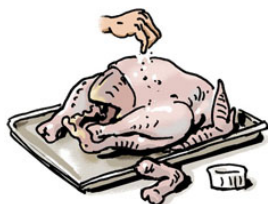


You will need: a large roasting pan fitted with a roasting rack; a brush or turkey baster; a meat thermometer; a 12- to 15-pound turkey; salt and pepper; vegetable oil; a half stick of butter; half a lemon; half an onion, cut into four pieces; one celery stick, cut into three pieces

Step
1

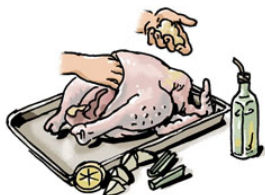
The **night before** you roast the turkey, make sure it is fully **defrosted** (a frozen bird must go in the fridge three to four days ahead to thaw). Remove the contents from the cavity. Discard the giblets and **reserve the neck**. Rub the turkey all over with several generous pinches of **salt**, including a few under the skin covering the breast. Place in a dish or on a baking sheet, cover with plastic wrap, and **refrigerate** until the next day.

Step
2

Heat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit (it will take at least 20 minutes to warm up) and place a **rack in the lower third**.

Step
3

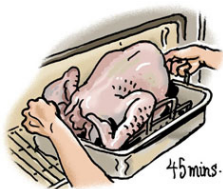
Pat the turkey dry inside and out with paper towels and tuck the wing tips back and underneath. Season well with **salt and pepper**, including inside the cavity, then rub a generous amount of **vegetable oil** inside the cavity, all over the outside, and under the skin.

Step
4

Break the **butter** into little chunks and place them **under the skin covering the breast**. Put the lemon, onion, and celery inside the cavity.

*From the store to the kitchen to the table: We outline the steps that get you from raw ingredients to your dinner tonight, free of measurements and complicated techniques. It's a method you'll remember and whip out whenever you like. It is the most basic way to make the thing you're making.

Illustrations by Bill Russell. Find this online at www.chow.com/stories/11940.

Step
5

Place the turkey **breast down** on the roasting rack, and put the reserved neck in the bottom of the pan. **Roast** in the oven for 45 minutes, **basting the turkey every 20 minutes** once the pan juices accumulate.

Step
6

After 45 minutes, **flip the turkey onto its back** and continue to baste and roast for about 2 to 2 1/2 hours.

Step
7

When a meat thermometer inserted into the inner thigh registers **170 degrees Fahrenheit** and the **juices run clear**, remove the turkey from the oven and let it **rest 20 to 30 minutes before carving**. (If you're planning on making your own gravy, be sure to set aside the roasting pan and reserve both the vegetables from inside the bird's cavity and the neck.)

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