

Basic Braised Turkey

| Time: About 3 hours | Yield: 6 to 8 servings

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 turkey thighs (or 2 drumsticks and 2 thighs) and 1 breast (2 halves)

½ pound bacon or pancetta, diced (optional)
2 large onions, diced
1 pound shiitake or other mushrooms, sliced
2 pounds carrots, peeled and diced
1 bunch celery, diced
A few branches sage, thyme or rosemary
3 cups turkey stock or water, or more
Chopped fresh parsley for garnish (optional)

Preparation

1. Put the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Season the turkey and brown the leg (and, if you're using them, wing) portions on the skin side well, 10 minutes or more; turn and cook for another 2 minutes on the skinless side. Remove to a plate and brown the breasts in the same skillet, again mostly on the skin side; remove and keep them separate.
2. Heat the oven to 300, and cook the bacon or pancetta (if using) in the remaining fat in the skillet until nearly crisp; remove with a slotted spoon. Cook the onions, mushrooms, carrots, celery and herbs, in batches if necessary, until beginning to brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer with the bacon or pancetta to a large roasting pan, then nestle the dark meat in there, leaving room for the breasts. Add stock or water to come about one-third to halfway up the sides of the thighs.
3. Roast uncovered for about 90 minutes, checking occasionally to make sure liquid levels remain sufficiently high and stirring vegetables if they threaten to brown too much. When thigh meat is tender, place the breasts in the pan, and cook until tender, 30 to 45 minutes more, or until done. (They should register 155 on an instant-read thermometer.)
4. Slice breast and thigh meat and serve on a platter with the vegetables garnished, if you like, with parsley.

How to Turn Stock Into Gravy After removing the turkey and vegetables from your roasting pan, place on the stovetop over high heat. Deglaze the pan by pouring in 4 to 6 cups of turkey stock and stirring to loosen any brown bits. Reduce the heat when the mixture bubbles. Taste and adjust the seasoning; do not skimp on salt or pepper. For every 4 to 6 cups of stock, mix together 1/3 cup cornstarch and 1/4 cup water until smooth. Add the cornstarch mixture to the gravy, stirring constantly. It should thicken almost instantly; serve right away.