RECIPE

Roast Turkey

A dry-salted whole turkey with a four-spice olive oil under the skin, served skin off, the centrepiece of a holiday dinner.

MAKES

12 servings US Metric

TOTAL

3 h 45 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 1 whole turkey, about 12 lb, thawed (about 8½ lb of meat and skin once the bones are out; the skin comes off before serving)
- [ ] 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- [ ] 4 tablespoons olive oil
- [ ] 2 teaspoons paprika
- [ ] 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- [ ] 1 teaspoon black pepper
- [ ] 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- [ ] 1 onion, quartered
- [ ] 1 lemon, halved
- [ ] 1 cup water for the pan

Method

1. Thaw the turkey in the fridge, about 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds, so a 12-pounder needs about 3 days. Take out the neck and the bag of giblets. Pat the bird dry. Do not wash it.
2. The day before: rub the kosher salt all over the turkey, inside and out. Set it on a rack in a roasting pan and leave it uncovered in the fridge overnight. Up to 2 days is fine.
3. Roast day: heat the oven to 425 °F and set a rack in the lowest position. Stir the oil with the paprika, garlic powder, pepper and thyme.

4. Slide your fingers under the skin over the breast and spoon about two-thirds of the spiced oil under it. Rub the rest over the skin. Put the onion and lemon in the cavity, tuck the wing tips behind the back and tie the legs together. Pour the water into the pan. The skin stays on for roasting; it holds the juices in.

5. Push a food thermometer into the thickest part of a thigh, away from the bone. Roast at 425 °F for 30 minutes. Then turn the oven down to 350 °F and roast about 2 to 2½ hours more. Start checking at 2 hours. If the breast turns dark brown early, lay a loose tent of foil over it.

6. It is done when both the thickest part of the thigh and the thickest part of the breast read at least 165 °F, and the juices run clear. Go by the thermometer, not the clock.

7. Lift the turkey to a board and cover it loosely with foil. Rest it 30 minutes. It stays hot, and the middle keeps climbing a few degrees. Pull the skin off and set it aside, then carve the meat. Keep the drippings for gravy.

8 Leftovers: get the meat off the bones and into the fridge within 2 hours. Reheat to 165 °F. Freeze sliced meat flat in bags, two servings each, dated. Simmer the carcass for stock; bring the stock to a boil before you use it.