

TURKEY DINNER BASIC BASICS

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TURKEY

Remove the neck and giblets from your turkey; pat dry, then let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Season the turkey inside and out with salt and pepper. Fill the cavity with chopped onions, carrots, apples and herbs. Tie the legs together with twine. Place breast-side up in a roasting pan and brush with melted butter. Tent with foil and roast for two hours for a 10- to 12-pound turkey; add an extra 15 minutes per pound for larger birds. Uncover and brush with more butter and increase the heat to 425 degrees. Roast until the thigh meat registers 165 degrees, about one more hour. Let rest for 30 minutes before carving.

GRAVY

Pour the turkey drippings into a bowl. Add a splash of chicken broth to the roasting pan and scrape up any browned bits; add to the bowl, then freeze the drippings until the fat hardens on top. (Alternatively, use a degreasing cup.) Spoon one-half cup of the fat into a saucepan. Add one-half cup of flour; cook over medium heat, stirring, until golden, about 4 minutes. Slowly whisk in eight cups of hot chicken broth. Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer. Discard any remaining fat from the drippings. Add the drippings to the saucepan. Simmer, whisking, until thick, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Strain to remove lumps, if needed.

MASHED POTATOES

Put two pounds of whole unpeeled russet potatoes in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Season generously with salt. Bring to a simmer (do not boil) and cook until the potatoes are tender, about 45 minutes. Drain, then peel and return to the pan. Add one cup of hot milk and one-half to one stick of room-temperature butter. Mash with a potato masher or fork (do not use a food processor). Season with salt and pepper.

GREEN BEANS

Melt four tablespoons of butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add four to six thinly sliced garlic cloves. Cook, stirring, for about 2 minutes. Add two and one-half pounds of trimmed green beans and a few pinches each of salt and sugar. Cook for 2 minutes. Add one-half cup of water. Cover and cook until tender, about 6 minutes, then uncover and boil until the water evaporates, about 1 more minute. Season with salt and pepper. Toss with chopped pecans.

STUFFING

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Melt one stick of butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add two cups each of diced onions and celery, two chopped apples and one tablespoon each of minced sage and thyme. Season with salt and pepper and cook for 5 minutes. Add three cups of chicken broth and bring to a simmer. Whisk two eggs with ¼ cup of chopped parsley in a large bowl. Add sixteen cups of stale country white bread. Pour in the vegetable-broth mixture and toss. Transfer to a buttered three-quart baking dish and dot with more butter. Cover and bake for 30 minutes, then uncover and bake until golden, about 20 more minutes.