

Simple Roasted Turkey Breast

Roasting a turkey breast is so much easier than manhandling an entire bird. Just before serving, you can even make a quick gravy by deglazing the roasting pan with a little white wine and stock, and whisking in a paste of flour and soft butter to thicken. Squeeze in some lemon, and voila. Dinner.

Serves 6, with plenty of leftovers

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 teaspoon regular or smoked paprika
3 garlic gloves, minced
One 5-pound bone-in turkey breast
Onions and potatoes, if desired
Olive oil
1 scant cups chicken stock or low-sodium broth (more if you're making gravy)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees with the rack in the lower third position.

In a small bowl, mash the butter, paprika, garlic, and 1 teaspoon of salt until smooth.

Rinse the turkey under cold water and pat as dry as humanly possible with paper towels. Slip your fingers under the skin of one turkey breast, and massage some of the seasoned butter underneath. Repeat with the other breast. Rub the remaining butter all over the rest of the exposed turkey skin, and sprinkle generously with additional salt and some pepper. Set skin-side up on a v-rack set in a roasting pan. If desired, quarter a few onions and potatoes, drizzle with a thin stream of olive oil, and season with salt and pepper. Scatter in the bottom of the roasting pan.

Roast the turkey for 45 minutes. Baste with 1/2 cup of the chicken stock. Roast 45 to 55 minutes longer, or until the meat is juicy but cooked through and the skin is crispy and deep brown, basting with a little additional stock two or three more times. Remove to a cutting board and let rest at least 20 minutes before carving. (If making gravy, see the head note, and make it while the bird rests.)

To carve, hold a sharp, heavy knife at a 45-degree angle and remove one entire breast in a single piece. Slice the meat crosswise. Repeat with the remaining breast. Freeze the carcass for stock.