

# COOK'S

ILLUSTRATED

## Turkey for a Crowd



### Ingredients

- 2 medium onions, chopped coarse
- 2 medium carrots, chopped coarse
- 2 ribs celery, chopped coarse
- 1 lemon, quartered
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme (3 to 4 inches each)
- 1 frozen turkey (Butterball or kosher turkey, 18 to 22 pounds gross weight), neck, heart, and gizzard reserved for gravy, turkey rinsed and thoroughly dried with paper towels (see note)
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt or 1 teaspoon table salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

Serves 20 to 24

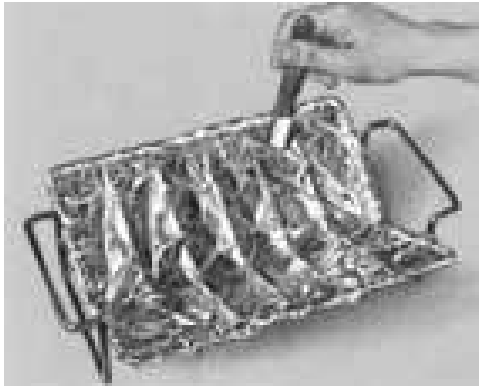
### Instructions

*You can use any roasting pan to roast the turkey, even a disposable one, but make sure to use a V-rack to keep the bird elevated. Be careful to dry the skin thoroughly before brushing the bird with butter; otherwise it will have spotty brown skin. Rotating the bird helps produce moist, evenly cooked meat, but for the sake of ease, you may opt not to rotate it. In that case, skip the step of lining the V-rack with foil and roast the bird breast-side up for the entire cooking time. Because we do not brine the bird, we had the best results with a frozen Butterball (injected with salt and water) and a kosher bird (soaked in saltwater during processing). See below for tips on defrosting a frozen turkey.*

1. Adjust oven rack to lowest position; remove remaining racks. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Following illustration below, line large V-rack with heavy-duty foil and poke holes in foil; set V-rack in 15- by 12-inch roasting pan.
2. Toss onions, carrots, celery, lemon, and thyme in medium bowl; set aside. Brush turkey breast with 2 tablespoons butter, then sprinkle with half of salt and half of black pepper. Set turkey breast-side down on V-rack. Brush with remaining 2 tablespoons butter and sprinkle with remaining salt and black pepper. Fill cavity with half of onion mixture; scatter rest in roasting pan and pour 1 cup water into pan.
3. Roast turkey 1 hour; remove roasting pan with turkey from oven. Lower oven temperature to 325 degrees. Using clean dishtowel or 2 potholders, turn turkey breast-side up; return roasting pan with turkey to oven and continue to roast until legs move freely and instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of thigh registers 170 to 180 degrees, about 2 hours longer. Transfer turkey to carving board and let rest, uncovered, 35 to 40 minutes. Carve and serve.

## Turkey for a Crowd

### Technique



### Preparing the Rack

A V-shaped rack lifts the bird off the roasting pan bottom and ensures crisp skin. However, the bars on the rack will form ribbed impressions in the skin on the breast. To prevent this from happening, line the rack with foil and then use a paring knife or skewer to poke 20 to 30 holes in the foil so juices can drip down into the pan as the bird roasts.

### Technique

#### Thawing a Frozen Turkey

Defrost the turkey in the refrigerator, calculating one day of defrosting for every 4 pounds of turkey. Say you're cooking a 12-pound turkey. The frozen bird should be placed in the refrigerator on Monday so that it's defrosted and ready to cook on Thanksgiving Day.

#### What if you don't thaw the turkey ahead of time?

Don't panic. You can still save the situation. Fill a large bucket with cold water. Place the turkey (still in its original wrapper) in the bucket and let thaw for 30 minutes per pound; a 12-pound bird, for example, would take 6 to 8 hours. Change the cold water every half hour to guard against bacteria growth.