

MAPLE BUTTER TURKEY

10 to 12 servings

This is a standard roasting method, but includes a salty-sweet butter poured over top which will give you some crackling bits on the side and some sticky onions to eat with the whole thing. You can up the maple syrup here, but risk “crackling bits” turning into “burned bits.”

6 tablespoons flaky sea salt

½ cup light brown sugar

¼ cup cracked black pepper

1 tbsp crushed red pepper flakes

14-16 lb turkey

1 bunch thyme (or rosemary, marjoram or oregano)

3 onions, peeled and quartered

4 garlic heads, halved crosswise

⅓ cup, plus 1 tablespoon olive oil

1 stick unsalted butter

4 tbsp maple syrup

4 cups parsley, finely chopped

½ cup plus 2 tablespoons thyme leaves, finely chopped

¼ cup lemon juice, plus more to taste

For the turkey:

1. Combine salt, sugar, pepper and crushed red pepper flakes in a medium bowl; mix to blend.
2. Make sure the giblets are removed from the cavity and place the turkey on a rimmed baking sheet lined with a wire rack. (If you do not own a wire rack, just place the turkey directly on the baking sheet) Using paper towels, pat the turkey dry on all sides. Spread the salt mixture all over the bird, making sure to distribute the seasoning evenly to all the bits and parts.
3. Refrigerate turkey, uncovered, for 8 to 24 hours — the longer, the better— longer than 24 hours though and you'll start to “cure” the turkey, which could result in a too-salty-even-for-me bird, or tough meat.
4. Remove turkey from the fridge, and transfer it to another clean rimmed baking sheet (if you only own one, transfer it to a plate or cutting board and clean the sheet tray before returning the turkey). Stuff turkey with remaining bunch of thyme, a few of the quartered onions and half of the garlic. Scatter remaining onion and garlic around the turkey.
5. Combine olive oil, butter and maple syrup in a small pot over medium heat and saucepan until butter is melted. Pour half of the mixture over the turkey and onion. Toss the onion quarters lightly to evenly coat, and season everything with salt and pepper.
6. Roast, rotating the dish every hour or so, for 2½ to 3 hours or until the turkey has reached 160°F when a meat thermometer is inserted in the deepest part of the thigh. The turkey will be cooked through and tender, and the skin will be brown.
7. Increase oven temperature to 425° F. Pour remaining half of butter mixture over the turkey (warm it slightly if solidified) and continue to cook for 20–25 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F and the skin is very deeply browned all over. (If you find the skin is browning too quickly, especially on the top at the breast, feel free to place a sheet of foil over the breast.)
8. Remove turkey from oven and allow to rest on the tray for 20–30 minutes. Tip the turkey, cavity-side down, making sure the onions etc stay inside the cavity, and let any juices run out into the roasting dish. (This is what will be used to make the gravy.)
9. Transfer the turkey, along with the roasted onion and garlic, to a large serving platter (alternatively, use two of your largest plates). Let it continue to rest while you make the gravy.
10. To make the gravy, use a spatula to scrape up the bits from the turkey drippings, and transfer to a medium bowl. Remove the garlic cloves from half the roasted garlic and coarsely chop or mash into a paste. Add garlic paste, parsley, thyme and lemon juice to bowl and mix to combine. Season with salt and pepper and more lemon juice, if you like.
11. To serve, carve the turkey and place back on the large platter (or two plates) with the remaining garlic and onion. Sprinkle with flaky salt and serve with the sauce.