



RECIPE OF THE WEEK: 19/12/2022

Christouyeniati Yalopoula (Christmas Turkey)

Try this amazing recipe with the aromas of thyme, sage, garlic, lemon and bay leaves. Follow the secrets given and end up with a succulent, moist and herb infused turkey to celebrate Christmas. Serve with your favourite trimmings for a perfect Christmas meal.

Ingredients (Serves 8-10)

1 X 4.5-5.5kg turkey, good quality and free-range with giblets and turkey neck removed
2 onions peeled and roughly chopped
2 carrots roughly chopped
2 celery sticks roughly chopped
4 bay leaves
2 whole garlic cloves and 2 garlic cloves, crushed
a small handful of finely chopped thyme leaves
a small handful of sage leaves
500ml water
1 orange or clementine, zested and halved
a few sprigs of fresh rosemary
125g unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
sea salt and freshly ground pepper

For the gravy

2 tbsp plain flour
250ml red wine
500ml chicken or vegetable stock
1 tbsp redcurrant jelly

Method

1. If you have a frozen turkey, you need to defrost it completely in the refrigerator by placing it with its packaging in a large, deep roasting tin. Allow 24 hours for every 1.5 kg, in other words up to 3 days for a 5kg turkey. Another method is to immerse it in cold water and allow half an hour for every 500g, 5 hours for a 5kg bird.
2. When you are ready, take the fresh turkey out of the fridge and unwrap for an hour before cooking for it to reach room temperature
3. Pre-heat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas 7
4. Season the bird all over with sea salt and pepper
5. Place half of the chopped onions, carrots, celery, giblets, turkey neck, 2 bay leaves, garlic cloves, thyme and sage in a large roasting tin. Put a roasting rack on top of the vegetables and place the turkey on the rack breast-side up.
6. Pour the water into one corner of the roasting tray. Cover the tray with foil.

7. Stuff the cavity of the turkey with the rest of the onions, the orange or clementine halves, the rest of the bay leaves, crushed garlic cloves and the sprigs of rosemary. This will allow the flavours to infuse into the turkey while cooking. Do not pack them too tightly so as to allow the hot air to circulate while cooking.
8. Wrap the wing and leg ends with foil in the first 2 hours of roasting to prevent them from burning.
9. Melt the butter in a pan over low heat for 30 seconds. Add half of the thyme, orange or clementine zest. Set aside to cool a little.
10. Carefully push your fingers under the skin of the bird, starting from the neck and pushing all the way down, being careful not to tear the skin. Rub the butter on the underside of the skin and on the top of the bird. Sprinkle with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper.
11. Cook in the pre-heated oven, 40-45 minutes per kilo. For a 5kg turkey, cook it for 3 hours and 30 minutes.
12. Turn the heat down to 170°C/150°C fan/gas 3 after 45 minutes. Keep basting the bird every 35-40 minutes. Remove the tin foil about 35 minutes before the end of cooking to achieve a golden colour.
13. To check if the turkey is cooked, in the thickest part of the leg immerse a skewer or knife. If the juices run clear, the bird is ready. Another method is to use a thermometer where a temperature of the turkey should reach 65C-70C to indicate that it is cooked and safe to eat.
14. Lift it out of the tin using strong tongs or two large spoons and place in a large platter. Cover with tin foil and allow it to rest for at least half an hour before serving.
15. To prepare the gravy, place the tray of vegetables with the juices over a low heat. Scrape any pieces from the bottom of the tray using a wooden spoon. Add the plain flour and stir well to make sure there are no lumps. Cook for 1 or 2 minutes and then pour in the wine, the stock and the redcurrant jelly stirring continuously. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 5 minutes until the gravy starts to thicken. Strain it into a bowl. Serve the turkey with the gravy, roast potatoes and steamed seasonable vegetables.

© George Psarias

