

## To save time and stress, try making the basic gravy the day before Thanksgiving.

for thinner, looser gravy because it will thicken as it cools and even as it is kept warm. Have extra broth on hand to loosen it.

Incorporating the pan drippings — where most of the flavor lies — can be done at the beginning as long as the drippings are from an unbrined turkey. For a brined turkey, add the salty drippings to taste as you finish the gravy. You won't need additional salt, probably just a little pepper.

Vegetarians and vegans can go for vegetarian

gravy spiked with a little Marmite, the glutamic acid- and umami-packed condiment made from yeast extracts. You can also make gravy from store-bought chicken or turkey broth. As with the vegetarian version, Marmite increases savoriness if you don't have drippings.

To save time and, more importantly, to reduce stress, try making a basic do-ahead gravy the day before Thanksgiving. Then heat it and add your drippings as the turkey rests.

With the gravy done ahead, Thanksgiving's iconic dish — turkey and gravy — should bring a smile to every cook's face.

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## Gravy tips

- ▶ Make roux with equal parts fat (oil, butter and/or turkey fat) and flour, by weight.
- ▶ Make it ahead. Oil roux will keep at room temperature for several days. Refrigerated, oil roux and butter roux will keep at least a month; frozen, even longer.
- ▶ A layer of oil will develop as an oil roux sits. Just stir it back in before using.
- ▶ Two tablespoons of white or blond roux will thicken about 1 cup liquid.
- ▶ The darker the roux, the less the thickening power.
- ▶ Use a saucier pan, if you have one. Its more gradual sloping sides make it easier to whisk and stir.
- ▶ It's helpful to stir with a flat-edged wooden spatula, so you can easily scrape the bottom of the pan.
- ▶ Quickly and thoroughly whisk room-temperature or cooler broth into just-cooked roux that has cooled a little; alternatively, whisk warm or hot liquid into room-temperature or chilled roux.
- ▶ Whisk off the heat to allow extra time to smooth out the gravy, then return to the heat.
- ▶ Curdled-looking gravy will come together as it heats up.
- ▶ Simmer gravy about 10 minutes to cook out any floury taste.
- ▶ Too-thin gravy can be simmered and reduced to desired consistency and taste. Or whisk in more roux; you can also whisk in small pieces of beurre manie (equal parts flour and softened butter that have been kneaded together — it will be soft and dough-like).
- ▶ Always bring gravy to a full simmer to see how much it thickens before adding more roux or beurre manie.
- ▶ If making the gravy ahead, place plastic wrap directly on the surface to keep a skin from forming.
- ▶ Gravy thickens as it cools, so thin as needed with additional broth or water before serving.
- ▶ Do not add salt to the gravy if using drippings from a brined turkey; add the drippings only to taste.
- ▶ Pass lumpy gravy through a sieve or whirl it with an immersion blender or in a conventional blender to smooth it out.
- ▶ Wondra flour — a superfine flour blend — can also be used as a thickener.