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Roast Turkey with Maple Balsamic Butter Rub

Serves 10 to 14

The key to seasoning the turkey with this butter rub is to blot the bird dry, which enables the rub to adhere to the skin. You can also stuff the turkey, but it takes about an hour longer to cook. An instant-read thermometer is a must for ensuring a perfectly cooked bird. Remember that the internal temperature will increase by a few degrees once the turkey is removed from the oven.

INGREDIENTS:

One 14- to 16-pound turkey, patted dry

RUB:

2 shallots, finely chopped
3 tablespoons, pure maple syrup
1 tablespoon balsamic glaze
1 tablespoon soy sauce
2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme, or 2 teaspoons dried thyme
1 tablespoon Seriously Simple Seasoning Salt (see Page 3)
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter at room temperature

1 large orange, peel intact and sliced crosswise
3 onions, 1 sliced, 2 coarsely chopped
2 carrots, peeled and sliced
2 cups easy turkey stock, or chicken broth, or more if needed

1. Remove the turkey from the refrigerator 1 hour before roasting
2. Make the rub: In a small bowl, stir together all of the ingredients until well blended. Taste and adjust the seasonings.
3. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Place the turkey on a piece of aluminum foil on the counter. Starting around the main body cavity, carefully slip your fingers under the skin and loosen the skin, being careful not to break the skin. (You may need to wear rubber gloves if you have long fingernails.) Pat the rub under the skin and then pat it all over the bird on top of the skin. (If some of the rub falls off, that is okay; it will flavor the gravy.)

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4. Place the orange and onion slices in the cavity. Insert a wooden skewer through the thighs to hold the drumsticks together. Place the chopped onions and the carrots on the bottom of a large roasting pan. Pour the 2 cups of stock over the vegetables. Set a nonstick roasting rack in the roasting pan and place the turkey breast-side up on the rack.

5. Roast in the center of the oven for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F and roast, basting about every 45 minutes with the pan juices, until a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of a thigh away from the bone registers 170°F and the juices run clear. You may need to add more stock if the pan becomes too dry. If the bird becomes too dark, tent a piece of aluminum foil on top. A 16-pound turkey should take about 4 hours. Be sure to check the temperature at 30-minute intervals as the finish time approaches.

6. Transfer the turkey to a large platter or carving board. Let rest for at least 20 minutes before carving. Discard the vegetables.

ADVANCE PREPARATION:

Make the rub 2 days ahead, cover, and refrigerate. Remove both the turkey and the rub from the refrigerator 1 hour before roasting.

THE CLEVER COOK COULD:

- Stuff the turkey: Omit the onion and orange. Use your favorite stuffing. Loosely stuff the turkey in the neck and main cavities. Close the flaps with wooden skewers. A stuffed 16-pound bird should take about 5 hours to cook.
- Use the rub on a 3-1/2 – 4-pound chicken and roast for about 1 hour at 425°F.

RECOMMENDED WINE:

The underrated Riesling is magic with the sweet and savory tastes in this turkey recipe. Lighter reds, such as Beaujolais Nouveau, Grenache, Pinot Noir, and Côtes du Rhône are also excellent choices.

See Seriously Simple Seasoning Salt on Page 3

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SERIOUSLY SIMPLE SEASONING SALT

Makes about 3-1/2 cups

This magical seasoning will elevate the flavor of just about anything you cook. I have made a version of this recipe for years and, over time, I have simplified the method by using a food processor. To make this even more quickly, you can purchase already peeled garlic cloves.

INGREDIENTS:

30 peeled garlic cloves, ends cut off
2 cups kosher salt
1 tablespoon onion powder
2 tablespoons paprika
3 tablespoons good-quality chili powder
2 tablespoons ground white pepper
2 tablespoons celery seed
1 tablespoon ground ginger
1 tablespoon poultry seasoning
1 tablespoon dry mustard
1 tablespoon dried dill weed

1. In a running food processor fitted with the metal blade, drop in the garlic cloves, and process until finely minced.
2. Combine all the remaining ingredients in a large measuring cup. Add to the garlic and pulse until completely blended. Use a spatula to scrape down the sides of the blender container and pulse again. Transfer to an airtight container or to smaller containers with shakers on the top. Keep refrigerated.

ADVANCE PREPARATION:

Make up to 3 months ahead and refrigerate.