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## Apple-brined Grilled Turkey

### By Tailgate U

12 pound turkey, fresh or thawed

#### For the Brining Solution

- 1 gallon unsweetened apple cider
- 1 cup sea salt or kosher salt
- 2/3 cup light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons candied ginger pieces
- 1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns
- 2 teaspoons allspice berries, cracked
- 6 whole cloves
- 3 star anise
- 1 gallon ice-cold water
- 1 orange, quartered
- 2 brining bags

#### For Roasting the Turkey

- 1 sweet onion, quartered
- 1 baking apple, quartered
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Canola oil for brushing the turkey
- 4 cups [apple wood chips](#), soaked
- Foil turkey pan and roasting rack
- Cotton string and 1 bamboo skewer

## Instructions:

**Preparing the Brine** Combine  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon of apple cider with all other brine ingredients except the water and oranges in a large stock pot and bring to a boil, stirring until all of the sugar and salt are completely dissolved. Remove from heat.

Stir in the remaining apple cider and the ice water. Place the brine in the refrigerator to cool if necessary.

**Brining the Turkey** Discard the giblets and neck from the turkey. Rinse and pat dry. Place the quartered orange in the cavity. Place one brining bag inside the other. Working in a large roasting pan or a clean sink, place the turkey inside the inner bag breast-side-down and then fill with the brining solution. Squeeze out all the air and seal the bags, one inside the other, ensuring the turkey is completely submerged. I place the bagged turkey inside a large stock pot to help keep the turkey fully submerged.

Brine the turkey in the refrigerator overnight.

**Setting Up the Grill for Indirect Cooking** Soak 2 cups of Apple wood chips in water for at least 30 minutes. Prepare a grill for indirect cooking between 275 and 325 degrees. For hybrid grills, light a charcoal fire on one half the grill and let it burn just until the coals are covered with gray ash and very hot. When the grill is ready, add some of the soaked wood chips to the grill. For a gas grill, place them in smoker drawer; for a hybrid grill, place them on the hot coals. If you have a side-mounted smoker box, you know what to do.

**Preparing the Turkey for the Grill** Remove the turkey from the brine and pat thoroughly dry with paper towel. Place the onion, apple and cinnamon stick inside the cavity, and then tie the legs together with a cotton string. Pull the skin over the neck opening and secure with a small skewer. Set the turkey on a roasting rack inside a heavy-gauge foil pan. Brush turkey lightly with oil.

**Roasting the Turkey** Set the turkey in the pan on the cooking grate in the indirect cooking zone. Pour 1 cup water into the pan. Close the grill and cook over medium heat. To maintain an even temperature with a charcoal grill, add more charcoal regularly (usually a few pieces every half hour or so). Continue adding wood chips as desired.

Check the turkey periodically, you may want to cover the wing tips and/or the whole turkey to prevent the skin from getting too brown. The turkey is done when its juices run clear and the internal temperature of the thickest part of the thigh is about 170 degrees Fahrenheit. Estimate about 12 to 14 minutes per pound, typically 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 hours. Remove the turkey from the grill, cover loosely with foil and let stand 15 minutes. (The temperature will rise 5 to 10 degrees as the turkey rests.)