



# Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce

## The Heart of the Meal

This recipe feels like a big hug. It is a whole feast in one pan. You get juicy turkey, herby stuffing, and a sweet-tart sauce. I love how the smells fill the whole house. Doesn't that smell amazing?

It matters because it brings everyone to the table. Good food does that. It turns a meal into a memory. What is your favorite food memory? I would love to hear about it.

## A Little Secret for Juicy Turkey

Let me share a little secret. The brine is just salty water. Soaking the

turkey in it keeps it so moist. It is like giving the bird a nice, long drink before its roast.

My grandson once forgot the salt. The turkey was a bit dry. We laughed and covered it in extra sauce. It still tasted good together. This step matters. It makes sure every bite is tender and full of flavor.

## Butter, Herbs, and Love

Next, we make herby butter. You mash soft butter with sage and thyme. Then you tuck it under the turkey skin. This is the best part.

The butter melts into the meat as it cooks. It bastes the turkey from the inside out. *Fun fact: Rubbing herbs under the skin is an old French trick called “en sous-vide.”* But we just call it delicious. Do you have a favorite herb? Mine will always be sage.

## One Pan Magic

Here is the magic. You cook onions and celery right in the roasting pan. Then you place the turkey right on top. The bread cubes go around the sides.

As the turkey roasts, its tasty juices drip down. They soak into the bread below. That bread becomes the most flavorful stuffing. One pan means less washing up. I still laugh at that. It is a clever bit of kitchen wisdom.

## The Sweet-Tart Finish

While the turkey roasts, make the cranberry sauce. It is so simple. Cranberries, sugar, and water go in the microwave. They pop and become a ruby-red jam.

The sauce is not just for taste. Its bright, tangy flavor cuts through the rich turkey and stuffing. It makes your whole mouth happy. Would you try making cranberry sauce from scratch? It is easier than you think.

## Letting it Rest

When the turkey is done, do not carve it right away. Let it rest on the board. Cover it loosely with foil. This is very important.

Resting lets the juices settle back into the meat. If you cut it too soon, all those good juices run out. I use this time to finish the stuffing with broth and parsley. Then, you are ready to gather everyone and eat.

## Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
bone-in whole turkey breast	1 (6- to 7-pound)	trimmed
unsalted butter, softened	5 tablespoons	divided use
fresh sage, minced	2 tablespoons	divided use
fresh thyme, minced	2 tablespoons	divided use
onion	1	chopped fine
celery ribs	2	minced
hearty white sandwich bread	1 pound	cut into ½-inch cubes
frozen cranberries	12 ounces (3 cups)	thawed
sugar	1 cup	
water	¼ cup	for cranberry sauce
chicken broth	1 cup	plus extra as needed
fresh parsley, minced	1 tablespoon	
salt (for brine)	½ cup	



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Ingredient	Amount	Notes
cold water (for brine)	4 quarts	
Salt and pepper		as specified in instructions





## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce

# Instructions

**Step 1:** First, let's brine our turkey. Mix the salt into the cold water until it dissolves. Place the turkey breast in this salty bath. Cover it and let it rest in the fridge for a few hours. This makes the meat so juicy and tender. (If your turkey says "kosher" or "self-basting," skip this step and just season it later.)

See also [Baking Christmas Apple Pie with Everyday Apples](#)

**Step 2:** Now, make your herby butter. Mash the soft butter with the sage, thyme, salt, and pepper. Gently wiggle your fingers under the turkey skin. Spread half the butter right on the meat. Rub the rest all over the top. Doesn't that smell amazing already?

**Step 3:** Heat your oven to 425 degrees. Melt butter in your big roasting pan. Cook the onion and celery until they're soft. Stir in the rest of your herbs. Turn off the heat. Place the turkey in the center, skin side up. Scatter the bread cubes around it. Roast for 30 minutes. **What vegetable makes stuffing taste like home? Share below!**

**Step 4:** Lower the oven heat to 325 degrees. Let the turkey roast until it's just cooked through. This takes about an hour. Use a thermometer if you have one. I still laugh at the time I just guessed. The turkey will be a beautiful golden brown. Let it rest on a board before you carve.

**Step 5:** While it roasts, make the cranberry sauce. Mix cranberries, sugar, water, and salt in a bowl. Microwave it until the berries pop and get juicy. Give them a gentle mash with a fork. Set this ruby-red sauce aside. (A splash of orange juice here is my secret.)

**Step 6:** The turkey is done! Move it to a board and cover it loosely. Pour broth and parsley into the pan with the bread. Gently stir this stuffing. Let it sit, covered, for 10 minutes to soak up all the flavor. Now, carve your turkey. Serve it all with that sweet-tart cranberry sauce.

## Creative Twists

You can make this recipe your own. I love adding little changes. It keeps things fun in the kitchen. Try one of these ideas next time you cook. They each add a special touch.

**Apple & Sausage Stuffing:** Add cooked sausage and diced apple to the bread cubes.

**Orange-Honey Glaze:** Brush the turkey with orange juice and honey before roasting.

See also Vesper Noel

**Spiced Cranberries:** Add a cinnamon stick to the cranberry sauce as it cooks.

**Which one would you try first? Comment below!**

## Serving & Pairing Ideas

This meal feels like a hug on a plate. For sides, I love simple mashed potatoes. They're perfect for the pan sauce. Some roasted carrots or green beans add a nice color. Don't forget a warm, crusty roll for mopping up your plate.

For drinks, a crisp apple cider is lovely. It's not too sweet. For the grown-ups, a glass of Chardonnay pairs beautifully. It tastes like autumn



in a glass. **Which would you choose tonight?**





## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce

### Keeping Your Feast Fresh

Let's talk about leftovers. They are a gift to your future self. Carve the turkey off the bone for storage. Keep the meat and stuffing separate in airtight containers. They will be good in the fridge for three days.

You can freeze the turkey for up to two months. Wrap it tightly. I once froze slices with a little broth. It stayed so moist when thawed. The cranberry sauce freezes beautifully in a jar.

Reheat turkey in a pan with a splash of broth. Cover it to keep it steamy. Warm stuffing in the oven with foil on top. This stops it from drying out.

Batch cooking matters. It gives you a head start on busy weeks. A ready meal is a warm hug on a tired day. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

### Simple Fixes for Common Hiccups

We all face little kitchen troubles. Here are three easy fixes. First, a dry turkey breast. This often happens from overcooking. Use a simple meat thermometer. It tells you exactly when it's done.

Second, soggy stuffing. I remember when mine turned to mush. The bread soaked up too much juice. The fix is easy. Just place the stuffing around the turkey, not under it.

Third, cranberry sauce that's too tart. Taste it after cooking. You can always stir in a spoon more sugar. This balances the flavors perfectly.

Getting these right builds your cooking confidence. It also makes every bite taste just as it should. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

## Your Quick Questions, Answered

**Q: Can I make this gluten-free?**

A: Yes! Use your favorite gluten-free bread for the stuffing cubes. It works just fine.

**Q: What can I do ahead of time?**

A: You can make the cranberry sauce two days early. Chop your veggies and herbs a day ahead, too.

**Q: I don't have fresh herbs.**

A: Dried herbs are okay. Use one-third the amount. So, use one teaspoon dried instead of one tablespoon fresh.

**Q: Can I make a smaller portion?**

A: You can use a smaller turkey breast. Just reduce the stuffing ingredients by half. Roasting time will be less.

**Q: Any optional tips?**

A: A *fun fact*: letting the turkey rest after cooking is key. It lets the juices settle back into the meat. This makes it tender.

See also Maple Pumpkin Stacked Holiday Cake

**Which tip will you try first?**

## From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope this recipe brings warmth to your table. Cooking is about sharing

stories and good food. I love hearing about your own kitchen adventures.

Please tell me all about it. Did your family love the cranberry sauce? What stories were shared over the meal? **Have you tried this recipe?** Let me know in the comments below.

Happy cooking!  
—Elowen Thorn.





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# **Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce**

Author: Elowen Thorn



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Cooking Method: [Roasting](#)



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Courses: [Main](#)



## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce | 20

Difficulty: **Beginner**





## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce | 21

Prep time: **45 minutes**



## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce | 22

Cook time: **1 hour 30 minutes**



## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce | 23

Rest time: **15 minutes**



## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce | 24

Total time: **2 hours 30 minutes**



## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce | 25

Servings: **6 servings**



## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce | 26

Calories: **780 kcal**





## Herb Stuffed Turkey with Cranberry Pan Sauce | 27

Best Season: **Summer**

### **Description**

One-Pan Roast Turkey Breast with Herb Stuffing and Cranberry Sauce. A

flavorful and simplified holiday classic.

## Ingredients

- ☐ 1 (6- to 7-pound) bone-in whole turkey breast, trimmed
- ☐ 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- ☐ 2 tablespoons minced fresh sage
- ☐ 2 tablespoons minced fresh thyme
- ☐ 1 onion, chopped fine
- ☐ 2 celery ribs, minced
- ☐ 1 pound hearty white sandwich bread, cut into ½-inch cubes
- ☐ 12 ounces (3 cups) frozen cranberries, thawed
- ☐ 1 cup sugar
- ☐ ¼ cup water
- ☐ 1 cup chicken broth, plus extra as needed
- ☐ 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- ☐ ½ cup salt (for brine)
- ☐ 4 quarts cold water (for brine)
- ☐ Salt and pepper (as specified in instructions)

## Instructions

1. Dissolve ½ cup salt in 4 quarts cold water in large container. Submerge turkey in brine, cover, and refrigerate for 3 to 6 hours; remove from brine and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 425 degrees. Mash 3 tablespoons butter, 1 tablespoon sage, 1 tablespoon thyme, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper together in bowl. Using fingers, gently separate skin from meat. Spread half of butter mixture under skin directly onto meat. Spread remaining butter mixture evenly over skin.

3. Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter in 16 by 12-inch roasting pan over medium heat (over 2 burners, if possible). Add onion, celery,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon pepper and cook until vegetables are softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in remaining 1 tablespoon sage and remaining 1 tablespoon thyme and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Off heat, place turkey, skin side up, on top of vegetables and arrange bread around turkey. Roast turkey for 30 minutes.
4. Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees and continue to roast turkey until breast registers 160 degrees, about 1 hour.
5. While turkey roasts, combine cranberries, sugar, water, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt in bowl and microwave, stirring occasionally, until cranberries are broken down and juicy, about 10 minutes. Coarsely mash cranberries with fork; set aside for serving.
6. Remove pan from oven. Transfer turkey to carving board, tent loosely with aluminum foil, and let rest 15 minutes. Stir broth and parsley into stuffing left in pan, cover with foil, and let stand 10 minutes; add extra broth if stuffing is dry. Carve turkey and serve with stuffing and cranberry sauce.

## Notes

Before You Begin – If using a self-basting turkey breast (such as a frozen Butterball) or kosher turkey, do not brine in step 1, but season with salt after rubbing with butter in step 2.

Keywords: Turkey, Cranberry, Stuffing, Holiday, Roast