

Roast Turkey and Gravy

Frank Brigtsen – Brigtsen's Restaurant

Yield: 10-12 servings as a main course

CHEF'S NOTES: My favorite sauce is gravy, plain and simple. Delicious natural pan gravy is easy to make, but not really that simple. Careful timing, good technique, and a homemade stock are essential. My Mom's Thanksgiving ritual includes making the turkey stock 2-3 days before this classic American feast. As I like to say, "You can't buy gravy".

Ingredients:

3 lbs turkey wings
3 lbs turkey necks
2 cups diced carrot (1/2-inch pieces)
2 cups diced celery (1/2-inch pieces)
4 cups diced yellow onions (1/2-inch pieces)
24 cups cold water
1 turkey, 12-14 lbs.
Salt and ground black pepper
4 Tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
¾ cup + 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
1 cup all-purpose white flour

1. Make turkey stock: Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Place the turkey wings and necks in a roasting pan. Add the carrots, celery, and onions. Bake in 350° oven for 2 hours.
3. Place the roasting pan on top of the stove over medium-high heat. Add 4 cups of cold water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Scrape the bottom and sides of the pan with a metal spatula to deglaze the pan.
4. In a large stock pot, add the roasted turkey wings and necks and the pan drippings from the roasting pan. Add the remaining 20 cups of cold water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 1 ½ hours. Strain. Reserve the liquid and the meat. When the meat is cool enough to handle, remove the meat from the turkey wings and necks and set aside. (It is helpful to use a table fork to scrape the meat off the turkey necks).
5. Roast the turkey: Preheat oven to 500°. Remove the giblets from the turkey. Rinse the turkey and pat dry. Place the turkey on a V-shaped rack set inside a large, deep roasting pan. Using your hands, rub the turkey all over with the softened butter. Slide your fingers underneath the breast skin and rub the breast meat with butter. Wash your hands well.
6. Season the turkey generously, inside and out, with salt and black pepper.

7. Place the turkey in the preheated oven and immediately lower the temperature to 325°. After 1 hour, carefully tilt the roasting pan to let the natural juices gather in the bottom of the roasting pan. Baste the top of the turkey. Baste every 30 minutes until done. After 2 hours, cover the top of the turkey loosely with aluminum foil. While the turkey is cooking, make a roux:
8. Make a medium-brown roux: Heat the vegetable oil in a cast-iron skillet over high heat to about 375°. Gradually add the flour, whisking constantly. Cook, whisking constantly, until the flour turns medium-brown (the color of peanut butter). Remove from heat and set aside.
9. Check the temperature of the turkey after 2 ½ hours. Cook until the turkey reaches 160-165° near the deepest part of the thigh and the juices are running clear, not pink, 3 – 3 ½ hours for a 12-14 lb. turkey.
10. When done, remove the turkey from the oven and transfer the turkey and V-shaped rack to a separate pan. Cover loosely with aluminum foil for 20-30 minutes before carving.
11. Pour the turkey pan drippings from the roasting pan into a glass measuring cup or heatproof container. Allow to rest for 10-15 minutes. Skim off any excess fat from the top of the pan drippings. Reserve the roasting pan and pan drippings to make the gravy.
12. Deglaze the turkey roasting pan: Place the roasting pan on the stovetop. Add 12 cups of turkey stock and the pan drippings. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer until the liquid reduces by about a third, 15-20 minutes. Scrape the bottom and sides of the pan with a metal spatula to deglaze the pan. Strain the liquid into a saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat.
13. Add the cooked turkey wing and neck meat. Season with salt and black pepper. (For 8 cups liquid, I use 2 teaspoons salt and ½ teaspoon finely ground black pepper).
14. Carefully pour off any excess oil that may have risen to the top of the roux and discard. Slowly and carefully add the roux to the boiling broth, a little bit at a time, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 15-20 minutes. Skim off any excess oil that rises to the surface and discard.