

Rick's Brined Turkey and Stuffing Recipe

Blended families bring with them different holiday traditions. When Irene and I got married, we split Thanksgiving & Christmas, until I came up with this recipe. It was so moist and tender that I got to do both holidays from then on (Whomever cooks in our house, doesn't clean up) Here are my recipes, hope you enjoy.

The turkey (non Butterball) is soaked overnight, after thawing in a solution of 2/3 cup salt per US gallon of water. Use a pot just big enough to hold the turkey and maintain the ratio of salt to water. I thaw the turkey, soak it 8 hours in the brine, then dry and return to refrigerator until ready to cook, if you are eating in the evening.

The chemistry is the sodium chloride ions penetrate into the muscle of the turkey, causing it to swell and suck in water. The ion is bound to the protein, and the meat hold much more water while cooking. This is what causes the juiciness. Ionic changes cause the muscle to relax for those needing a technical explanation, and no it does not taste salty !

Roast the turkey, breast up and uncovered at 450 degrees F for the first 45 minutes and then 325 F until the meat thermometer stuck in the thigh reaches 160 F. It cooks at about 13 minutes per pound stuffed. Let it sit 20 minutes out of the oven before slicing, time to prepare the veggies and remove the stuffing.

Stuffing (Dressing) for 22-24 pound turkey

2 lbs Farmer John breakfast links
½ cup unsalted butter
1 large chopped brown onion
2 chopped green onions
4 inner stalks celery, leaved included
2 cups frozen corn (thawed)
½ teaspoon basil
½ teaspoon sage
2 teaspoon thyme
12 cups day old cornbread or 1 ½ boxes Ms. Cubbisons cornmeal stuffing)
1 cup cool turkey broth (from boiling the neck, gizzards and liver for 1 hour in water)
1 chopped Portobello mushroom or 1 TBSP chopped dried Porcini mushroom
salt and pepper to taste

Cut the sausage into ½ in pieces as it comes out of the package and brown in medium pan for 5-7 minutes. Break into pieces as needed. Set sausage aside to drain, pour off fat but do not clean pan.

Melt the butter in the pan and over medium heat, add brown onion, green onion, and celery, sautéing for 8-10 minutes.. do not brown. Add corn and spices and cook 2 more minutes, stirring. Set aside to cool, about 10 minutes

Place cornbread in a large bowl, add sausages and onions and combine into a rough mixture, using enough of the turkey broth to hold together. Add salt and pepper as desired.

Use as Turkey stuffing or drizzle with ½ cup broth and bake in a preheated 350 F oven in a lightly buttered oven safe dish loosely covered with foil for 30 minutes .