Crock Pot Turkey

A digital thermometer or an accurate meat thermometer would be a really good investment to make if you plan to cook a turkey in a crock pot. You also want to be sure that the boneless turkey you choose will fit in your crock pot. Do not overfill the crock pot by using a turkey that's too large. You also don't want to use a turkey that's too small. To be safe, the turkey should take up no more than about 2/3 of the space in your crock pot. If the turkey fills up less than half of the pot than the pot is too big and the turkey will likely get overcooked.

If you really want to have an amazingly moist turkey, consider brining. Not only does it reduce the cooking time, but also helps the meat to be juicy and tender by hydrating the meat and helping to retain moisture throughout the cooking process. To brine the turkey, you'll need to start 24 to 48 hours before you start cooking the turkey, depending on how frozen the turkey is. (Never start cooking a turkey that's still frozen, especially in a slow cooker. It must be completely thawed). You will also need a non-reactive container that can be kept sealed and cool. Depending on the size of the turkey you plan to brine and cook, a small cooler like the Coleman 16-quart personal cooler would be ideal. It should be able to handle up to a 10-pound bird, plus liquid and ice. (it's important to keep the bird below 40 degrees throughout the brining process.) The height of the cooler can help the turkey to stay completely submerged in that murky sweet and salty goodness. Or you could use a brining bag if you have room in your refrigerator.

If you're going to brine the turkey, here's what you'll need along with the 16-quart Coleman cooler:

3 pound frozen Honeysuckle white boneless turkey (if you decide to brine the turkey, do NOT use a turkey that contains a basting solution)
1/2 to 3/4 cup kosher coarse salt (use less if you prefer)
2 gallons fresh unfiltered apple juice or apple cider
1 cup dark brown sugar
Crushed ice to cover the turkey during the brining process (probably need to keep a fresh supply of ice in a second cooler co you can use to replenish the ice above the turkey as it melts)
Additional seasonings - cayenne pepper or jalapeño pepper, if you like things hot. Or a bay leaf or fresh rosemary if you like a more traditional taste. Or try fresh ginger, garlic and a good quality tamari (If you use tamari, don't forget to reduce the amount of salt for the brine) for a unique Asian flavor combination. Maybe even try some Liquid Smoke, if you are feeling adventurous.

Pour 1 to 2 quarts of the unfiltered apple juice or cider into a hot pot, add the kosher coarse salt, brown sugar and spices and heat the mixture to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Cook for 10 minutes until the brown sugar and salt have completely dissolved. Turn off the heat and allow mixture to cool for 5 minutes. Place the turkey inside the cooler. Pour the mixture over the bird then pour the remaining apple juice over the turkey. If the turkey is not completely covered, add cold water into the cooler until it is submerged. Then cover with ice. Close the

cooler cover tightly. Check periodically to be sure there's plenty of ice. When the turkey is thawed and has brined for at least 24 hours, take the turkey out of the brine and rinse it off. Place the turkey in a crock pot with a Reynolds Slow Cooker liner, cover the turkey with avocado or olive oil and butter season with black pepper or other seasonings, but NO salt.

Secure the lid so that it doesn't come off while you are driving. Some people use heavy duty rubber bands – but be aware that the crock pot can get pretty hot – so you want to use something that won't melt.

Turn on the slow cooker to high and cook for 60 to 90 minutes. Check it and if the temperature at the thickest part of the meat reaches 145 degrees, you can turn it down to low and cook for another 90 minutes. At around 3 hours check the temperature again. The meat is done when the temperature in the thickest part of the turkey reads 165 degrees Fahrenheit.