

How to Dry Brine a Turkey for Thanksgiving

It's super easy! All you need is some salt and a few of your favorite herbs and spices.

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Dry-brining your turkey for [Thanksgiving](#) is the perfect way to step up your game in the kitchen this year. Some might argue that dry-brining is a way to flavor your turkey from the outside in, which is something you can't really achieve if you only season your turkey moments before popping it in the oven. That's what sets brining apart from just a sprinkling of your typical mix of herbs and spices. Don't worry though—it's so easy to learn how to dry brine a turkey!

You've probably heard of a wet brine. In fact, Ree Drummond has a great [turkey brine recipe](#) that pairs well with a lot of different flavor profiles. Dry-brining, as you may have guessed, doesn't involve putting the turkey in a big pot of water. The best part about dry-brining (aside from the fact that all you need is a baking sheet to do it) is that you can still get a moist and flavorful turkey even if you're not using water. Thanks to the use of a lot of kosher salt, dry-brining builds flavors that penetrate the meat of the turkey while also maintaining juiciness. A good dry brine will also make for extra-crispy turkey skin.

Here's exactly why you'll be glad you used a dry brine: The use of salt in the seasoning mixture of a dry brine extracts the moisture from the turkey, and the salt dissolves into those juices, which then mingle with the flavors of your dry brine mixture. The juices that were previously extracted soak back into the turkey. During this process, not only does the turkey meat become flavorful and tender all over, but the outside of the turkey dries out in the fridge, which makes for perfectly roasted skin. All in all, you get a [roasted turkey](#) that's crispy and flavorful on the outside, and juicy and tasty on the inside—sounds a lot like the perfect turkey to have on your [Thanksgiving menu!](#)

YIELDS: 1 cup

TOTAL TIME: 8 hours 15 mins

Ingredients

1

12- to 14-pound turkey, thawed if frozen

Kosher salt

1 tbsp.

sugar

1 tbsp.

fresh rosemary

1 tbsp.

chopped fresh sage

1 tbsp.

fresh thyme

1 tsp.

celery seeds

Freshly ground pepper



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Directions

1. Remove the neck and giblets from the turkey and save for gravy. Pat the turkey dry with paper towels and put on a rimmed baking sheet.
2. Combine 1/4 cup salt, the sugar, rosemary, sage, thyme, celery seeds, and 2 teaspoons pepper in a spice grinder. Pulse until the herbs are finely chopped and the salt is pale green.
3. Rub the turkey inside and out with the salt mixture, rubbing some under the skin of the breasts. Refrigerate, uncovered, at least 8 hours or overnight.
4. When ready to roast the turkey, rinse it well and pat dry with paper towels. Stuff the cavity of the turkey with desired flavors and ingredients. Tie the legs together with kitchen twine. Put the turkey breast-side up on a rack set in a large roasting pan and tuck the wings under the body. Add desired seasonings and flavor to the outside of the turkey. Let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes.
5. Position an oven rack in the lowest position (remove the other racks) and preheat the oven to 350°. Roast the turkey 1 hour, then baste with the pan drippings, adding up to 1/2 cup water to the pan if the drippings are getting too dark. Continue to roast the turkey, basting every 30 minutes and adding more water to the pan if needed, until the skin is golden brown and a thermometer inserted into the thigh registers 160°, 1 1/2 to 2 more hours. Transfer the turkey to a cutting board and let rest 30 minutes before carving.