



## 2-3 Days Before

Serves: 10 to 12 | Active Time: 1 hour 5 minutes | Total Time: 16 hours

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## Recipe Steps

### Step 1: Cheesecake – Making the Crust



- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 2 tbsp icing sugar
- 2 tbsp light brown sugar
- 1/8 tsp table salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 1 large egg yolk

#### Method:

To begin the cheesecake, cover the bottom of a 10-inch spring form pan with a parchment round, letting it hang over by about an inch. Lock the base over the paper and place onto a large, round piece of foil and fold up the sides. Fold and wrap a 3-foot strip of foil securely around the pan. Spray the inside with non-stick spray and set aside.

Next, mix together the flour, icing sugar, brown sugar and salt. Cut in the butter with a pastry cutter or fork. Break up the egg yolk and drizzle over top. Keep mixing, cleaning the cutter from time to time with a knife. Then gently knead the dough with your hands until it comes together.

Flour the surface and shape the dough into a round, gently rolling and turning, so it doesn't stick to the counter. Fold the dough and transfer to the pan. Press it into place, and make sure the dough is snug against the sides. Chill in the freezer for about 30 minutes.

Preheat your oven to 350° degrees Fahrenheit and bake the crust for approximately 30-35 minutes or until golden. Remove and let cool slightly. Gently press the edges up against the sides, so the filling doesn't leak to the bottom. Let cool completely, while you make the filling.

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### Step 2: Cheesecake – Making the Filling and Baking



- 32 oz cream cheese (4-8 ounce packages)
- 1 1/3 cups sugar
- 1 tbsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1/8 tsp ground cloves
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 can solid pumpkin purée (15 ounces)
- 3 large eggs

**Method:**

Before you make the filling, be sure all of your ingredients are at room temperature. Blend the cream cheese until smooth. Add the sugar and continue to mix; then add the vanilla, ginger, clove, cinnamon and fresh nutmeg. Lastly, add the pumpkin puree and mix until blended. Scrape the sides of the bowl to ensure it's all incorporated. Add the eggs, one at a time, scraping the bowl as you go.

Blend the mixture together, but don't over mix. Pour into the crust, smooth the top a bit and place into a roasting pan.

Place the roasting pan into the oven, then fill with hot water until it reaches half way up the side of the cheesecake. Bake for approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Check the cheesecake by gently shaking the pan. It should have a solid jiggle. Keep in mind it will continue to cook as it cools and sets. Take the cheesecake out of the water and place onto a cooling rack for a few minutes. Run a knife along the edges, to prevent the top from cracking as it cools. Remove the foil, leave the ring on and let cool for about 30 minutes. Then refrigerate on the cooling rack for at least 12 to 48 hours.

Now go ahead and make the cranberry sauce.

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**Step 3: Making the Cranberry Sauce**

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 bag fresh cranberries (14 ounce)
- 1/2 orange
- 1/4 cup Creme de cassis (black current liqueur) - can substitute with any black current concentrate. such as Ribena

**Method:**

To make the sauce, place the sugar and water into a medium pot, and bring to a boil. Once the sugar dissolves, add the cranberries, squeeze the orange juice, and bring this back to a boil.

Turn down the heat, and let simmer for about 10 to 15 minutes. This just depends on how thick you want your cranberry sauce. Add the cassis and stir everything together. Once you reach the proper consistency, turn off the heat.

The sauce will thicken considerably, as it cools. Once cooled, refrigerate until ready to use. Just remember to take it out of the fridge at least an hour before dinner is ready.

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**Notes**



## 1 Day Before

Serves: 10 to 12 | Active Time: 3 hours | Total Time: 12 hours to 24 hours

### Recipe Steps

#### Step 1: Turkey – Brining



- 2 qt cold water
- 1 large onion
- 1 bunch fresh thyme
- 1 1/2 cups Kosher salt - can substitute with 3/4 cup table salt
- 1 turkey (15 pounds)
- 5 qt cold water
- 2 qt ice

**Method:** To brine the turkey, place 2 quarts of cold water into a medium pot and bring to a boil. Slice the onion and add to the pot, along with the thyme and Kosher salt. Once all of the salt has dissolved, turn off the heat and set aside to steep and cool.

Next, clean the turkey by removing and reserving the neck. Discard the giblets unless you choose to add them to your stuffing. Using your fingers, gently loosen the skin from the top of the bird. Then rinse the turkey with cold water.

In a large container, add the steeped brine mixture and 5 quarts of very cold water. Top up with 2 quarts of ice. Add the turkey and make sure it's completely covered with the brine. Place into the refrigerator or a large cooler full of ice for up to 24 hours.

Now you can go ahead and make the compound butter.

#### Step 2: Turkey – Making the Compound Butter



- 1/2 lb unsalted butter
- 1/2 tsp Kosher salt - can substitute with 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- 1 tsp freshly cracked pepper
- 2 tsp fresh thyme

**Method:** To make the compound butter, finely chop the thyme. Mash the thyme, salt and pepper into the butter, then place into the refrigerator until tomorrow.

That was easy; now let's move onto the stuffing.

#### Step 3: Stuffing – Cutting the Bread



- 2 loaves French bread (28 cups, once cut)

**Method:** To begin the stuffing, cut the bread into ½ - inch cubes.

Dry the bread by leaving uncovered on the counter for up to 24 hours.

Let's move on to the yams.

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#### Step 4: Yams - Preparing



- 6 lb yams
- 3 tbsp maple syrup
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp freshly cracked pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp Kosher salt - can substitute with 3/4 tsp table salt

**Method:** To prepare the yams, peel, slice in half, then cut into 1 to 1 1/2 inch cubes. Mix together the maple syrup, olive oil, nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper and salt. You could also add a few pinches of cayenne pepper, if you like. Pour over the yams and toss to coat.

Cover the yams and refrigerate until tomorrow.

Now let's get started with the Brussels sprouts.

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#### Step 5: Brussel Sprouts – Preparing



- 2 lb Brussels sprouts
- 2 tsp table salt

**Method:** To prepare the Brussels sprouts, trim off the very end, then score the stem with an "X". Bring a pot of cold, salted water to a boil and add the sprouts. Simmer, uncovered, for about 7-10 minutes. Don't let the water boil too hard, otherwise the sprouts will tumble into each other and the leaves will start to come apart.

While the sprouts cook, prepare an ice bath. After about 7 minutes, test one of the larger sprouts to check for doneness. As soon as they are done to your liking, place into the ice bath and let them cool for about 3-4 minutes to stop the cooking process, set the color, and remove most of the sulfurous smell. Remove the sprouts from the water and drain well.

While the sprouts drain go ahead and start the sauce.

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#### Step 6: Brussel Sprouts – Making the Mornay Sauce



- 3 strips prosciutto - can substitute with bacon or ham
- 2 cloves fresh garlic
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 1/2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/8 tsp ground white pepper
- 1 tsp Kosher salt - can substitute

**Method:** Begin the sauce by cutting the prosciutto into small strips. Chop the garlic and pull the leaves from the stem of the thyme. Grate the cheese and set everything aside. Over low heat, melt the butter, along with the prosciutto and garlic.

Let cook for about a minute, then add the flour and stir.

To avoid lumps, add the milk in a few stages, letting the milk boil each time before stirring. Let the mixture come back up to boil before

- with 1/2 tsp table salt
- 1/8 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/3 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano

adding more milk. You may need to turn up the heat slightly. Once you've added all of the milk, bring the sauce to a gentle boil.

Let cook for about a minute then turn off the heat. Add half the cheese, stir to melt then add the rest. Add the pepper, salt, thyme and fresh nutmeg. Whisk everything together and taste for seasoning.

Pour the Brussels sprouts into the sauce. Just make sure they are very well drained. Also, when you pour them into the sauce be careful of any water at the bottom of the bowl. Fold together, then pour into a casserole dish and top with the grated cheese.

Let cool, then cover and store in the refrigerator until tomorrow. Now, you just have the pumpkin pie to make.

### Step 7: Pie – Making the Dough



- 5 tbsp unsalted butter
- 4 tbsp shortening
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup cake flour
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp table salt
- 1/8 tsp baking powder
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 tsp distilled white vinegar
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 3 ice cubes

**Method:** To start the dough, cut the butter and shortening into small cubes and transfer to the freezer for about 20 minutes to harden.

Place the flours, sugar, salt and baking powder into the bowl of a food processor and pulse to combine. Whisk the egg yolk, vinegar, and water together. Add the ice cubes just before you're ready to make the dough and let it sit for a few minutes to get really cold.

Once the butter and shortening are firm, add half to the flour mixture and pulse on and off for about 45 seconds. The smaller pieces of butter and shortening will help bind the dough together. Add the second half and pulse only 6 or 7 times. Don't over mix at this stage. The bigger pieces will give the crust its flakiness.

Place this into a bowl and add about 3 tablespoons of the egg mixture. Stir gently with a fork. Add a tablespoon at a time, until you reach the proper consistency. You will have liquid leftover, as you will likely only have to add about 4 to 6 tablespoons to get the perfect consistency. Gather the dough, shape into a round, wrap with plastic, and chill in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes.

To roll out the dough, flour the counter and dough. Gently roll and turn the dough as you go. Roll the dough out until it's about an inch or so larger than the pie plate. Place into the pie plate and trim the edges if needed, leaving about an inch overhang. Fold the dough underneath, then crimp the sides. Once done, poke holes in the bottom and sides; then chill in the freezer for at least 30 minutes.

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### Step 8: Pie – Baking the Crust



**Method:** To bake the crust, preheat your oven to 325° degrees Fahrenheit. Cut a round of parchment and place over the dough, and fill with beans or pie weights. Bake for about 35 minutes or until the crust starts to set around the edges. When the crust has set, remove the beans and return to the oven for about 20 to 25 minutes. Once the crust is cooked through and slightly golden, remove from the oven and set aside while you make the filling.

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### Step 9: Pie – Making the Filling and Baking



- 1 can solid pumpkin purée (15 ounces)
- 1 can condensed milk (300 ml)
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 1/8 tsp ground allspice
- 1/2 tsp table salt
- 1/4 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 2 large whole eggs
- 1 large egg yolk

**Method:** To make the filling, use a medium pot over low heat and add the pumpkin puree, condensed milk, cream, ground spices, salt, and fresh nutmeg. Whisk and bring to a gentle simmer. Then whisk the eggs and secure the bowl with a wet cloth. Slowly pour in the pumpkin mixture to temper the eggs. Once everything is combined, pour the filling into the crust and bake for about 40 to 45 minutes. Check the pie at about the 35 minute mark. When done, the edge of the pie should look set, but the center should still have a bit more move to it. Remove from the oven and let cool completely.

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### Notes

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## T-Day (Day Of)

Serves: 10 to 12 | Active Time: 2 hours 45 minutes | Total Time: 5 hours 30 minutes

### Recipe Steps

#### Step 1: Turkey – Remove from Brine



**Method:** To start, remove the turkey from the brine and let it drain briefly before placing onto a tray. Discard the brine and pat the turkey dry. Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 350° degrees Fahrenheit. Let the turkey sit at room temperature for one hour.

Meanwhile, you can prepare the short stock. Also, now is a good time to take the compound butter out of the fridge.

#### Step 2: Turkey – Making the Short Stock



- 1 onion
- 1 carrot
- 1 rib celery
- 2 lb chicken bones
- 4 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 6 cups stock (turkey or chicken )

**Method:** To make the short stock, prepare your mise en place. Chop the onions, carrots, and celery, and place into a bowl and set aside.

Using a heavy knife, carefully chop up the bones, including the reserved turkey neck. You could also ask the butcher to do this for you. Preheat a large stainless-steel fry pan over high heat. Once hot, add the oil and half of the bones. Let the bones brown and caramelize before adding half of the vegetables. Let the vegetables caramelize slightly. Deglaze with half of the white wine, scraping up any bits from the bottom. Transfer to the roasting pan and repeat with the second batch.

Once done, add the stock to the roasting pan. Place the V-rack over top and cover with foil. Poke a few holes to let the juices run through. Coat the foil with a bit of oil then set the pan aside while you prepare the turkey.

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### Step 3: Turkey – First Hour of Roasting



- 1 tsp Kosher salt - can substitute with can substitute with 1/2 tsp table salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly cracked pepper
- 1 onion
- 1 small carrot
- 1/2 head fresh garlic
- 6 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

**Method:** To season the bird, have your mise en place ready. Season the inside with the salt and pepper and add the vegetables and herbs. Rub the outside skin with a bit of oil. Then add about a third of the compound butter just underneath the skin. Place the turkey, breast-side-down, onto the v-rack, and into the oven. Set your timer for one hour.

Now you have a whole hour to prep the potatoes.

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### Step 4: Potatoes – Prepping



- 8 lb Yukon gold potatoes - can substitute with russet potatoes

**Method:** To start the potatoes, peel and remove any eyes. Rinse the potatoes, cut in half lengthwise and dice into 1 1/2 inch cubes. Place the potatoes into a pot with cold water and then top up, making sure they're fully covered.

Now that the turkey has been in the oven for one hour...Let's flip it over.

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### Step 5: Turkey – Second Hour of Roasting



**Method:** Before you remove the turkey from the oven, melt the compound butter. Then, using two cloths, carefully flip the turkey over. Brush the top with some of the melted butter and return to the oven. Set the timer for hour number 2.

Now we have an hour to make the stuffing.

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### Step 6: Stuffing – Preparing



- 2 large onions
- 1/3 lb unsalted butter
- 8 ribs celery
- 3 large carrots
- 30 fresh sage leaves
- 8 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 tsp poultry seasoning
- 1 tbsp Kosher salt - can substitute with 1/2 tbsp table salt
- 2 tsp freshly cracked pepper
- 4 large eggs
- 5 cups stock (turkey, chicken or vegetable)
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter

**Method:** To prepare the stuffing, finely dice the onions; then melt the butter in a large fry pan over medium-low heat. Start to sweat the onions while you finely dice the celery and carrots. Add to the onions and chop the fresh sage and thyme. Add all of the herbs and spices and let cook until translucent.

When done, add to the bread and toss to combine. Whisk the eggs and stock together. Pour this over the bread and toss. Butter a large casserole dish, add the stuffing and cover.

You can just set this aside, while we check the turkey. This is also a good time to take out the cranberry sauce.

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### Step 7: Turkey – Third Hour of Roasting



**Method:** Quickly brush the turkey with a bit more butter and set your timer for the third hour.

If you have used the apple cider brine, the sugar in the brine will make the turkey color a lot quicker. Just cover it with foil to prevent over-browning.

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### Step 8: Stuffing – Baking



**Method:** TIMING NOTE: At the 2 hour 30 minute mark of the turkey roasting, place the stuffing into the oven alongside the turkey.

Then start to cook the potatoes.

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### Step 9: Potatoes – Cooking



- 1 1/2 tbsp table salt
- 4 bay leaves

**Method:** Add the salt and bay leaves, and bring to a boil over high heat. Skim occasionally, and as soon as the potatoes come to a boil, turn the heat down and let simmer for about 15 to 17 minutes. Test the potatoes for doneness. Once they're done, remove the bay leaves and drain. Return the potatoes to the pot and mash while hot. Cover and set aside while you heat up the butter and cream.

But first, let's check the turkey again.

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### Step 10: Turkey - First Test



**Method:** At the 3-hour mark, test the turkey for doneness by inserting a thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh. Then test the same area from the inside of the cavity. The inside reading will always be lower, so this is where you should take your final reading from.

Brush with the remaining butter and return to the oven for about 15-30 minutes. Because all ovens cook differently, and your turkey may be slightly bigger or smaller, the timing now will all depend on the reading you get from your turkey.

TIMING NOTE: Now is a good time (30 to 45 min. before cooking) to take the Brussels sprouts out of the refrigerator, so they are not stone cold going into the oven.

Now let's finish the mashed potatoes.

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### Step 11: Potatoes – Mashing



- 1/3 lb unsalted butter
- 2 cups half and half - can substitute with can substitute with milk or cream
- 1 tbsp Kosher salt - can substitute with can substitute with 1.5 tsp table salt
- 1/2 tsp ground white pepper
- 1/2 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter

**Method:** In a small pot, heat the butter and cream over medium heat and let come to a gentle boil. Whisk in the salt, pepper, nutmeg and set aside. Add the cream, a little bit at a time, and mix together. The potatoes should be a little bit wet. As they sit, they'll absorb some of the liquid. Taste for seasoning and add more salt and pepper, if you like.

Place thin slices of butter over top and cover the surface with plastic wrap to prevent a crust from forming. Cover and let sit until ready to serve.

Let's see how the turkey's doing.

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### Step 12: Turkey – Testing for Doneness



**Method:** Test the turkey again. The inside of the thigh should read 165° degrees Fahrenheit, which is perfect. Loosely tent with foil, and tear a small hole in the top to allow the steam to escape. Let the turkey rest for 30 minutes before carving.

Remove the lid from the stuffing and then we'll quickly tray up the yams.

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### Step 13: Yams – Baking



**Method:** To bake the yams, cover a baking sheet with parchment paper. Toss the yams and evenly spread them out. Return the top rack to your oven, and bake the yams for about 15 minutes.

As the yams bake, you can make the gravy.

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### Step 14: Turkey – Making the Gravy



- 6 to 7 cups stock (from short stock)
- 3/4 cup fat drippings
- 1 cup + 2 tbsp. all-purpose flour

**Method:** To make the gravy, strain the liquid from the roasting pan and let the fat rise to the top. Skim off the fat into a separate bowl and reserve.

Measure the liquid equal to 6 cups. Take ¾ cup of the reserved fat and pour into a large sauce pan over medium heat. Once the fat is nice and hot, add the flour and stir continuously. As the roux cooks, it will turn from a light tan color to a nice rich brown. This will take about 10 to 15 minutes but the end result is well worth it.

Add about 1/3 of the stock and stir constantly. Stir and continue to add the stock until

smooth. Once the 6 cups of stock have been added check for consistency, keeping in mind it will continue to thicken after you turn off the heat. If you like a thinner gravy you may want to add up to one additional cup of stock.

For a super-smooth gravy, strain again. Cover and keep the gravy hot while we finish up the vegetables.

Let's see how the yams are doing.

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### Step 15: Yams – Tossing



**Method:** Toss the yams and continue to bake for another 15 to 20 minutes, or until fork tender.

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### Step 16: Brussels Sprouts – Baking



**Method:** Place the Brussels sprouts into the oven with the yams and stuffing and bake for about 20-25 minutes.

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### Step 17: The Final Minutes



**Method:** Now it's time to put everything on the table while you set yourself up to carve the turkey. Here's where you call in the troops and put some people to work. Take the cheesecake and/or pumpkin pie out of the fridge. Place a bowl and whisk in the fridge to later make the maple-whipped cream.

Once the Brussels sprouts are warmed through, take them out of the oven and set on a hot plate. By now, the stuffing should be hot and have a nice golden crust. Place this on the table and take a look at the yams. Once fork-tender, transfer them to a serving dish.

Then turn off the oven and heat up your plates for a few minutes. Just leave the door open a crack to let out some of the heat. Remember to use oven mitts when removing, as they'll be hot.

Finish up by removing the plastic wrap from the potatoes and stir in the melted butter. Transfer to a serving dish, and make sure the gravy is nice and hot. Don't forget about the cranberry sauce.

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### Step 18: Turkey – Carving



**Method:** There are two ways to carve a turkey. In either case, make sure to hone your knife so it's nice and sharp.

The first method is carving at the table. Start by slicing off the wing, then slice the meat off the breast. Cut off the drumstick and thigh, then continue slicing along the breast.

To carve in the kitchen, remove the whole breast, by cutting along the rib cage. Place the breast onto a cutting board and slice vertically against the grain. Next, cut off the thigh and drumstick. Cut between the knuckle of the thigh and the drumstick and continue to carve.

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### Step 19: Pie – Making the Whip Cream



- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1 tbsp maple syrup

**Method:** Add the cream to the chilled bowl and whisk and whip just a bit before adding the maple syrup. Continue to whisk until you reach soft peaks. Slice the pie and serve with a dollop of the maple-whipped cream.

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### Step 20: Cheesecake – Serving



**Method:**

To serve the cheese cake, slide a knife around the edges one more time. Remove the ring and gently lift the cheesecake onto a cutting board. Use a flat spatula to loosen the paper, then slide the parchment out from underneath.

To cut the cheesecake, place a long knife into hot water, wipe off the excess water and slice. Do this each time you make a cut, and you will end up with perfect pieces every time. This cheesecake is great on its own or served with a dollop of whip cream.

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### Step 21: Happy Thanksgiving



**Method:** Happy Thanksgiving! Thanks for letting all of us here at Rouxbe be a small part of your dinner.

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### Notes

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# Roasted Turkey with Gravy

## Purchasing the Turkey

If you can, buy a fresh turkey. The flavor is great and it's worth the extra cost. If buying frozen, thaw it properly in the fridge, on a tray and in its plastic. For every pound of turkey, plan for about 5 hours of thawing.

**10 pound turkey: Approximately 50 hours (just over two days)**

**15 pound turkey: Approximately 75 hours (just over three days)**

**20 pound turkey: Approximately 100 hours (just over four days)**

A thawed turkey can be kept in the fridge for up to two days before cooking.

## What is brining?

Brine is a salty solution. The salt deeply penetrates the meat tissue, opening the pores and actually unlocks the fibers. Not only does it trap water molecules and keep the flesh juicy and moist, it seasons the flesh throughout, adding a lot of flavor.

## How much salt should I use?

A moderate brine is approximately ½ cup of Kosher salt per 3 quarts of water.

## Salt equivalents

Table Salt (without iodine) – 1 cup (10 ounces)

Morton Kosher Salt – 1-1/2 cups (about 8 ounces)

Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt (half as potent as regular table salt) – use 2 cups (5 ounces per cup)

When using other salts, such as sea salt, pickling salt, or other brands of Kosher salt, simply weigh out 10 ounces on your kitchen scale to find its equivalent of table salt.

Create different brines by adding herbs, spices, and brown sugar, honey or molasses. Apple juice, cider, apple cider vinegar, rice wine vinegar, stock, tea, beer, wine, or other liquids can replace some or all of the water.

## Always start with a cold brine

For food safety reasons, the brine must be cold (40° degrees Fahrenheit, 4° degrees Celsius) to ensure the meat stays at proper refrigerator temperature. If you need to heat the brine mixture to dissolve the salt, make sure you cool the brine down before using. The food must be completely submerged. Refrigeration is absolutely required during brining. The meat and brine solution must be kept below 40° degrees Fahrenheit at all times. If you can't find a large enough container, fill a cooler with ice.

## Brining time

The turkey should sit in the brine for at least 10 hours. It can process for as much as 24 hours but the turkey will have absorbed all the brine it needs in 10 hours. The amount of brining time is not set in stone. Even a little brining is better than none. Brining for too long can ruin the flavor as well and make it too salty. If you are using a small turkey, cut down on the brining time, or reduce the amount of salt in the brine.

Once the meat is removed from the brine, you can rinse off the excess salt from the surface and pat dry. You can also air-dry poultry in the refrigerator overnight. Place a cooling rack over a baking sheet and rest the poultry on top. By letting the moisture evaporate, it is easier to achieve crispier skin.

Make sure to discard used brining liquid. It has been contaminated with raw food and cannot be reused.

## Stuff or not to stuff?

Don't stuff your turkey. Stuffing acts as insulation and makes cooking the turkey that much longer, creating dry breast meat. Hot air cannot get inside the turkey and can't cook the meat closest to the bone, which is the area that takes the longest to cook. Simply season the turkey extremely well with salt and pepper and let the hot oven air do its work.

## Preparing your turkey

Season the cavity and underneath the skin. Rub butter underneath the skin and make sure to start with a short stock for added flavor. Place the turkey on a V-rack, so it's not in contact with the juices in the pan. The steam from the juices will keep the turkey nice and moist during the slow, long cooking time. A V-rack guarantees a moist turkey and the beginnings of a delicious gravy.

Make sure you don't put a cold turkey in the oven. It will take that much longer to cook, and longer cooking time means dry meat. Let the turkey sit at room temperature for up to one hour before roasting.

## Ideal oven temperature

The ideal oven temperature is 350° degrees Fahrenheit.

### **To baste or not to baste?**

If you over-baste, you lower the oven temperature and the temperature of the turkey, making the cooking time longer. You create a baste by slipping butter underneath the skin. Baste another 1-2 times, but don't get carried away.

### **Which way is up?**

If you brine your turkey, it will be juicy any way you place it. However, if you don't brine, start with the breast side down. The gentle steam from the pan will keep the breast meat nice and moist. At half way point, turn it over so you end up with crispy skin.

### **When is it done?**

Turkey needs to reach an internal temperature of 165° degrees Fahrenheit; higher than this will produce dry meat. Use a thermometer, and insert it into the thickest part of the thigh. Test both thighs for accurate readings. If you don't have a thermometer, stick a skewer into the thickest part of the thigh, making sure you hit bone; if the juices run clear, it's time to take the turkey out.

### **Why rest?**

Resting any kind of meat, before carving, is essential. It allows the muscles to relax and heat distribute evenly. It makes it easier to carve, and the meat will be nice and juicy. Rest a large turkey for at least 20 to 30 minutes. Tent with foil and make sure to poke holes in the top. The steam must be able to escape so the skin doesn't get soggy.

### **For additional information, visit:**

[USDA Poultry Preparation](#) and [The National Organic Program](#)

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## **Buttery Mashed Potatoes**

Two important things when cooking potatoes: 1) don't over cook them; and, 2) drain them right away. If they are left to sit in the water, they'll become waterlogged and you will end up with watery mashed potatoes.

Feel free to put them through a ricer or food mill. The reason we don't here is there are simply too many. It would take a long time to rice them all, and they would cool down considerably. By all means, rice potatoes when making them for a smaller crowd. Ricing ensures light, fluffy and ultra-smooth mashed potatoes.

The options for flavoring mashed potatoes are endless. Add different spices and things like bacon bits, minced chives or green onions, truffle oil, different cheeses, cream-cheese, sour cream, and cream; or keep them low-fat and use skim milk.

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## **Traditional Stuffing**

To reduce the cooking time for the stuffing, simply put it into a shallow and wide baking dish.

Add your own flair and favorite flavors to this simple stuffing, by incorporating items such as Italian sausage, chestnuts, mushrooms, and different vegetables. Just make sure the ratio is about 1 part vegetables/meat to 2 parts bread.

For a vegetarian version, simply use vegetable stock instead of chicken stock.

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## **Garlic-Prosciutto Baked Brussels Sprouts**

These Brussels sprouts can be prepared in advance, then covered and stored in the refrigerator until the next day. Just take them out of the refrigerator at least 30 to 45 mins. before cooking so they are not so cold going into the oven.

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## **Cassis Cranberry Sauce**

This cranberry sauce gets substantially thicker as it cools and can be made up to a week in advance.

It's best served at room temperature, so be sure to take it out at least an hour before dinner.

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## **Pumpkin Pie with Maple Whipped Cream**

Break the tradition of having raw dough in your pumpkin pie, by fully blind-baking the crust.

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## **Spiced Pumpkin Cheesecake**

It is important to have all of your ingredients at room temperature. Mix the cream cheese just until there are no lumps. If you try to cheat and use cold cream cheese, you will wind up incorporating too much air by overbeating. This may form unattractive air bubbles on the surface of your cake. Once the eggs are added, mix just until combined. Again, don't overbeat the mixture and incorporate too much air. This could make the cheesecake fall during baking. If you do wind up with lumpy batter, press the mixture through a sieve to obtain a smoother batter, rather than overbeating.