

# Holiday Turkey with Rice Stuffing & Gravy with Fresh Herbs

Holidays are usually the time we throw caution to the wind, and just enjoy ourselves with all our friends and family. We created this holiday menu and recipes so you can do just that without compromising health. The rice stuffing is delicious and a very satisfying alternative to the heavy bread stuffing usually served. Enjoy the holiday feasting, knowing that you are nourishing your body at the same time.

## Ingredients

Please read entire recipe before shopping or beginning.

**12-15 lbs.** fresh organic, or free-range turkey, (do not use self-basting turkey)

Stuffing:

**½ cup** wild rice

**1 cup** long grain brown rice

**1 med** onion, chopped

**¾ cup** diced celery, about ¼ inch pieces

**2 cups** sliced crimini mushrooms

**1 medium** green apple, diced about ¼ inch pieces

**4 medium** cloves garlic, minced

**½ cup** chopped walnuts

**6** dried apricots, coarsely chopped

**½ cup** raisins

**½ cup** chopped fresh parsley

**2 tablespoons** chopped fresh sage

**3 tablespoons** chopped fresh thyme

**½ tablespoon** fennel seeds

**½ cup** chicken broth, and 1 tablespoon salt and black pepper, to taste

Gravy:

**6 cups** chicken broth

**2** large carrots chopped in large pieces

**2** medium onions cut into large pieces

**2** celery sticks cut into large pieces

neck, wing tips and giblets from turkey

**⅓ cup** flour mixed with water

**1 TBS** chopped fresh rosemary

**2 TBS** chopped fresh thyme

salt and black pepper

\*optional ¼ cup dried porcini mushrooms



## Method

Stuffing:

Bring 3½ cups of lightly salted water to a boil.

While water is coming to a boil rinse the wild rice under running water in a strainer.

When water is boiling add both wild and brown rice, cover, turn heat to low and cook for about 45 minutes, until tender. Do not overcook. You will most likely have excess water when rice is cooked properly.

Put cooked rice in a strainer and drain out excess water. Set aside in a large enough bowl to mix everything together.

Heat 1 TBS chicken broth in a large stainless steel skillet. Healthy Saute onion in broth over medium heat for 5

minutes. Add mushrooms and celery and continue to saute for another 2-3 minutes.

Mix all the stuffing ingredients together in bowl and season with salt and pepper.

Always stuff the turkey just before roasting - never ahead of time to avoid harmful bacteria. Have the stuffing hot and pack it loosely in the body cavity.

#### Turkey:

Rinse turkey well inside and out. Pat dry. (If you had to buy a frozen turkey, make sure it is completely thawed.)

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees F and put the oven rack on the bottom shelf. Stuff the turkey loosely with dressing while it is still hot right before roasting.

Cut about 48 inches of heavy kitchen twine. Truss the turkey by first binding the legs together with the center of the length of twine. Run the twine along the sides of the turkey toward the neck tightly holding the wings to its sides with the twine. Cross the twine around the neck end of the bird and back to the legs. Loop around legs and tie a knot. Rub the turkey with a little salt and pepper.

Place turkey breast side down on a flat or V shaped rack in roasting pan. Make sure you use a rack inside the roasting pan. Otherwise the skin may stick to the pan and tear. Add a cup of chicken broth to the bottom of the pan. Roast breast side down basting about every 30 minutes with the pan juices for about 2½ hours for a 12-15 lb turkey.

Bring turkey to the top of the stove, turn it to its back and remove the trussing twine. This will now allow the inside of the legs to brown along with the rest of the turkey. Baste again, and return to the oven. But first, check the breast for doneness by inserting an instant reading thermometer at the thickest part of the breast toward the neck. This will give you an idea how much longer the turkey will need to cook. It should read about 125 at this point. When the thermometer reads between 165 and 170 in the thickest part of the thigh the turkey is perfectly done. Check the stuffing by inserting the thermometer into the center of the cavity. The stuffing should read 165 to be done. If it has not reached this temperature, you will have to remove it from the turkey and finish cooking it in a baking pan on its own. It's important the stuffing reaches this temperature to be safe to eat. Check the thighs for doneness. Remove your turkey to a platter, but don't carve it for at least 20 minutes.

#### Gravy:

Simmer all the ingredients except oat flour, thyme, rosemary, salt and pepper for about 1 hour on medium heat.

Strain and discard solids. Heat ¼ cup broth in a stainless steel skillet. Whisk in flour a little at a time to incorporate. Using a wire whisk, add the rest of the broth a little at a time on low heat. Keep whisking to avoid lumps until all the liquid is incorporated.

Add rosemary and cook for another 20 minutes on low heat, stirring occasionally. Season with chopped thyme, salt and pepper.

## Notes

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Roasting a big holiday turkey can be tricky. If you are roasting a turkey that is small and easy to handle it is best to start roasting it breast side down, and turn it breast side up after about 1 ½ hours. Juices from the dark meat flow down through the breast and moistens it. If you are roasting a large turkey it is too difficult to turn, especially when it is stuffed. One way to avoid ending up with a dry breast is to pack it in ice before roasting so it is much colder than the rest of the bird. That way when you roast it entirely with the breast up it cooks slower and there is much less chance of it over cooking and drying out. Tent the breast with foil until there is about 1½ hours left of roasting time. If the breast reads 125 internal temperature at its thickest part and it is not sufficiently brown, turn the oven heat up 25 degrees. If it is getting too brown turn the heat down to 350 to slow down the browning.

Plan on roasting your stuffed turkey about 30 minutes per lb total.

Simmer your neck and giblets (not the liver) with water, onions, carrots, and celery instead of using the fat from the turkey for a healthier way of making your gravy.

If you want to add some of the drippings from the turkey pan skim off as much fat as possible. Use just enough to enhance flavor, so you avoid too much fat. Also if you choose to add dried porcini mushrooms to your gravy simmer them in the beginning with the vegetables for an hour. You will get a lot of flavor from them. You can either discard them with the rest of the vegetables or chop them and add back to the gravy.