

TURKEY TERRIFIC: Brine Your Turkey and add “Super Butter”

The brine is not overwhelmingly spiced, so you're getting a nicely flavored result without being overly sugared or too salty.

I usually put celery, chopped apple and onion in the cavity of the turkey just to further pump up the flavor.

* Allow 2 days ahead of roasting time for this preparation! I begin brining the turkey on Tuesday morning before roasting it Thanksgiving morning.

Bring to a boil, then simmer 10 minutes:

- 4 C. filtered water
- ½ C. Kosher salt
- ½ C. dark brown sugar, packed
- 2 T. molasses
- 6 large Bay leaves (dried)
- 1 bunch fresh Thyme (I save 1 t. of the leaves to use in my “super” butter.)
- (1) 4”-5” piece of fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 T. Allspice berries, crushed coarsely
- 1 T. Peppercorns, crushed coarsely
- ¼ t. Red Pepper flakes
- 4 more C. filtered water (added later)

Cover pan and allow the brine to steep for about 30 minutes. When cool, put it (with spices and all ingredients) in the container you are using to brine the turkey. Make sure you can fit it in your refrigerator! 😊

Add 2 quarts ice cubes and 4 C. more filtered water to the brine, and then add the turkey to the brine. Add more ice if you need it to make sure the turkey is submerged in the brine. Refrigerate for 24 hours.

VERY IMPORTANT STEP: The night before you cook the turkey, remove it from the brine and set it in a colander placed in a large bowl or baking dish so the turkey can drain. Cover with a clean dish towel and refrigerate 8 hours or overnight. The goal is to let the skin dry out.

I allow the drained turkey to sit at room temp for about an hour before I roast it at 400 degrees.

“Super Butter” (to be inserted into the turkey via frozen “spikes”)

- Mince the following ingredients:
 - 1 t. fresh Thyme leaves
 - 1 t. fresh Rosemary leaves
 - 1 small Shallot
 - 2 or 3 fresh Sage leaves
 - 6 T. butter
 - 1/8 t. Kosher salt
- Mash the minced herbs and shallot into 6 T. butter and 1/8 t. Kosher salt.

Spread the “super butter” at least 1/4” thick on a parchment paper-lined cookie sheet. I usually make a rectangle about 2” wide and 5” long.
Freeze the butter until ready to use.

Using a knife dipped in very hot water, cut the butter into 1/2” slices and separate them, warming the knife each time. (A gentle rocking motion helps cut through without breaking the “spikes”). Return these to the freezer or immediately insert them into the turkey. The goal is to end up with about a dozen “butter spikes” for adequate distribution.

Make deep cuts by piercing the turkey wherever you can and push a butter “spike” into that cut. It should be tight. I use a paring knife with a blade about the length of the “spikes.” It helps to poke your finger into the cut to make more room for the “spike.”

Leave one of the butter spikes aside so it can soften and be used to baste the turkey during the last half hour of roasting. You can save any extra butter for many other uses, such as seasoning some crisp-tender green beans just before serving them. It will keep in the freezer.

One final note:

Every recipe should be tested, regardless of its source. There are many variables that can come into play (especially with baking) whether it's altitude, humidity, ingredient brands, etc. With our recipes, we are giving you tested information that seeks to deliver the best possible outcome. However, your testing our recipe(s) is the final lap of the race!

Let's remember two timeless quotes from culinary icon, Julia Child:

"This is my invariable advice to people: Learn how to cook—try new recipes, learn from your mistakes, be fearless and above all have fun."

"I would far prefer to have things happen as they naturally do, such as the mousse refusing to leave the mold, the potatoes sticking to the skillet, the apple charlotte slowly collapsing. One of the secrets of cooking is to learn to correct something if you can, and bear with it if you cannot."