

# BRINED AND ROASTED THANKSGIVING TURKEY

## INGREDIENTS

### **Brine (optional)**

- 1-¼ gallons (20 cups) cold water
- 1 cup kosher salt
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 bay leaves, torn into pieces
- ½ bunch fresh thyme
- 8 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed

- ½ tsp. black peppercorns smashed
- 1 15-lb. fresh turkey (thawed if not fresh), giblets removed and set aside for another use

### **Turkey**

- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tsp. smoked or sweet paprika

## PREPARATION

**Prep time:** : If your turkey is frozen, allow 48 hours to thaw in the refrigerator. Brine the turkey for 24 hours before roasting.

**Cook time:** Varies based on size of turkey, refer to chart below.

**Serves:** 14-16 people (1 pound per person)

**Brine (optional):** Place the water in a large non-reactive pot (like a stainless steel stockpot) or a plastic bucket that can easily hold the liquid and the turkey. Add all the brine ingredients and stir for a minute or two until the sugar and salt dissolve. Put the turkey into the brine and refrigerate for 24 hours. If the turkey floats to the top, cover it with plastic wrap and weigh it down with a plate and cans to keep it completely submerged in the brine.

Preheat oven to 500°F.

**Roast:** Remove the bird from the brine and drain well. Pat dry. Brush with melted butter. Stuff the turkey. Sprinkle with paprika. Trussing the turkey is an option but is not required. The bird cooks more evenly when NOT trussed. Place the bird on its back (breast side up) on a well-oiled roasting rack in a roasting pan. Add enough water to the roasting pan so that it is ¾-inch deep. Put the turkey in the oven with its legs towards the back of the oven (since it is hotter there and the legs need longer to cook). Roast in a preheated oven for 20 minutes. Remove from oven and move the turkey around to make sure it is not sticking to the rack. Tent with foil and return to the oven to finish cooking. Roast about 1 hour and 40 more minutes if unstuffed and 2 hours and 10 more minutes if stuffed. The turkey is done when the legs and thighs move up and down freely, the juices are clear in the pan and a meat thermometer inserted into the thigh reads 160°F. Reserve the pan juices for the gravy.

**Serve:** Allow the turkey to stand, tented with foil, for 20 minutes before carving and serving.

### **Note:**

- You may halve or double the recipe. The important thing is to prepare enough brine to cover the turkey completely.
- Adjust cooking times as follows for various bird sizes:

WEIGHT	STUFFED	UNSTUFFED
10 pounds	1 hour and 45 minutes	1 hour and 15 minutes
12 pounds	1 hour and 50 minutes	1 hour and 20 minutes
15 pounds	2 hours and 30 minutes	2 hours
20 pounds	3 hours and 30 minutes	3 hours

### **For kids:**

- Most kids like turkey, but if they don't, consider using a spice rub or alternate preparation method.

### **For leftovers:**

- Use leftover turkey to make a comforting turkey pot pie using some purchased puff pastry as a crust. Other leftover meals that are great for cooler weather are turkey soup, turkey sandwiches, turkey salad, or wild rice salad with turkey.

### **Simple substitutions:**

- If your family doesn't want to go the traditional route, you can use this same preparation for chicken, duck or game hens. For a quicker preparation, ask your butcher to break down your turkey and roast the pieces individually.

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