

Braised Turkey with Gravy

From America's Test Kitchen episode: *A Slow and Easy Thanksgiving*.

Serves 10 to 12

Instead of drumsticks and thighs, you may use 2 whole leg quarters, 1½ to 2 pounds each. The recipe will also work with turkey breast alone; in step 1, reduce the salt and sugar to ½ cup each and the water to 4 quarts. If you are braising kosher or self-basting turkey parts, skip the brining step and instead season the turkey parts with 1½ teaspoons of salt.

INGREDIENTS

TURKEY

Salt and pepper

1 cup sugar

1 (5- to 7-pound) whole bone-in turkey breast, trimmed

4 pounds turkey drumsticks and thighs, trimmed

3 onions, chopped

3 celery ribs, chopped

2 carrots, peeled and chopped

6 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed

2 bay leaves

6 sprigs fresh thyme

6 sprigs fresh parsley

1/2 ounce dried porcini mushrooms, rinsed

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

4 cups low-sodium chicken broth

1 cup dry white wine

GRAVY

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

Salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. FOR THE TURKEY: Dissolve 1 cup salt and sugar in 2 gallons cold water in large container. Submerge turkey pieces in brine, cover, and refrigerate for 3 to 6 hours.

2. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 500 degrees. Remove turkey from brine and pat dry with paper towels. Toss onions, celery, carrots, garlic, bay leaves, thyme, parsley, porcini, and 2 tablespoons butter in large roasting pan; arrange in even layer. Brush turkey pieces with remaining 2 tablespoons butter and season with pepper. Place turkey pieces, skin side up, over vegetables, leaving at least ¼ inch between pieces. Roast until skin is lightly browned, about 20 minutes.

3. Remove pan from oven and reduce temperature to 325 degrees. Pour broth and wine around turkey pieces (it should come about three-quarters of way up legs and thighs). Place 12 by 16-inch piece of parchment paper over turkey pieces. Cover roasting pan tightly with aluminum foil. Return covered roasting pan to oven and cook until breasts register 160 degrees and thighs register 175 degrees, 1¾ to 2¼ hours. Transfer turkey to carving board, tent loosely with foil, and let rest for 20 minutes.

4. FOR THE GRAVY: Strain vegetables and liquid from roasting pan through fine-mesh strainer set in large bowl. Press solids with back of spatula to extract as much liquid as possible. Discard vegetables. Transfer liquid to fat separator; allow to settle, 5 minutes. Reserve 3 tablespoons fat and measure out 3 cups braising liquid (reserve any remaining broth for another use).

5. Heat reserved fat in medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, until flour is dark golden brown and fragrant, about 5 minutes. Whisk in 3 cups braising liquid and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until gravy is thick and reduced to 2 cups, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove gravy from heat and season with salt and pepper to taste.

6. Carve turkey and serve, passing gravy separately.

TECHNIQUE

HOW BRAISING CREATES JUICY, FLAVORFUL TURKEY PLUS RICH GRAVY

Contrary to what you might expect, it's possible for braised meat to turn out dry. To guarantee moist, juicy meat, we brine the turkey and cook it in a low oven.

1. BRINE Brining the turkey parts in water, salt, and sugar not only ensures that the outer layers of the breast don't dry out during cooking but also seasons the meat thoroughly.



2. BROWN To boost complexity and lend roasted flavor to the mix, briefly brown the turkey parts in a 500-degree oven along with the aromatics and flavorings.



3. ADD LIQUID To ensure a concentrated braising liquid, pour 1 cup of wine and 4 cups of broth into the pan—just enough to partially submerge the meat.



4. BRAISE Cover the pan with parchment and foil and then braise gently in a 325-degree oven until the white



and dark meat are cooked through, about two hours.



5. MAKE GRAVY Making gravy from the rich-flavored braising liquid is easy: Strain the liquid, use some of its fat to make a roux, add back the liquid, and simmer until thickened.



America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of *Cook's Country* and *Cook's Illustrated* magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to *America's Test Kitchen* (www.americastestkitchen.com) on public television.