

Roasted Turkey with and Wild Rice and Goat Cheese Stuffing

1 fresh turkey, about 16 pounds
20 fresh sage leaves
1 cup (2 sticks) butter, melted
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Pomegranate Sauce, recipe follows
Wild Rice and Goat Cheese Stuffing, recipe follows
Chopped chives, for garnish
Pomegranate seeds, for garnish



Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F.

Remove the neck and gizzard from the turkey and discard. Rinse the bird thoroughly with cold water and pat dry. Using your fingers, gently loosen the skin from the breasts and drumsticks and slip the sage leaves underneath. Rub the entire surface with 1/4 cup of the melted butter. Lightly sprinkle the skin and cavity with salt and pepper.

Truss the turkey and place on a rack in a large roasting pan. Roast for about 45 minutes, until brown, basting with the remaining butter every 10 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 350 F and continue roasting for another 1 1/4 hours or until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thigh registers 180 degrees F. If the legs or breast brown too quickly, cover them with foil.

Transfer the turkey to a cutting board and allow it to rest 20 to 30 minutes before carving.

To serve, cut down along each breast and remove it whole. Cut the breast into slices, the way you would a loaf of bread. Place on a large serving platter and arrange the thigh meat in chunks and the legs on top. Spoon some pomegranate sauce over the top and sprinkle everything with the pomegranate seeds and chives. Serve the remaining Pomegranate Sauce and the Wild Rice and Goat Cheese Stuffing alongside.

You can reheat sliced turkey over medium heat in stock just to cover. Top with sauce, pomegranate seeds, and chives just before serving.

Pomegranate Sauce:

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 medium Spanish onion, finely diced
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns
1 cup port wine
6 cups home-made chicken stock
2 cups pomegranate juice (or substitute cranberry juice)
2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
2 tablespoons light brown sugar
Salt and freshly ground pepper

3 tablespoons finely chopped chives

1/2 cup pomegranate seeds

Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat, and sweat the onion and garlic until the onion is tender, about 3 minutes. Add the peppercorns and cook another 3 minutes.

Add the port and cook, stirring, until most of it has evaporated. Add the stock, pomegranate juice, molasses and brown sugar, raise the heat to medium-high, and reduce slowly to a sauce consistency. As the sugars caramelize, the sauce will turn brownish red. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and add chives and pomegranate seeds.

Wild Rice and Goat Cheese Stuffing:

1 1/2 cups wild rice

5 cups water

Salt

1/2 cup coarsely diced chorizo

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 large onion, finely diced

1 tablespoons minced garlic

2 carrots, finely chopped

3 celery stalks, finely chopped

3/4 pound stale country-style bread, cubed

6 ounces goat cheese

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley

1 tablespoons finely chopped fresh thyme

1 1/2 cups chicken stock, plus extra, if needed

Place the rice, water, and salt to taste in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Simmer until the grains open all the way. Drain the rice.

Meanwhile, cook the chorizo in a small saucepan over medium heat until the fat is rendered and the chorizo gets a little crisp. Drain.

Melt the butter in a large saute pan over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, carrots, and celery and sweat until the onion is tender, about 5 minutes. Add the rice, chorizo, bread, cheese, parsley, thyme, and stock and stir to combine. The mixture should be quite wet: add a little more stock or water, if needed. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper.

Transfer to a 6-cup buttered baking dish and bake, uncovered, until golden brown and heated through, 25 to 30 minutes. May be refrigerated up to 1 day; reheat with a little chicken stock for 20 minutes at 350 degrees F.