

Spiced Orange and Fennel Turkey Crown with Smoked Chestnut Gravy

A turkey crown brined with fennel, orange and star anise for properly seasoned, juicy meat, finished with a rich gravy thickened the clever way: with chestnuts, not flour.

PREP TIME	COOK TIME	SERVES
25 minutes, plus 12 hours brining	Approx. 1 hour 30 minutes	10 to 12 (1 x 2.5 to 3kg crown)

Ingredients and shop codes

Brine

- 2 litres cold water
- 100g flaked sea salt
  204207 Maldon Sea Salt (1x1.4kg)
- 60g soft light brown sugar
  200542 Tate & Lyle Soft Light Brown Sugar (4x3kg)
- 2 oranges, sliced
  810574 Fresh Oranges (each)
- 2 tsp fennel seeds
- 3 star anise
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
  203619 Country Range Whole Black Peppercorns (4x500g, listed as Clearance)

Turkey

- 1 turkey crown, bone-in, 2.5 to 3kg
  Closest: 753003 Thomas Stratton Boneless Turkey Breast (1x2.5kg)
- 80g butter, softened
  001056 Meadow Churn Unsalted Butter (40x250g) or 001055 Salted (40x250g)
- Zest of 1 orange
  810574 Fresh Oranges (each)
- 1 tsp ground fennel
- 2 tbsp olive oil
  203521 Country Range Extra Virgin Olive Oil (3x5L)
- 4 shallots, halved
- 1 head of garlic, halved
  Closest: 250081 Country Range Garlic Puree (6x1kg)

Smoked chestnut gravy

- 1 tbsp olive oil
  203521 Country Range Extra Virgin Olive Oil (3x5L)
- 2 shallots, finely diced
- 150g vacuum-packed cooked chestnuts
  203399 Merchant Gourmet Whole Chestnuts Cooked & Peeled (1x500g, listed as Clearance)
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 800ml gluten-free chicken or turkey stock (check label)
  200325 Maggi Chicken Bouillon, Gluten Free (2x2kg)
- 100ml dry sherry or white wine
- 1 tbsp cornflour mixed with 2 tbsp cold water, only if needed
  250075 Country Range Cornflour (4x3.5kg)
- Salt and pepper
  204207 Maldon Sea Salt (1x1.4kg); 203616 Country Range Ground Black Pepper (4x500g)

Shop notes

- **Turkey crown:** Ask the Thomas Stratton butchery team for bespoke crowns. Also of interest: 753016 Thomas Stratton Turkey Breast stuffed with Gluten Free Smeat (1x2.5kg).
- **Cornflour mixed with 2 tbsp cold water:** Check the label for gluten-free status.

Method

1. Dissolve the salt and sugar in warm water, add the aromatics and chill completely. Submerge the crown for 12 hours (no longer).
2. Remove the crown, pat completely dry and rest uncovered in the fridge for an hour to dry the skin.
3. Heat the oven to 190C (170C fan). Mix the butter with the zest and ground fennel, and work under the skin of the breasts. Rub the skin with oil.
4. Place the crown on the shallots and garlic in a roasting tray. Roast for approx. 1 hour 30 minutes, until the thickest part of the breast reads 72C core temperature held for 2 minutes (or 75C for immediate service). Cover with foil if the skin colours early.
5. Rest for 30 minutes, loosely covered.
6. For the gravy: soften the shallots in oil, add the chestnuts and paprika, deglaze with sherry, reduce by half, add stock and simmer 15 minutes. Blend until smooth. Adjust consistency with reduction; use the cornflour slurry only if needed. Season and pass through a fine sieve.
7. Carve and serve with the gravy.

Chef's tips

- **Technique:** the chestnut purée is the thickener, so no roux and no gluten. Season only at the end, as the brined meat and stock already carry salt.
- **Make ahead:** brine and butter the crowns the day before. Gravy keeps 3 days chilled and freezes well.
- **Holding for volume service:** carve and layer in a gastro tray with gravy, cover and hold hot above 63C.
- **Care home / texture-modified adaptation:** blitz carved turkey with extra gravy and a little butter to a smooth, moulded puree (IDDSI Level 4), or finely mince and bind with gravy for Level 5 (minced and moist). Reheat to a safe core temperature.
- **Schools:** a milder version works well by omitting the sherry and star anise.

Scaling

For 50+, roast 5 to 6 crowns across two combi ovens, allowing 150 to 180g cooked meat per portion. Make the gravy in one large batch.

Allergens

Gluten-free when confirmed gluten-free stock is used. Contains **milk** (butter). Check the sherry or wine for sulphites. Chestnuts are not among the named tree nuts in the UK's 14 allergens, but some diners with nut allergies avoid them, so check your own allergen policy and supplier labelling.

Gluten-free only when every ingredient is confirmed gluten-free. Always check current labels and specifications at the point of purchase. Product codes are shopping suggestions; prices and stock show on shop.brookstreetfoods.co.uk once you are signed in.