SMOKED · ADVANCED

Smoked Christmas turkey on the kamado

The recipe that retires the family oven on December 25th: 12-hour brine, butter under the skin, apple wood smoke and a whole turkey at 120 °C — tender inside, deep gold outside, properly smoked.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
720 min	360 min	10	120 °C

Ingredients

- **4.5 kg** whole fresh turkey (no giblets)
- **3 l** water for brine
- **1 cabeza** head of garlic, halved
- **3 ramas** fresh rosemary
- **8 bayas** juniper berries
- **1 ud** zest of one lemon
- **1 trozo** cherry wood chunk (for colour)
- **540 g** kosher coarse salt (180 g per litre of brine)
- **2 ud** reineta apples cut in wedges
- **6 ramas** fresh thyme
- **2 hojas** bay leaves
- **150 g** soft butter
- **4 trozos** apple wood chunks

Method

1 STEP 1 · BRINE FOR 12 HOURS

Warm 1 litre of water and dissolve all the salt. Add the rest of the water cold, the apples, halved garlic, herbs, bay and juniper. Submerge the turkey in a brine bucket or bag, fully covered. Refrigerate for 12 hours (no longer, or it gets salty).

2 STEP 2 · DRY AND HERB BUTTER

Pull the turkey from the brine, drain and pat very dry with paper towels. Mix the soft butter with chopped thyme, rosemary, two crushed garlic cloves and lemon zest. Carefully lift the breast skin and spread two thirds of the butter directly onto the meat. Smear the rest over the skin.

3 STEP 3 · STABILISE AT 120 °C

Install the ceramic deflector. Light the charcoal in one zone using the Minion method and stabilise the kamado at 120 °C indirect for 30 minutes. Once the smoke runs clear and blue, add the apple chunks and the cherry chunk onto the coals.

4 STEP 4 · LOAD THE TURKEY

Set the turkey on a rack inside an aluminium tray (the drippings become the sauce base). Slide the tray into the kamado and push the probe into the thickest part of the breast without touching the bone. Close the lid and leave it shut for 4 hours.

5 STEP 5 · WATCH THE PROBE

From hour 4 onwards the probe climbs faster. If it hits 60 °C early and the skin is not yet golden, push the kamado to 135 °C by opening the bottom vent a touch. If the skin browns too quickly, drop to 110 °C.

6 STEP 6 · PULL AT 75 °C

Remove the turkey when the breast reads 75 °C internal. The thighs will sit at 80-82 °C — exactly where they need to be. Carry the turkey indoors in its tray to rest.

7 STEP 7 · REST 30 MINUTES

Tent the turkey loosely with two sheets of foil and rest for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, strain the pan drippings, skim the fat off the top and reduce with a splash of stock and white wine for the sauce.

8 STEP 8 · CARVE AND SERVE

Take off the legs first, then the wings, and finally slice the breasts 1 cm thick across the grain. Serve with the pan-drippings sauce, mashed potato and a quick red onion relish in cider vinegar.

Editor's tips

- If the turkey is frozen, thaw it 48 hours in the fridge before brining. Never at room temperature.
- Plan on 4 kg of lump charcoal for a 6-hour cook. If your kamado is smaller than 18 inches, butcher the turkey into pieces: breasts and legs separately.
- Do not chop the herbs too fine for the butter — a medium chop holds up to the heat and releases aroma gradually.
- If the skin ends up soft, crank the kamado to 175 °C for the final 20 minutes. Watch it — it goes from bronzed to scorched in 5 minutes.
- Serve the pan-drippings sauce hot in a pitcher, not poured over the turkey. The smoked skin loses its charm under sauce.

Gear for this recipe

Kamado Joe Big Joe III 24"

The 24" Big Joe fits a whole turkey for 10 with room for the deflector.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-joe-big-joe-iii

Kamado Joe Big Block XL lump charcoal 9.1 kg

Long-burning lump charcoal to last the smoke without refuelling.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/kamado-joe-big-block-xl-lump

Weber Apple Wood Smoking Chunks 1.5 kg

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/weber-tacos-manzano-15kg

MixRBBQ Half-Moon Ceramic Heat Deflectors (Kamado Joe Big Joe I/II/III, 2-pack)

Big Joe half-moon deflectors for 100% indirect smoking at 120 °C.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/mixrbbq-deflector-mediasluna-bigjoe

HIC Kitchen turkey brining bag, 61 × 60.7 cm, 9 kg rated load

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/hic-kitchen-bolsa-salmuera-pavo-61x60

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/pavo-ahumado-navidad

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