



Turkey Brining & Cooking Suggestions

Most poultry benefits from a brine. All this means is soaking the bird in a salt water solution. It can be as simple as just salt or it can include herbs & spices. At minimum, a turkey should be bathed in salt water for 12 hours. After eating a brined turkey you may never go back!

Why do it?

Some of the liquid is absorbed, lending a wonderfully light, salty taste to the meat. Some also say that it seals in moisture so not as much is lost to the pan. You can be the judge.

What you will need

Anything that will hold your size turkey will work, such as a large pot. For larger turkeys, a 5-gallon bucket works well, available for a few dollars from your local hardware store. I have also heard that brining bags sold in supermarkets work well.

Recipe

This is a base recipe with the proper water to salt ratio. Adjust for your size bird. When in doubt taste the brine. A brine solution that is too salty will make the meat too salty.

8 quarts water (warm to allow the salt to dissolve well)

1 cup salt (I suggest a higher quality sea salt)

Mix well to dissolve salt. Taste. The mixture should not be uncomfortably salty.

Adjust salt & water for your size bird if necessary. Soak for 12-48 hours in a cool place.

That is all that needs to be done to accomplish a good brine. If you'd like, try adding bay leaves, sugar, citrus, toasted sage, or juniper berries. Each will add subtle flavor.

Cooking

Cooking time depends on the size of your bird and whether or not you stuff it with dressing. Cook in a 275-350 degree oven for several hours until the juices run clear.

One technique I like is cooking the turkey breast side down. This can be difficult because it will not want to rest comfortably on your cooking rack and dressing can fall out, but it does make a difference. Since dark meat takes longer to cook than white meat, it helps to have it closer to the top of the oven where the higher temperatures are. The last hour or so you can turn it over to brown up the skin on the breast for good presentation. Enjoy!

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