. Pour this over the bread and toss again. Butter a large casserole dish. Add the stuffing and cover.

You can just set this aside, while you check the turkey. This is also a good time to take out the cranberry sauce.

## Step 6: Stuffing – Preparing

- 2 large onions
- 1/3 lb unsalted butter
- 8 ribs celery
- 3 large carrots
- 30 fresh sage leaves
- 8 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 tsp poultry seasoning
- 1 tbsp kosher salt
- 2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 4 large eggs
- 5 cups stock (turkey, chicken or vegetable)
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter

## Turkey – Third Hour of Roasting

Quickly brush the turkey with a bit more butter and set your timer for the third hour.

If you have used the apple cider brine, the sugar in the brine will make the turkey color a lot faster. If this happens, just cover it with foil to prevent the skin from over-browning.

## Step 7: Turkey – Third Hour of Roasting

## Stuffing – Baking

TIMING NOTE: At the 2 hour 30 minute mark of the turkey roasting, place the stuffing into the oven alongside the turkey.

Then start to cook the potatoes.

## Step 8: Stuffing – Baking

### Potatoes – Cooking

Add the salt and bay leaves to the potatoes and bring to a boil over high heat. Skim occasionally, and as soon as the potatoes come to a boil, turn the heat down and let simmer for about 15 to 17 minutes.

Test the potatoes for doneness. Once they're done, remove the bay leaves and drain. Return the potatoes to the pot and mash while they are still hot. Cover and set aside, while you heat up the butter and cream.

But first, check the turkey again.

## Step 9: Potatoes – Cooking

- 1 1/2 tbsp table salt
- 4 bay leaves

### Turkey - First Test

At the 3-hour mark, test the turkey for doneness by inserting a thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh. Then test the same area from the inside of the cavity. The inside reading will always be lower, so this is where you should take your final reading from.

Brush with the remaining butter and return to the oven for about 15-30 minutes. Because all ovens cook differently, and your turkey may be slightly bigger or smaller, the timing now will all depend on the reading you get from your turkey.

TIMING NOTE: Now is a good time (30 to 45 min. before cooking) to take the Brussels sprouts out of the refrigerator, so they are not stone cold going into the oven.

Now, let's finish the mashed potatoes.

## **Step 10: Turkey - First Test**

### **Potatoes – Mashing**

In a small pot, heat the butter and cream over medium heat and let come to a gentle boil. Whisk in the salt, pepper, nutmeg and set aside. Add the cream, a little bit at a time, and mix together. The potatoes should be a little bit wet. As they sit, they'll absorb some of the liquid. Taste for seasoning and add more salt and pepper, if you like.

Place thin slices of butter over top and cover the surface with plastic wrap to prevent a crust from forming. Cover and let sit until ready to serve.

Now, check to see how the turkey is doing.

## **Step 11: Potatoes – Mashing**

- 1/3 lb unsalted butter
- 2 cups half and half (or cream or milk)
- 1 tbsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp ground white pepper
- 1/2 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter

## **Turkey – Testing for Doneness**

Test the turkey again. The inside of the thigh should read 165° degrees Fahrenheit, which is perfect. Loosely tent with vented foil to allow the steam to escape. Let the turkey rest for at least 30 minutes before carving.

Remove the lid from the stuffing and move on to the yams.

## **Step 12: Turkey – Testing for Doneness**

### **Yams – Baking**

To bake the yams, cover a baking sheet with parchment paper. Toss the yams and evenly spread them out. Return the top rack to your oven, and bake the yams for about 15 minutes.

As the yams bake, you can make the gravy.

## **Step 13: Yams – Baking**

### **Turkey – Making the Gravy**

To make the gravy, strain the liquid from the roasting pan and let the fat rise to the top. Skim off the fat into a separate bowl and reserve.

Measure the liquid equal to 6 cups. Take 3/4 cup of the reserved fat and pour into a large sauce pan over medium heat. Once the fat is nice and hot, add the flour and stir continuously. As the roux cooks, it will turn from a light tan color to a nice rich brown. This will take about 10 to 15 minutes but the end result is well worth it.

Add about 1/3 of the stock and stir constantly. Stir and continue to add the stock until smooth. Once the 6 cups of stock have been added check for consistency, keeping in mind it will continue to thicken after you turn off the heat. If you like a thinner gravy you may want to add up to another cup of stock.

For a super-smooth gravy, strain again. Cover and keep the gravy hot while you finish up the vegetables.

Also, check to see how the yams are doing.

### **Step 14: Turkey – Making the Gravy**

- 6 to 7 cups stock (from short stock)
- 3/4 cup fat drippings
- 1 cup + 2 tbsp all-purpose flour

### **Yams – Tossing**

Toss the yams and continue to bake for another 15 to 20 minutes, or until fork tender.

### **Step 15: Yams – Tossing**

### **Brussels Sprouts – Baking**

Place the Brussels sprouts into the oven with the yams and stuffing and bake for about 20-25 minutes.

## **Step 16: Brussels Sprouts – Baking**

### **The Final Minutes**

Now it's time to put everything on the table while you set yourself up to carve the turkey. Here is where you call in the troops and put some people to work. Take the cheesecake and/or pumpkin pie out of the fridge. Place a bowl and whisk in the fridge to later make the maple-whipped cream.

Once the Brussels sprouts are warmed through, take them out of the oven and set on a hot plate. By now, the stuffing should be hot and have a nice golden crust. Place this on the table and check the yams. Once fork-tender, transfer them to a serving dish.

Then turn off the oven and heat up your plates for a few minutes. Just leave the door open a crack to let out some of the heat. Remember to use oven mitts when removing, as they'll be hot.

Finish up by removing the plastic wrap from the potatoes and stir in the melted butter. Transfer to a serving dish, and make sure the gravy is nice and hot. And don't forget about the cranberry sauce!

## **Step 17: The Final Minutes**

### **Turkey – Carving**

There are two ways to carve a turkey. In either case, make sure to hone your knife so it's nice and sharp.

The first method is carving at the table. Start by slicing off the wing, then slice the meat off the breast. Cut off the drumstick and thigh, then continue slicing along the breast.

To carve in the kitchen, remove the whole breast by cutting along the rib cage. Place the breast onto a cutting board and slice vertically against the grain. Next, cut off the thigh and drumstick. Cut between the knuckle of the thigh and the drumstick and continue to carve.

After all of that work, you can now enjoy a fabulous dinner!

## **Step 18: Turkey – Carving**

## **Pie – Making the Whip Cream**

Add the cream to the chilled bowl and whisk just a bit before adding the maple syrup. Continue to whisk until you reach soft peaks. Slice the pie and serve with a dollop of the maple-whipped cream.

### **Step 19: Pie – Making the Whip Cream**

- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1 tbsp maple syrup

## **Cheesecake – Serving**

To serve the cheese cake, slide a knife around the edges one more time. Remove the ring and gently lift the cheesecake onto a cutting board. Use a flat spatula to loosen the paper, then slide the parchment out from underneath.

To cut the cheesecake, place a long knife into hot water. Wipe dry before slicing. Do this each time you make a cut, and you will end up with perfect pieces every time. This cheesecake is great on its own or it can be served with a dollop of whip cream.

Enjoy dessert and hope you had a great meal overall!

### **Step 20: Cheesecake – Serving**