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Franksgiving: Turkey roasted in a pot

by Frank Davis

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D'ja ever cook your Thanksgiving turkey inside a black pot, Cajun style? Well, you might want to give it a try this year. It couldn't be easier and it can only come out pretty and perfect. What's more, because it's roasted slowly at a constant temperature, unstuffed, in an old-fashioned Dutch oven, you get one of the juiciest turkeys you ever ate. If you're a fan of my traditional slow-roasted turkey, you're gonna love this! Cuz' you don't cook a turkey this way for the turkey—you cook it this way for the gravy!

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- 1 fresh or frozen turkey**, 8 to 10 pound average
- 4 tablespoons** poultry seasoning
- 2 tablespoons** kosher or sea salt
- 2 tablespoons** fresh ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon** cayenne pepper
- 1 tub** Promise Buttery Spread
- 1 whole**, large,, peeled onion
- 4 tablespoons** vegetable oil for greasing the pot
- 3 heaping tablespoons** cornstarch + **1 cup** water

First, put the turkey in the sink under cold running water and wash it thoroughly, making sure to remove every single trace of debris from the internal cavity.

Then, with paper towels, pat the bird totally dry inside and out and place it onto a sheet of freezer paper on the countertop.

At this point, you also want to preheat your oven to 325 degrees.

Next, prepare the turkey, front and back, inside and out, with the poultry seasoning, salt, black pepper, and red pepper. And I don't mean just *sprinkle* it on--*rub those seasonings into the bird hard!*

Then, take the Promise spread and massage the bird liberally, again both inside and out, until it coats the entire turkey. And be sure you put some of the spread up under the skin too!

Now place the turkey, breast-side up, into a slightly oiled cast iron Dutch oven large enough to hold the bird *plus* whatever juices will be rendered out (and you will get juices!).

Oh, yeah—and you want to cook the turkey unstuffed, except for the whole onion which you place inside the cavity.

When your thermostat indicates that the oven is right at 325 degrees, put the lid on the black pot and slide it into the oven on the low-center rack.

Then set your timer for about 2 hours and don't even peek in the pot until the timer goes off. Depending upon the weight of the bird, you can expect it to cook to perfection in about three to four hours (which figures out to about 22 minutes to the pound).

Of course, to be sure that you're correct, I suggest you use a meat thermometer and roast the turkey until the internal temperature in the turkey breast or thigh reaches 180 degrees.

After the initial two-hour roasting time you might want to baste the turkey occasionally to keep it moist and help the breast skin to brown beautifully.

Finally, when you're ready to eat, remove the bird from the pot (it's going to be so fall-apart tender you may have to extricate it in pieces), place it onto a serving platter, and finish carving it at the table for your family and dinner guests.

But whatever you do, make sure you whisk together the cornstarch and water mixture, stir it into the natural pot drippings and cook it briefly at a slow boil to create the best-tasting turkey gravy that ever passed over your lips!

And yes—the gravy is really the only reason you do a turkey this way!

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CHEF'S NOTES:

1—Depending upon the turkey's size, an 8-quart or even a 10-quart Dutch oven is ideal for preparing this recipe. Just make certain that you got lots of extra "roasting room" inside the pot.

2—To make removal from the Dutch oven easier, I suggest you allow the turkey to cool and "set" briefly on the stovetop—maybe 15 to 20 minutes. This will also make the turkey a little easier to carve into serving size pieces and give the bird's natural juices time to redistribute.

3—You can prepare either a fresh or frozen turkey this way. But if you use a frozen turkey, it must be thoroughly thawed out before you attempt to cook it. I recommend that you thaw a turkey this size in the refrigerator for about 3 days. Just remember, to prevent contamination, never, never, never thaw a turkey (or any other kind of food for that matter) on the countertop, in the sink, or at room temperature.

4—If you use a meat thermometer, make sure it doesn't touch any bone or grizzle.

5—To keep the turkey from sticking to the pot as it roasts, rub down the cold Dutch oven with the vegetable oil before placing the bird into it. And if you own a porcelain-coated Dutch oven, that's really the way to go.

6—Just for the record, if you want the onion you stuffed inside the turkey for yourself alone, you had better claim it early in the serving process. There's a tendency for the family to fight over it once it makes it to the table.

7—Now, if you just so happen to be a turkey hunter and you were lucky enough to bag a tom during the spring season, and if you want to cook it this year for Franksgiving, you can certainly use this recipe with fantastic results. But...you will have to make an alteration or two to accommodate for "wild game." To get a succulent, richly flavored wild turkey, you must either bard or lard or brine the bird prior to cooking it. Barding or larding means adding fat to the turkey to give it lots of moistness (since all wild game is usually very lean), and the Internet will provide a variety of recipes for brining that you can use on your wild turkey.