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***Cooking a Small Turkey – Two Ways!***

Treating one of our smaller turkeys more like a wild turkey may yield better results rather than using a traditional roast recipe. The smaller birds tend to be more lean and therefore are sensitive to over-cooking or drying out. ***Braising,*** ***spatchcocking, or splaying*** your small turkey will lead to a juicier, more tender small bird. Have fun with these methods!

***Braised Turkey***

**Ingredients**

8 pound turkey (whole or quartered) and a 10 quart Dutch oven/Le Creuset pot with lid

Salt and pepper to taste, chopped rosemary or sage (fresh or dried)

1 quart of poultry broth

½ to 1 stick of butter and/or olive oil

Heat oven to 325 degrees.

Pat bird dry, rub with salt & pepper. Heat Dutch oven to medium high and melt butter/oil. When butter starts to bubble, add sage or rosemary and cook till golden brown. Place turkey in herbed brown butter and brown skin on all sides.

Once browned, place turkey, breast up, and pour broth into the pot. 3-4 inches of liquid is ideal. Put lid on pan and place in oven. Begin checking temperature with an instant read thermometer after 45 minutes of cooking. Meat internal temperature should reach 155-160 degrees. The bird will continue cooking slightly once removed from the oven as it rests.

**Note:** Basting should not be necessary, as the Dutch oven will act somewhat as a baster. For crispy skin, remove turkey from the braising liquid once internal temp reaches 155 degrees and place on a baking sheet. Place under broiler until brown and crispy! And don’t forget to make gravy from the basting liquids!

***45 Minute Roast Spatchcocked or Splayed Turkey***

***(courtesy of Mark Bittman, The New York Times)***

Yields 10 servings

1 8 to 12 pound turkey

10 garlic cloves (or more to taste), peeled and lightly crushed

1 branch fresh tarragon or thyme, separated into sprigs, or ½ teaspoon dried tarragon or thyme

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil or butter

Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oven to 450 degrees. Put turkey on a stable cutting board breast side down and cut out backbone. Turn turkey over and press down to flatten bird. Put bird, breast side up, in a roasting pan. Wings should partly cover breasts and legs should protrude a bit. Alternatively, you could also splay the bird: Google “How to Splay a Turkey New York Times. Nov 8, 2016.” (Splaying is easier than spatchcocking.)

Tuck garlic and tarragon under bird and in nooks of wings and legs. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper. Roast for 20 minutes. Turkey should be browning. Remove from oven, baste with pan juices, and return to oven. Reduce heat to 400 degrees. If turkey browns too quickly, reduce temp to 350.

Begin to check turkey’s temperature (ideally using an instant read thermometer) after 30 minutes, at the thickest part of the thigh. Meat is done when it registers 160 degrees. Let turkey rest for a few minutes before carving. Serve with garlic and pan juices.