

The focus for the next three weeks is on Thanksgiving. We will have recipes for appetizers, the main entrée (the turkey) side dishes and dessert. If you have a favorite recipe, send it in! Recipes, with photo (and a short story/history), if available, can be submitted to ads@thedrummer.com.

Brined Herb-Crusted Turkey with Apple Cider Gravy

Level: Intermediate

Total: 2 days 5 hr

Prep: 1 hr

Inactive: 2 days

Cook: 4 hr

Yield: 8 to 10 servings

Brine:

7 qts. water
1 qt. apple cider
3/4 c. kosher salt
1/3 c. granulated sugar
1 lg. onion, diced
1 lg. or 2 sm. carrots, diced
3 ribs celery, diced
1 head garlic, cut in 1/2 equatorially
1/2 bunch fresh rosemary
1/2 bunch fresh sage
6 bay leaves
1 (12 to 14 lb.) turkey, free range organic is great!

Herb crust:

1 bunch fresh rosemary, leaves finely chopped
1 bunch fresh sage, leaves finely chopped
3 sticks butter, room temp.
Kosher salt

Gravy:

1 lg. onion, cut into 1/2" dice
1 lg. or 2 sm. carrots, peeled and cut into 1/2" dice
2 ribs celery, cut into 1/2" dice
4 cloves garlic, smashed
2 Granny Smith apples, cut into 1/2" dice
5 bay leaves
1 cinnamon stick
1 bunch thyme
Kosher salt
1 qt. chicken stock, divided
2 c. apple cider, divided
1/2 to 3/4 c. all-purpose flour

Special equipment: butcher's twine

To brine the turkey: Combine all of the ingredients for the brine in a large container. Add the turkey and let it brine in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 days.

To prepare the turkey for cooking: Remove the turkey from the brine the night before roasting and pat it thoroughly dry with paper towels. Combine the rosemary, sage, and butter for the herb crust in a small bowl. Season, to taste, with kosher salt. Work the butter under the skin of the turkey and massage it into the breasts and the legs. Massage the butter on the outside of the skin as well. Tie the legs together over the breast so they will protect it during cooking and help keep it moist and juicy.

Gravy preparation: Put the onions, carrots, celery, garlic, apples, bay leaves, cinnamon stick and thyme in a roasting pan and season with salt. Arrange the turkey on top of the veggies and refrigerate overnight UNCOVERED! Yes, that's right, uncovered. This will help the skin dry out and become really brown and crispy. Make sure that there is no raw food near the turkey in the refrigerator. After refrigerating overnight, the turkey is ready to go in the oven.

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F.

Put 2 cups chicken stock and 1 cup apple cider in the bottom of the roasting pan. Roast the turkey in the preheated oven until the skin gets really nice and brown, about 40 minutes. Lower the oven heat to 350 degrees F for the remainder of the cooking time. Baste the turkey every 30 minutes or so and add more stock to the roasting pan, if needed. Cook about 17 minutes per pound. Once it gets to the proper color, tent the turkey with aluminum foil to prevent it from getting too dark.

Remove the turkey from the oven when an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the turkey registers 160 degrees F. Make sure that the thermometer is not touching a bone when doing the reading. When the turkey has reached the proper temperature, remove it from the roasting pan to a cutting board and let it rest for at least 30 minutes. Cover loosely with aluminum foil.

Strain all the veggies over a bowl to separate them from the stock/mixture. Discard the veggies. Skim off the fat and add it to the roasting pan. This is the fat for the roux. Put the roasting pan over 2 burners and over a low heat and whisk in the flour. Cook until the mixture looks like wet sand, about 4 to 5 minutes. Slowly whisk in the remaining 1 cup apple cider, remaining chicken stock and the stock/cider mixture. Cook until the mixture has thickened and reached a gravy consistency. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Pour into a serving pitcher or bowl.

Carve the turkey, transfer to a serving platter and serve with the gravy.

Scalloped Potato Gratin

Level: Easy
Total: 1 hr 5 min
Prep: 15 min
Cook: 50 min
Yield: 4 to 6 servings

1-1/2 c. heavy cream
3 bay leaves
2 sprigs fresh thyme, plus more to finish
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1/2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
Salt & freshly ground black pepper
Unsalted butter
2 lbs. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/8"-thick slices
1/2 c. grated Parmesan, plus more for broiling

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

In a saucepan, heat up the cream with the bay leaves, thyme, garlic, nutmeg and some salt and pepper.

While the cream is heating up, butter a casserole dish. Use a slotted spoon to remove the bay leaves and thyme. Pour the heated cream into a large bowl with the potato slices. Mix gently to coat the potatoes. Dust the Parmesan over the potatoes. Season the mix with a little bit of salt and pepper. Mix to gently incorporate. Spoon a little bit of the cream into the bottom of the casserole dish. Then spoon the potatoes in. Level out the potatoes for uniform cooking time. Pour the remaining cream at the bottom of the bowl over the top. Top with some Parmesan and fresh thyme leaves. Cover the dish with aluminum foil, but pull back one corner for the steam to escape. Bake for 40 minutes.

Sausage and Herb Stuffing

Level: Intermediate
Total: 1 hr 22 min
Prep: 25 min
Cook: 57 min
Yield: 8 to 10 servings

16 c. 1" bread cubes, white or sourdough (1-1/2 lbs. loaf)
8 T. (1 stick) unsalted butter
2 c. medium-diced yellow onion (2 onions)
1 c. medium-diced celery (2 stalks)
2 Granny Smith apples, unpeeled, cored & large-diced
2 T. chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 T. kosher salt
1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
3/4 lb. sweet or spicy Italian sausage, casings removed
1 c. chicken stock
1 c. dried cranberries

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F.

Place the bread cubes in a single layer on a sheet pan and bake for 7 minutes. Raise the oven temperature to 350 degrees F. Remove the bread cubes to a very large bowl.

Meanwhile, in a large saute pan, melt the butter and add the onions, celery, apples, parsley, salt and pepper. Saute over medium heat for 10 minutes, until the vegetables are softened. Add to the bread cubes.

In the same saute pan, cook the sausage over medium heat for about 10 minutes, until browned and cooked through, breaking up the sausage with a fork while cooking. Add to the bread cubes and vegetables.

Add the chicken stock and cranberries to the mixture, mix well, and pour into a 9 by 12-inch baking dish. Bake for 30 minutes, until browned on top and hot in the middle. Serve warm.

Cranberry Sauce

Level: Easy
Total: 17 min
Prep: 10 min
Cook: 7 min
Yield: about 2-1/2 cups

1 lb. fresh cranberries, washed & dried
2 c. granulated sugar
1/3 c. water
1 cinnamon stick
1/2 tsp. ground allspice
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 orange, zested and juiced

In a medium pot, combine the cranberries, sugar and water. Stir to blend. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat. Reduce to a simmer and add the cinnamon stick, allspice and nutmeg. Stir to blend and simmer for an additional 5 to 7 minutes. Some of the cranberries will burst and some will remain whole. Add the orange juice and zest, stir and allow to cool before serving.

Quote of the Week:

“The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.”

~ George Washington