



Cider-Glazed Brined Turkey with Apple Brandy Gravy

(Gluten-Free, Egg-Free, Nut-Free, Easily Dairy-Free)

Ingredients:

1 18 pound ROOM TEMPERATURE fresh free-range turkey, brined following **The Pioneer Woman's method** -removed from brine, rinsed thoroughly, and allowed to totally dry
1/4 cup softened butter, mixed with **1/2 teaspoon sea salt** and **1 – 2 cloves minced garlic** (For Dairy-Free: use either Earth Balance Buttery Spread, softened, OR Organic Canola Oil)

FOR TURKEY CAVITY (size of bird will determine what fits):

1 – 2 Granny Smith or Golden Delicious Apples (quartered-can leave skin and core intact since this is not for consumption, only flavoring)
1 large onion, peeled and quartered
1 lemon, or orange, halved
1 cinnamon stick
2 sprigs fresh rosemary
4-6 fresh sage leaves
1/2 tsp salt

FOR BASTING:

1 cup Apple Cider
2 Tbsp Grade B Maple Syrup (preferably organic)
4 Tbsp Cultured butter, preferably organic from grass-fed cows (For Dairy-Free: use either Earth Balance Buttery Spread OR Organic Canola Oil)
3 Tbsp Calvados or applejack (Apple Brandy), or more to taste
1 tsp ground Cinnamon
1/2 tsp sea salt

FOR GRAVY:

Pan Juices
2 – 3 Tbsp Apple brandy (or more to taste)
3 – 4 cups Gluten-Free Turkey or Chicken Broth (preferably Organic)
1/4 cup Apple Cider
3 Tbsp Cornstarch
Sea salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. After discarding **your brine**, and thoroughly rinsing bird, pat dry inside and out and allow bird to air-dry on counter for at least **1 1/2 hours** (this will bring the bird to room temperature and allow the skin to dry out enough so that it can crisp up nicely during roasting).
2. Set oven rack to lowest position in oven (you may have to remove a rack). Preheat oven to **450 degrees**.
3. Place turkey on rack inside of large roasting pan. Gently loosen skin away from breast meat and rub softened butter mixture all over breast, under skin, getting as far as you can, while taking great care *not to tear it*. Rub any remaining butter all over the outside of the bird, on breast and legs. Season bird generously with sea salt and freshly cracked pepper.
4. In medium bowl, mix together ingredients for turkey cavity: apples, onion, citrus halves (squeezing some of the juice out into bowl as well), cinnamon stick, rosemary, and sage. Fill turkey cavity with mixture.

5. Tuck wings under turkey and tie legs together with kitchen twine. For instructions on how to do this, Alton Brown has a good method on [How to Truss a Turkey](#).
6. Place oven-safe thermometer (preferably a digital one) in thickest part of thigh away from bone of turkey. Place turkey in pre-heated oven and roast for 30 minutes.
7. While turkey is roasting at high heat, mix together in medium saucepan, all ingredients for basting: apple cider, maple syrup, butter, brandy, cinnamon, and salt. Bring to gentle boil, then after 2 minutes, remove from heat and set aside.
8. After 30 minutes, lower oven temperature to 350 degrees. Baste turkey with hot basting mixture. At this point, pour 1 cup of liquid (water or broth) into bottom of roasting pan – will prevent sugars in basting liquid from burning in pan, and create steam-like effect to keep breast meat moist but will not prevent browning.
9. Baste turkey every 30 minutes with both basting liquid you and with the pan juices, checking for too much browning of bird. Turn your turkey to face the other direction halfway through cooking since most ovens have hot spots. Will help produce more even cooking.
10. If you find bird to be browning too quickly, or too much in one area, tent the bird loosely with foil in browned areas. Remove foil during basting, then replace.
11. When thigh meat has reached 160 degrees (truth be told, I remove mine at about 155), remove turkey from oven and roasting pan and place bird on cutting board covered loosely with foil. An 18 pound bird should take from 2 hours 30 min to 3 hours. Let rest for 30 minutes.
12. In medium saucepan, gently warm 3 – 4 cups of turkey or chicken broth. Place roasting pan across two burners, if possible, and pour in Apple brandy, and deglaze bottom of pan over medium heat.
13. Once bottom of pan is scraped clean, pour pan juices from roasting pan into fat separator and set aside. Fat will rise to top as liquid cools; dark drippings, the flavorful part, will stay at bottom. If not using a separator, spoon fat from top after it settles.
14. Pour pan juices (minus fat) into warm broth mixture. In small bowl, whisk together apple cider and cornstarch until smooth. Pour this mixture into pan juice/broth mixture. Whisk constantly, using figure 8 motion, to avoid lumps. Gravy will begin to thicken. Salt and Pepper to taste. Can strain any lumps or larger pieces of drippings from gravy at this point (my mother does this, I do not).