

Mel's Thanksgiving Turkey and Stuffing

I am asked over and over why brine a turkey? If you season the outside of the turkey the seasoning does not penetrate the skin. If you season the cavity the meat in between the cavity and the skin does not get much flavor. If you brine a turkey the flavor penetrates the meat and the flavor permeates the bird.

Remember never cook a turkey frozen as the outside will be dry by the time the inside gets cooked. Remember let your turkey come to room temperature before putting in the oven.

Brine :

Ice

½ cup salt

½ cup soy sauce

fresh thyme

sprigs of Rosemary

1 orange

½ cup of brown sugar

In a large bucket (or plastic bag in a bucket) add a gallon of water ½ cup salt, ½ cup soy sauce. ½ cup brown sugar, a bunch of fresh thyme, a few sprigs of rosemary and an orange cut and half. (I know the orange seems weird but the oils leach from the orange and give the turkey a slight citrus flavor.) Place the turkey in the brine and fill the bucket with ice until the turkey is completely submerged in the liquid. Let the turkey soak in the brine for at least 12 hours.

When you take the turkey out of the brine make sure you clean the cavity, to get all of the little bits that might give the turkey an odd flavor. Save the neck bones, the gizzard and the giblets and any other organ meats for making the gravy. Pat the turkey dry.

12 – 15 lb turkey

2 chopped sage leaves

2 sprigs of thyme

½ cup of honey

¼ cup fresh squeezed orange juice

1 Tbl granulated garlic

3 Tbl onion powder

5 scallions chopped

1 Tbl black pepper

¼ cup Olive oil

½ cup of dry sherry

1 onion cut in half

1 head of garlic cut in half

2 stalks of celery

1 orange cut in ¼



In a bowl combine chopped, sage leaves, thyme, honey, orange juice, granulated garlic, onion powder, scallions and black pepper. Combined the seasoning to make a paste. Rub the inside of the cavity of the bird with the spice and herb mixture. Stick your fingers between the skin and the turkey meat. Place the rest of the seasoning mixture under the skin. In as many places as you can.

In the cavity place the onion, celery, garlic and the orange. What you put in the cavity is going to flavor the turkey meat.

Combine the olive oil and sherry and baste your turkey. This will produce a golden color on the skin. Bake the turkey at 300 until you have an internal temperature of 160. (don't rely on the pop up thermometers) The slower you cook your turkey the moister it will be. Never put your turkey direct in the pan as the air can't circulate leaving the bottom unable to brown. If you don't have a rack cut up some carrots and celery and let your turkey sit on top of that.

Stuffing

2 Onions diced
14 oz of sliced mushrooms
1 cup diced celery
1 cup of fresh cranberries
1tsp of salt
1tsp pepper
1 cup diced dried fruit
1 granny smith apple
1 cup of sherry
1 pkg stuffing mix
1 pkg cornbread stuffing mis.
Olive oil
1 egg
1 cup chicken stock
4 cloves of minced garlic

In a large sauté pan brown onions, mushrooms, dried fruit, cranberry, celery, apple. salt and pepper in olive oil until the onions become golden brown. When the onions are brown and the cranberries have popped add the garlic. (if you add the garlic too early it can become bitter) Next add the sherry so you have the flavoring but not the alcohol and cook for another two minutes. Beat the egg and pour over the stuffing mix and the fruit and veggie mix and mix well add chicken stock to moisten. I like to make my stuffing into patties, and bake on an oiled cookie sheet, so that you get a bit of crunch in every bite. Bake at 400 for about an hour or until you have crust. I love stuffing patties in sandwiches the next day with or with out the left over turkey.