



A few starting notes:

- Turkey does not have to be brined
- Skin is not necessarily the best part (herbs make it strong tasting) – but it will look great
- Makes fantastic gravy
- I used a 6 kg turkey

Required Items

- Turkey (not frozen)
- Two onions
- Celery (and perhaps a carrot or two)
- Fresh herbs (such as tarragon, sage, thyme, rosemary, etc.) or generously rub with your favourite Dizzy Pig rub
- 2 apples
- 1 lemon
- 1 pound (4 sticks) of butter: 2 for the turkey; 2 for the gravy
- Gallon zip-lock bags (very important!)
- Bottle of white wine
- Flour
- Roasting pan
- Stock pot (at least 4 quarts)



Directions

Gravy

- Clean out the insides (neck, heart, giblets, liver, fat...). Put this stuff into a large pot.
- Add a halved onion, couple of stalks of celery, a carrot or two, fresh herbs (in this case tarragon, sage, thyme -- rosemary is also good.)
- Fill the pot to the top with water and let it simmer all day. This will be your stock for making the gravy. Let this simmer all day long, adding water occasionally to keep the level up. This will do two things: 1) make your house smell great all day long and 2) create a wonderful rich stock for the gravy.





Turkey

- Clean and dry the bird, salt and pepper the cavity fairly liberally.
- Into the cavity stick one small onion (halved), one apple (quartered), one lemon (quartered) and a big bouquet of herbs (rosemary, sage, thyme, and whatever else you like). I also like to put some Dizzy Pig rub in as well as some garlic.
- Take two sticks of butter, softened. Chop up more fresh herbs and mix it into the butter till you have a nice paste.
- Put the bird in a roasting pan, breast up, elevated in a v-rack (you don't want it touching the bottom of the pan).
- Quarter another apple and throw it directly in the roasting pan around the bird.
- Note: Make sure the turkey is dry if not the herbs and others will not stick to the outside. I also used butcher twine to tie the legs together.

Two Important Steps

- 20 minutes before you put it in The Egg (or oven), take a one gallon zip lock bag full of ice cubes and lay it over the breasts for the 20 minutes. What this does is lower the breast temps sufficiently that over the course of the roasting, the breast and thighs will be done at the same time. This is the best way to do this. Remove the bag of ice just before putting it in The Egg. This is VERY important because if you don't, you will overcook your white meat and it will come out tasting dry (white meat cooks quicker and requires a lower temp than dark meat).
- Last steps prior to putting the bird in The Egg (or oven), take your butter paste and liberally apply it all over the bird. You can work some under the skin if you want to, but it's not necessary. Then, pour half a bottle of white wine over the bird and in the cavity. DON'T drink the rest of the bottle (you will need it for the gravy).



The Egg Set Up

- Make sure to test your Egg set-up beforehand and remember that a turkey is big.
- Essentially, you need indirect heat under your roasting pan. The best method for me was to invert the plate setter, put a barrier in between the plate setter and the pan (I used the BGE feet).
- If you put the roasting pan on the plate setter your gravy will burn. Key here is to have a heat barrier and sufficient air flow under your roasting pan (I use a disposable aluminium one) to avoid any scorching in the pan.



The Fire

- Clean out the firebox very well and fill it up with natural lump charcoal (leaving 1 inch gap between the lump and the bottom of the plate setter). Add one or two good chunks of apple wood for additional flavour.
- Get a good established fire going at 325 degrees & let burn for about 45 minutes prior to putting the turkey in (a full load at 325 will last around 8 hours, so it is close for a 20lb+ bird).



The Cook

A 21 pound turkey at 325 degrees takes a good 6 ½ - 7 hours to be done.

- During the cook regularly baste it with a bulb baster (about once every 20 minutes after the first hour).
- Ensure there is always water in your water pan (if using one)
- When the skin starts browning, loosely tent it with aluminium foil until about the last hour, when you should remove the foil to let the skin crisp up and come up to a nice golden brown.
- Check the inside temperature during the last hour or two. The goal is to have internal temps of 160-165 in the breast and 175-180 in the thigh (this is where the ice bag does its work).

Pull the turkey out when:

- A deep poke in the thigh and breast resulted in clear juices running;
- When the drumstick rotates freely at the joint



Very Important

When you pull the roasting pan and turkey from The Egg and you're removing the turkey from the roasting pan, first tilt the bird up so that all the juices in the cavity pour out into the pan (you do NOT want to lose this). Put your bird aside on a cutting board or platter and cover in foil until ready to carve.

The Gravy

When your turkey is done roasting, and prior to moving it to a platter, tip up the bird so that all the juices will run out of the cavity back into the roasting pan.

Here is what your pan will look like, with all the drippings in it. Also, discard the apple that was in the pan all through the roasting. Note that dark stuff you see is not burnt. It is well browned and will affect the final color of your gravy, but trust me, this is where all the real flavour is. Note: how dark the drippings end up being will determine how dark your gravy turns out. Sometimes it is lighter, sometimes darker. It will be fantastic either way.



Now pour the contents of this pan into a bowl or large measuring cup. In this case, I've gotten about 2 full cups of liquid from the pan. Let it sit for about 5 minutes so that the fat separates from the good drippings.

In this picture you can see that almost half the pan drippings are fat. Using a ladle, gently remove the fat and leave just the dark pan juices.





- Here is your bowl of drippings to be used in the gravy.
- It's beautiful, dark and rich in flavour.
This is the true key to your gravy.
- Now you are really ready to make the gravy.
Take your pan and place it over a burner
(in this case over both front and back burners) on high heat.
- Add two sticks of butter and whisk it hard, pulling up as much of the pan crud as possible. All through this process you need to be constantly whisking in order to avoid any burning or scorching.
- As the butter melts and you dislodge the crud from the pan, it will be bubbly and brown.
- Now start adding flour (anywhere from 1/2 to 1 cup). Keep whisking and working it in until it is bubbly, pasty texture. Keep whisking that flour/butter/crud mixture until you have a nice smooth roux. There should be no lumps of flour.
- After about 4 to 5 minutes it should be thick and smooth.
- Now, remember that 1/2 a bottle of wine you were saving (you did save it didn't you?)? Add the wine to the roux in the roasting pan. You should still have it on a high flame, so the alcohol will boil off quickly. Keep whisking (the key to lump free gravy is to whisk the roux till its lump free and keep whisking the other ingredients in so that it stays nice and smooth. With the high heat, it will be constantly bubbling - keep whisking, so it doesn't scorch or burn).
- Next step, remember that bowl of drippings you saved from the pan and separated from its fat? Once the wine has been mixed in, and reduced about 1/4 to 1/3, add in this liquid. This liquid imparts tremendous flavour.
- Now that you've mixed in the drippings, remember that stock you've been cooking all day? Start ladling that into the pan, one ladle at a time, continuing to whisk it in. Keep the heat on, bring it all to a boil. Keep adding stock till you have the desired thickness where you want it.
- This is a picture of the gravy after addition of the crud and beginning to add the stock. Its still pretty thick and I'll continue to add stock till it hits the consistency I want.





The Big Finish

- First, take the neck, giblets, heart and liver from the stock pot.
- Remove the meat from the neck (you'll be amazed how much meat there is).
- Chop it all up (meat, giblets, heart and liver) very finely and add it to the gravy.
- Second, in a small bowl, mix some of the stock with some flour to create a thickening agent. By doing this in a separate bowl, you avoid the problem of adding flour directly to the gravy with the intention of thickening it but in reality, you'll be creating lumps.
- If the gravy is too thin for your tastes, you can stir in some of this thickening agent till you get the gravy you want. Too thick? Simply add some more stock.
- Finish up your gravy by adding some salt and pepper to taste (or as my mom would suggest, some worchestershire sauce). Final note, this gravy will not look like the creamy stuff from a jar, nor is it intended to, but I'll bet it's the best you ever had.



The End

So, here's the finished product; succulent, moist, juicy turkey with all the great flavour added by roasting in The Egg, and the best tasting gravy you ever had.

Bon appetit!



For any other information

Visit the Big Green Egg website and ask The Eggxperts on their forum at www.biggreenEgg.com.

Happy Egging!
