

Giblet Gravy (www.melindalee.com)

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS

neck and giblets from turkey - rinsed and patted dry

[Cook's Note: If making this well in advance so the neck and giblets are not yet available, use turkey wings or a piece of turkey leg, cut into pieces]

1-2 tablespoons, butter (or more, as needed)

2 medium-size onions - coarsely chopped

2 medium-size carrots - coarsely chopped

1 large rib, celery - coarsely chopped

2 cloves, garlic - coarsely chopped

3 tablespoons, flour

6 sprigs, fresh thyme (or 3 teaspoons, dried thyme leaves)

1 or 2 bay leaves

2 quarts (8 cups), water

salt and pepper as needed

Cut the turkey neck (or alternative parts, see above) into three or four pieces, for easier handling. Trim the tough membrane from the gizzard. Rinse all neck pieces and giblets, and pat them very dry with paper towels.

In a large saucepan, melt the butter, and, when its foaming begins to subside, add the neck and gizzard pieces. Season with salt and pepper, and sauté over medium heat until golden brown - about 15-20 minutes.

Add the coarsely chopped vegetables and garlic, season again with salt and pepper, and continue sautéing (add small bits of butter if necessary to prevent scorching) until vegetables begin to color slightly - about 5 minutes. [The sautéing of the vegetables, develops sweetness, and prevents bitterness.]

Sprinkle over the flour, and continue sautéing, stirring constantly, until the floured vegetables turn brown - about 10 minutes. [This browning adds a nice depth of flavor.]

Add the thyme, bay leaves and water to the vegetables, whisking or stirring briskly to incorporate flavors and prevent lumps. When the liquid begins to boil, lower the heat and allow to simmer for about 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Strain the sauce and discard the solids. Reserve the sauce. You should have about 4 cups of sauce.

TO ADD DRIPPINGS AND ALSO THICKEN THE SAUCE AT THE SAME TIME:

Heat 4 tablespoons* of reserved turkey fat in a large saucepan until bubbling, then stir in an equal amount of flour (*use only half this amount of fat and flour if less thickening is desired for a thinner final gravy). Heat and stir the fat and flour mixture until bubbling - about 1 full minute, then gradually whisk in the defatted pan drippings, and finally, whisk in the finished sauce made ahead as described above. Reduce heat to a simmer, and simmer the drippings mixture with the sauce for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Taste for seasoning with salt and pepper.

NOTE: As the finished gravy is allowed to stand and cool, it will become thicker. To correct gravy that has become too thick, simply re-heat the gravy, adding water, turkey broth or chicken broth until it has thinned to desired consistency. Taste again for seasonings. A good idea: serve gravy in a warmed gravy boat or serving bowl.