

NEW DEAL VODKA BRINE FOR CHICKEN OR TURKEY

I think by now we all know that brining is a good thing. There's nothing like a lengthy dunk into a solution of water, salt and spices to add flavor and moistness to poultry prior to roasting. What you may not realize is that the benefits of brining are intensified when you add vodka to the mix. The end result is a bird that's moist and well-seasoned...the kind that will allow you to gloat and lord over people. Not that you would.

Keep in mind that brining is a do-ahead venture. You'll want to submerge the bird for at least 6-8 hours if fresh, and longer if frozen. In addition, you'll want to let it dry in the refrigerator overnight after its been brined. This is key, because the drier the skin, the better it will crisp while cooking.

Ingredients:

1-2 gallons	Ice-cold water (or enough to cover bird)
1 Cup	New Deal Vodka
	Plenty of ice (ice packs work well)
1 lb	Coarse salt (kosher is recommended)
1 Cup	Granulated sugar
1 ½ T	Whole black peppercorns
1 T	Dried thyme
1 T	Dried oregano
3	Bay leaves
To Taste	Various sprigs of fresh herbs: thyme, oregano, rosemary, etc (optional)

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients in a large bucket or a cooler until salt and sugar are dissolved.
2. Put container in the refrigerator or someplace very cold. Add ice packs as necessary to keep contents at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit during the entire process.
3. Wash bird inside and out and remove neck and giblets, and all of that other stuff.
4. Immerse bird, breast-side down in the brine and soak for 6-8 hours, weighing it down with a heavy object (like a plastic container filled with water) to keep it completely immersed. Replace ice packs, if necessary, to maintain temperature.
5. Remove bird from the brine and rinse inside and out under cold running water. Pat dry inside and out with paper towels and place in a shallow pan in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours or overnight.

