

Dad's Turkey, etc.

Equipment and Basics

A large **roasting pan** 18 x 14 inches, with a rack to keep the turkey above the liquids. A **baster**. A **sieve**. A 2-3 quart **pot**. A 9 X 13 Pyrex (or other) **baking pan**. 2 nine-inch **pie pans** (Pyrex or aluminum). A large **frying pan**. A large **mixing bowl**.

The **cranberry sauce** can be made a day ahead and refrigerated. The **stuffing** should be made before the turkey unless you have two ovens (I make it in the morning); refrigerate, then reheat at 300 degrees in the oven for 15 minutes after you take the turkey out.

Brown Sugar Turkey and Gravy

Prepare the turkey the **previous** day.

Takes **5-6 hours** cooking time. Get it in the oven by noon.

A 16-20 pound turkey, unfrozen

1 onion, cut into quarters

2 cans chicken broth

Aluminum foil

Turkey rub:

1/2 cup brown sugar

2 tablespoons salt (coarse sea salt or kosher is best)

1 tablespoon onion powder

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon ground allspice

1 teaspoon ground cloves

1 teaspoon ground mace

Mix these in a small bowl

Wash the turkey in the sink, inside and out, after taking out the package(s) of guts and the neck. I roast the neck along with the turkey. Dry inside and out with paper towels. Cut off excess skin at both ends. I use a large knife to punch a hole through the bottom of the turkey so juices can flow out. Put the turkey, breast up, on the rack in the roasting pan. Do not tie the legs together. Hand rub the

brown sugar mixture all over the outside of the turkey (it's messy - some will end up in the pan), including the legs, wings and back (also the neck). Do not put stuffing in the turkey! Refrigerate, uncovered, **overnight**.

The next day, take the turkey out, preheat the oven to **300 degrees**. Put two onion quarters inside the turkey, two in the pan. Sprinkle the turkey with pepper. Cover loosely with a sheet of aluminum foil and roast for **2 hours**.

Uncover the turkey, add a cup chicken broth to pan and use it to baste the turkey every half hour or so (add another cup halfway), roasting **2 hours** more.

Cover the turkey with aluminum foil again and roast **1-2 hours** more, depending on the size.

Turn off the oven, take the turkey and pan out. Using gloves or two large forks, move the turkey to a large platter or cutting board (after tilting the inside juices into the pan), cover it with foil and let sit **30 minutes** before carving. The juices in the pan will be the **gravy**:

Brown Sugar Gravy

Add a can (or more) of chicken broth to the roasting pan and stir to get most of the drippings and roastings. Pour through a sieve into a 2-3 quart pot. If your turkey was very fatty, cool the liquid, then put the pot in the freezer for 20 minutes so the fat can congeal at the surface and you can scrape it off with a spoon.

Bring to a medium boil for a few minutes. (If you want thick gravy, first add a teaspoon of cornstarch dissolved in a little bit of warm water.) Turn off the heat, season with salt and pepper.

Pearl Onion Cranberry Sauce

Takes **20 minutes**. I double this recipe if there are lots of people.

1 basket pearl onions (10 oz.)

To shed the outer layers, dump the onions into a pot of boiling water and cook for **4 minutes**. Rinse in cold water. Peel by cutting off the bottoms and squeezing with your fingers so the insides pop out. Put aside until later.

Sugar syrup:

1 cup brown sugar

1 cup water

2 cinnamon sticks

1 tablespoon fresh ginger, finely chopped

1 teaspoon grated lemon peel (fresh or from the spice rack)

Mix these together in a pot and bring to a boil over medium-high heat for **10 minutes**, stirring once in a while. Turn off the heat and put aside.

1 quarter stick butter (2 tablespoons)

2 cups cranberries

3 tablespoons dried currants

3 tablespoons Madeira cooking wine (or Marsala)

1 teaspoon red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon brown sugar

pinch of salt

Melt the butter in a large frying pan at **medium-high heat**. Add the onions and cook **6 minutes** until they brown slightly. Add 1 teaspoon brown sugar and pinch of salt, add the currants, stir a couple of minutes. Add the Madeira and vinegar. Stir. Add the sugar syrup. Add **one** cup cranberries, cook for **5 minutes**, stirring. The cranberries will split open. Add **one more** cup of cranberries, cook another **5 minutes**, stirring a lot. Turn off the heat, take out the cinnamon sticks. Cool.

Tastes even better if you make it a day in advance and refrigerate.

Corn Bread and Pepper Stuffing

Takes an **hour and a half**. You don't actually stuff this in the turkey. Make it before the turkey and reheat once the turkey is out.

First you have to make corn bread from scratch. (In a pinch you can use store-bought corn bread or muffins, but they're really too sweet.) To make two loaves:

Canola or other oil
2 cups yellow cornmeal
4 large eggs
1 & 1/2 cups buttermilk
1 & 1/2 teaspoon salt
1 & 1/2 teaspoon baking **powder**
1/2 teaspoon baking **soda**

Pre-heat the oven to **450 degrees**. Put 1 tablespoon oil in each of two pie pans and heat in the oven. Mix the buttermilk and eggs in a large bowl. Add the salt, baking powder and baking soda and stir. Slowly mix in the 2 cups of cornmeal.

Pour half the cornmeal mixture into each pie pan (**careful, the oil is hot!** I leave the pans on the oven rack while doing this). Bake **15 minutes**. Turn off the oven, remove the pans, cool a few minutes, then turn the corn breads out and cool them to room temperature.

1 large leek, chopped (just the white and light green parts)
2 red bell peppers, chopped
2 yellow bell peppers, chopped
6-8 cups fresh bread crumbs (crumble the insides of a country bread)
3-4 cups chicken broth
4 eggs
1 & 1/2 sticks butter (12 tablespoons)
3 tablespoons dried rubbed sage
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon pepper

Crumble the two corn breads into a large bowl, add the fresh bread crumbs, sage, salt, and pepper, mix well.

Melt the butter in a large frying pan over **high heat**, add the leeks and peppers, cook for **10 minutes**, stirring once in a while so they don't burn. Turn off the heat, add the vegetables to the bread mixture and stir in. Beat the eggs and add. Add 3 cups chicken broth, stir well; if dry, add more chicken broth, but you don't want it soggy.

Pre-heat the oven to **350 degrees**. Butter the 9 X13 baking pan, evenly add the stuffing mixture and bake for **30 minutes**. Fluff with a fork; put a sheet of aluminum foil on the top and bake **30 minutes** more. Turn off the heat, let cool, refrigerate while you roast the turkey. Reheat in the oven at **300 degrees** for **15 minutes**.