

Best Ever Fried Turkey

By Bob and Chef Matthew Merritt

Follow these steps to a successful "Best Ever Fried Turkey". The ideal size for a fried turkey is between 10 and 16 pounds. Never attempt to fry a turkey larger than this as it may cause your fryer to boil over! It may be impossible to safely handle one any larger.

1. Defrost your bird, rinse and clean it out thoroughly. Remove the plastic done button if your bird has one!
2. Determine the oil line in your fry pot for the turkey. Put the turkey on the fry stand and lower it down into the empty fry pot. Fill the pot with COLD water until the water is about ½ inch above the turkey. Remove the turkey allowing the water to drain back into the pot, dry it off and place into the refrigerator.

Now mark the water line in the pot with a permanent marker, you may want to use a ruler to measure the water line from the top of the pot. Pour out the water and use a bleach/water solution to sanitize the ruler, stand and the fry pot. Set the pot aside and allow it to dry.

3. Brine the bird for at least 10 to 12 hours, usually overnight at a temperature not greater than 40 degrees F. We've found that a large Rubbermaid storage container will fit into the bottom of our refrigerator. You can sit the container outside on a deck in a protected location if the temperatures are cold enough. Don't put it into the sunlight! Never use the aluminum fry pot for brining, as the salts will react with the aluminum. Since we are brining the bird, it is unnecessary and undesirable to also use a seasoning injector.

The Ultimate Brine Recipe:

- 1 ½ gallons COLD water (6 quarts)
- 1 ½ cups Kosher Salt
- 1 ¼ cups dark brown sugar
- 10 cloves
- 3 tablespoons freshly cracked black peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon dried sage
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme (or 5 to 6 fresh sprigs)
- 4 to 6 bay leaves
- 3 to 4 fresh rosemary sprigs
- 2 to 3 lemons quartered
- 2 to 3 oranges quartered

Place the turkey, breast down, into your brining container and pour the brine over it. If the turkey isn't completely submerged, mix ½ cup Kosher salt and ½ cup dark brown sugar to each additional gallon of COLD water. If the turkey floats up (it will) place a heavy plate or bowl on top to keep it submerged.

4. The next morning, remove the turkey from the brine solution and thoroughly dry it, inside and out. Allow the turkey to start coming up to room temperature.
5. Dry rub the turkey with the best poultry seasoning you can find. Try your best to get the rub all inside, underneath as much loose skin as you can, especially the breast area.

We use "Tulocay's: Made in Napa Valley Herbed Poultry Rub with Sea Salt and Cracked Pepper". Its available online at <http://www.madeinnapavalley.com/> and at most Cost Plus World Markets.

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6. Place the turkey onto the fry pot stand, breast end down (legs up top) and continue to allow the turkey to come up to room temperature. Invert the wing tips and tuck them in tightly so they don't get burnt up.
7. Prepare to fry. You will need a 40 to 60 quart fry pot with a high BTU burner, a full propane tank, about 6 gallons of peanut oil, fire-safe gloves, a candy thermometer to measure oil temperature, a meat thermometer to test the turkey doneness and just in case, a fire extinguisher.

Setup in an open flat area. DO NOT setup in your garage! Oil will pop and splatter, so you probably do not want to fry on your driveway either.
8. Fill the pot to the previously marked water line with the peanut oil – no higher! The hot oil will expand about an inch in depth as the temperature rises to 350-400 degrees F.
9. Light the burner and adjust for maximum heat output. The burner is usually hottest and most efficient when it sounds like a jet plane constantly taking off.
10. Attach the candy thermometer and make sure its down into the oil. Observe as the temperature rises. DO NOT leave the pot untended! DO NOT allow pets or children to be in the area!
11. Monitor the oil temperature, when it's around 375 to 400 degrees: **TURN THE BURNER OFF**. You're ready to SLOWLY lower the turkey into the pot. Slowly lowering a 16 pound turkey into 400 degree boiling oil may require two people. Expect vigorous boiling as the turkey goes in. If any moisture remains on the turkey it will cause the oil to splatter and pop. For safety, wear a long sleeve shirt. The oil temperature will drop to 325 to 350 degrees. Relight the burner.
12. Monitor the oil temperature; never allow it to go above 400 degrees or a flash fire can result. Ideally keep the oil temperature between 350 to 375 degrees. Whole turkeys require 3 to 3 ½ minutes per pound to cook. A 15-pound turkey cooks in about 45 minutes!!
13. Raise the turkey up out of the oil to check its temperature with a meat thermometer. When it's about done, the temperature in breast should be 170 degrees and the thigh should be 180 degrees. If it's not done, slowly lower it back into the oil. The turkey may start to float up a bit as it gets done.
14. Remove the turkey when it's done, turn off the burner and cover the oil. Allow the turkey to stand upright for about 15 minutes to drain the excess oil out of it.
15. Carve and serve!!
16. The oil may be saved and reused 3 to 4 times. Strain the oil as you return it to its original containers. If you have room to store the oil in a refrigerator, it will keep for several seasons. Don't reuse the oil with a turkey if you've had a fish fry!! 😊

See next page for some photos...

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The moment of truth!



YUM!! Best Ever Fried Turkey!!!!