

Thanksgiving Classics

November 2009

Menu:

Herb-Salt Rubbed Turkey with Hard Cider Gravy
Bacon, Wild Mushroom & Leek Sourdough Dressing
Yukon Gold Puree with Caramelized Fennel & Rosemary Breadcrumb Topping
Shaved Brussels Sprouts with Citrus Butter, Almonds and Dried Apricots
Balsamic-Honey Cranberry & Pear Relish

Turkey Basics
Thanksgiving Menu & Timeline



Herb-Salt Rubbed Turkey with Hard Cider Gravy

serves about 10 people

For the Turkey:

- 1/4 cup kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon poultry seasoning
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
- 1 fresh turkey, 14-16 lbs.
- olive oil, as needed
- 2 large Fuji apples, cut into large chunks
- 2 white onion, cut into large chunks
- 3 stalks celery, cut into large chunks
- 1 cinnamon stick, broke in half
- 3 cups chicken stock, (or water)

For the Gravy:

- 5 tablespoons butter
- 5 tablespoons flour
- 1-2 cups chicken or turkey stock
- 3 cups hard apple cider
- salt and pepper, as needed

***** Preparation ******

For the Turkey:

In a small bowl, stir together the salt, paprika, poultry seasoning and sage.

Remove any turkey bits from the cavity of the turkey and pat very dry. Gently separate the skin from the flesh of the breasts. Sprinkle the salt mixture all over the turkey: in the cavity, between the skin and flesh of the breast and all over the skin. Place on a baking dish, wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven to 500 degrees. Remove the plastic from the turkey and let sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes. Brush the turkey with olive oil. Fill the cavity loosely with some of the apples, onions, celery and the cinnamon stick. Place the turkey on a roasting rack in a roasting pan.

Scatter the rest of the apples, onions and celery around the turkey and add the 3 cups of liquid. Place in the oven and roast for about 30-45 minutes or until the breast is very golden. Pat some foil against the breast (leaving the legs exposed) and lower the oven to 375 degrees. Continue to cook for about 3 hours or until a thermometer inserted into the breast reads 165 degrees and the thighs read 175 degrees. Remove from the oven.

For the Gravy:

Remove the turkey from the pan, place onto a carving board, tent with foil and set aside until ready to carve and serve. Strain the liquid from the roasting pan into a fat separator and let sit for 5 minutes.

If using a heavy duty roasting pan, place the pan directly over medium-high heat. Otherwise, place a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the butter (OR add 5 tablespoons of the fat from the top of the separator) to the pan and the flour. Cook, stirring continuously until lightly golden, about 5 minutes. Whisk in 2 cups of the cooking liquid from the roasting pan (use the stock to make the 2 cups as needed). Once incorporated with the roux, add the cider. Cook, whisking often, until bubbling. Let simmer for 10 minutes. Taste and season with salt and pepper as needed.

EQUIPMENT:

large roasting pan with rack
large tongs OR turkey forks
digital thermometer
large cutting board for carving
fat separator
saute pan with edges
whisk
gravy boat or dish
serving platter for turkey

Bacon, Wild Mushroom & Leek Sourdough Dressing

serves 8-10

6 slices bacon, cut into small strips

4 oz dried wild mushrooms

8 oz crimini mushrooms, sliced

2 cups sliced leeks, white part only

8 cups diced sourdough bread, crusts removed (day old is best!)

1/3 cup toasted pinenuts

1 tablespoon poultry seasoning

2-3 cups chicken or turkey stock

4 tablespoons butter, cold, cut into small pieces (plus some for buttering the pan)

***** Preparation ******

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Place the bacon in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook until bacon is crisp.

Meanwhile, pour 2 cups boiling water over the dried mushrooms and let them sit for 10 minutes. Once the bacon is crisp, remove with a slotted spoon onto a paper towel. Set aside. Add the crimini mushrooms and the leeks to the hot pan with the bacon fat. Cook over high heat until mushrooms are golden. Strain the dried mushrooms, reserving the liquid and chop fine. Add the chopped mushrooms and leeks to the pan and cook until soft. Remove from heat.

In a large bowl, toss together the bread, crisp bacon, mushroom-leek mixture, pinenuts and poultry seasoning. Pour the reserved mushroom liquid on top of this mixture, leaving behind any sediment. Add stock as needed to moisten the mixture -- there should be some bread completely soaked and some still holding it's shape. Season with salt and pepper as needed.

Butter a 9x13-inch casserole dish and fill with the dressing. Top with dots of the cold butter. Cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil and cook for another 15 minutes or until golden.

EQUIPMENT:

large skillet

casserole dish



Yukon Gold Puree with Caramelized Fennel & Rosemary Breadcrumb Topping

serves 8-10

For the potatoes:

6 lbs yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks
1/2 cup sour cream
1 cup half and half, as needed
salt and pepper, as needed

For the topping:

4 tablespoons butter, (plus more for buttering the pan)
4 cups thinly sliced fennel
1 tablespoon chopped rosemary leaves
1 1/2 cups panko breadcrumbs
1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese
salt and pepper, as needed
chopped chives, for garnish

***** Preparation ******

For the potatoes:

Place the potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil and cook until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain and place back into the pot.

Pass potatoes through a ricer or food mill OR mash with a hand masher. Stir in the sour cream and as much half & half as needed to create the right consistency. Season with salt and pepper.

Butter a 9x13-inch casserole dish. Scoop the potatoes into the dish and set aside.

For the topping

In a large skillet, add the butter and place over medium heat. When melted, add the fennel and rosemary. Cook over medium-high heat until soft and golden -- about 15 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in the breadcrumbs and cheese. Toss until well combined.

Top the potatoes with the fennel mixture and bake for 20 minutes until bubbly and golden.

Top with snipped chives before serving.

EQUIPMENT:

large pot
potato ricer, food mill OR hand masher
casserole dish



Shaved Brussels Sprouts with Citrus Butter, Almonds and Dried Apricots

serves 8-10

4 tablespoons butter

1 orange, zested

1 lemon, zested

1/2 cup almonds, chopped

1 cup dried apricots, sliced

4 lbs Brussels sprouts, trimmed and thinly sliced

1 satsuma tangerine, (or orange)

salt and pepper

*** Preparation ****

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, combine the butter, orange zest, lemon zest, almonds and apricots. Cook until butter is melted and almonds are fragrant and butter is JUST beginning to turn brown.

Add the Brussels sprouts to the pan and toss, cooking until bright green and starting to wilt. Cut the tangerine in half and squeeze the juice into the hot pan. Season well with salt and pepper and toss.

Remove from heat and serve.

EQUIPMENT:

zester

large skillet

large serving platter or bowl

Balsamic-Honey Cranberry & Pear Relish

makes about 3 1/2 cups

1 teaspoon olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped shallots
1 teaspoon white sugar
1 bag fresh cranberries
2 bosc pears, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 cinnamon stick
1 orange, zested and juiced
1/2 teaspoon salt

***** Preparation ******

Place a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil, shallots and sugar. Cook for a few minutes until golden. Add all the remaining ingredients. Stir to combine and cook over medium-high heat until bubbling. Reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes until thickened. Remove from the heat and let cool before serving.

EQUIPMENT:

zester
saucepan
decorative serving bowl

Turkey Basics

- Get fresh! Frozen birds tend to dry out quicker during cooking. Organic, Free-Range and Kosher turkeys are all great – but the most important thing is that it's fresh.
- If you do get frozen, defrost for 4 days in the refrigerator OR submerge in a sink of cold water (never warm or hot!) and let soak for about 12 hours, changing the water every hour.
- When buying a turkey, plan for 1 pound per person – this leaves ample leftovers.
- Don't cook a bird over 18 pounds – it takes too long! If you need more turkey for a larger crowd, buy an additional turkey breast (or two) and a couple turkey legs. These will roast in about 1 – 2 hours and can be done the day before – roast them and let rest and cool; then refrigerate until the next day. Let them come back to room temperature and then carve the breast and place in a pan with a little bit of turkey stock and cover with foil. Reheat at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes.
- The **ONLY** way to tell for sure if your turkey is done is to use a meat thermometer – don't trust the red "pop-up" buttons! Remove your turkey from the oven when the white meat is at 165 degrees and the dark meat is at 170 degrees.
- Approximate roasting times for un-stuffed turkeys at 325 degrees:
 - 10 – 12 lbs – 3 hours
 - 12 – 14 lbs – 3 – 3 ½ hours
 - 14 – 18 lbs – 3 ½ - 4 ½ hours
 - 18 – 20 lbs – 4 ½ - 4 ¾ hours
- **ALWAYS** let your turkey rest, tented with foil, for at least 20 minutes before carving – this will help the juices stay inside the meat and make for easier carving.
- Carving 101 – step by step, here's how it's done:
 - First remove the twine and ties and stuffing (if you used).
 - Bend the leg back at the joint and cut to remove. Repeat for the other leg.
 - Make a large cut at the base of the breast, parallel to the table.
 - Make thin slices down the breast, working from the outside towards the bone. Repeat for the other breast.
 - Bend the thigh back, revealing the joint and cut to remove. Repeat for the other thigh. Then cut off dark meat and add to the platter.
 - Cut off wings.
 - Save the carcass for the best turkey soup!

Thanksgiving Menu & Timeline

Menu –

Antipasto Platter with Cheese, Cured Meats, Olives and Crackers
Herb-Salt Rubbed Turkey with Hard Cider Gravy
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Yukon Gold Puree with Caramelized Fennel Breadcrumb Topping
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Balsamic-Honey Cranberry & Pear Relish

Three weeks ahead:

Buy non-perishables & freezer items
Order fresh turkey
Ask someone else to bring dessert
Ask someone else to bring wine/beverages

4 days ahead (Monday):

Buy turkey & refrigerate
Buy perishables

2 days ahead:

Set the table
Set up self-serve bar area
Pull out platters and serving utensils
Cut bread for dressing and let dry out

1 day ahead:

Rub turkey with salt & refrigerate
Make dressing (don't bake), wrap & refrigerate
Make potatoes (don't bake), wrap & refrigerate
Make cranberries & refrigerate
Slice Brussels sprouts & refrigerate
Assemble antipasto platter

7 hours before dinner

Remove turkey from fridge
Preheat oven
Get the rest of the turkey ingredients ready
Get coffee pot ready to turn on for after dinner

6 hours before dinner:

Get turkey ready for oven & begin roasting

2 hours before dinner:

Remove dressing & potatoes from fridge
Put cranberries in serving dish and set aside

When turkey is done (about 45 minutes – 1 hour before dinner):

Remove turkey from oven (thermometer should
read 165 degrees in the breast)
Put dressing and potatoes in oven
Set turkey aside and make gravy

15-20 minutes before dinner:

Make Brussels sprouts
Carve turkey

Just before sitting down:

Turn on coffee pot
Set pies out on the counter (if refrigerated)

ENJOY!!!!!!