

NWWA 2012 Grenache-Syrah

Dry-Cured Rosemary Turkey

Serves 14 (with leftovers)

Why this pairing works

The soft and juicy tannins in the wine work well with the turkey. Since turkey is a lean meat, it shouldn't be overpowered by heavy tannins. Herbs in the rub --reminiscent of Herbes de Provence -- echo those of this Rhone-style blend, which also originates from Southern France. The bright acid of the wine is a counterpoint to the richness of the gravy.

For Turkey

3 Tablespoons sea salt or kosher salt
3 Tablespoons dried marjoram
3 Tablespoons dried thyme
3 Tablespoons dried juniper berries
1 Tablespoon black peppercorns
2 teaspoons anise seeds
1 turkey (14 to 15 lb.)
12 fresh rosemary sprigs (3 in. each)
12 cloves garlic, peeled
½ cup (¼ lb.) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1. Three days before serving, in a blender or spice grinder, finely grind salt, marjoram, thyme, juniper berries, peppercorns, and anise seeds.
2. Remove and discard leg truss from turkey. Pull off and discard any lumps of fat. Remove giblets and neck; save neck for gravy. Rinse turkey inside and out; pat dry. Cut off wing tips to the first joint and reserve for gravy. Rub half the herb mixture all over turkey; sprinkle remaining in body cavity. Cover and chill for 3 days.
3. Preheat oven to 325° (convection not recommended). Put rosemary sprigs and garlic inside turkey body cavity. Gently push your hand between skin and turkey breast to separate skin from breast. Spread about half the butter over breast under skin. Melt remaining butter and brush lightly over top of turkey. Coat a V-shaped rack with cooking-oil spray and set in a 12- by 17-inch roasting pan. Place turkey, breast down, on the rack. Roast turkey for 1 hour.
4. Turn down oven to 225°. Remove turkey from oven and turn breast side up. Return to oven and roast until a meat thermometer inserted straight down through thickest part of breast to the bone registers 160°, 2 ½ - 3 hours.

5. Tip turkey to drain juices from cavity into pan and transfer to a platter. Let stand in a warm place, uncovered, for 15 to 30 minutes. Finish gravy, then carve turkey.

Note: Use a turkey that hasn't been infused with broth or butter.