



ONION SAUCE FOR ROAST TURKEY

Courtesy of Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth, MA

Onions were a staple of the English garden and cooking pot. They were one of the few vegetables that could be stored against winter and their “temperature” (based on the Doctrine of Humours, onions were considered “hot and dry”) made them especially desirable in the cooler weather. Carrots, parsnips and turnips were also eaten in the cooler months for as long as they could be dug out of the ground. Storing vegetables in root cellars was several generations away.

This sauce is quite nice and makes a nice change from modern gravy. In the 17th century “gravy” was the drippings from the meat that were often transformed into a sauce.

*To make sauce for Capons or Turky Fowles
Take Onions and slice them thin, and boyle them in faire water till they be boyled drye,
and put some of the gravie unto them and pepper grose beaten.*

A.W. A Book of Cookrye. 1591 f.3

*Sauce for a Turkie
Take faire water and set it over the fire, then slice good store of Onions and put into it,
and also Pepper and Salt, and good store of the gravy that comes from the Turkie, and
boyle them very well together: then put to it a few fine crummes of grated bread to
thicken it; a very little Sugar and some Vinegar, and so serve it up with the Turkey.*

Gervase Markham , The English Huswife, 1623

MODERN RECIPE NOTES

6 medium onions, sliced thinly
2 cups of water
2 teaspoons of coarsely ground pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar
¼ cup red wine vinegar
¼ cup breadcrumbs (optional)

Follow your favorite recipe for roast turkey. Remove the turkey to a platter reserving the pan juices.

Place thinly sliced onions in a pot with water and salt. Bring to a boil over medium high heat and cook until the onions are tender but not mushy. A good deal of the water should have boiled away. Set aside for a moment.

Place the roasting pan over medium heat and stir to loosen any brown bits. Stir in the onion sauce, sugar, vinegar and breadcrumbs if desired. Add pepper to taste and adjust seasonings. To serve, pour over sliced turkey or serve alongside in a separate dish.