MAPLE-GLAZED TURKEY WITH BOURBON-PECAN GRAVY (for 10-12)
SOURCE: FOOD & WINE 11/01

INGREDIENTS:

1 18-20 lb turkey (neck & giblets reserved for another use)
1 1/2 C KY bourbon
1/3 C pure maple syrup
Kosher salt & freshly ground pepper
Water
4 C rich turkey stock (see recipe)
1/2 lb pecans (about 2 C), lightly toasted & chopped
1/2 C fresh orange juice
1 TBS chopped thyme
1 stick (4 oz) unsalted butter, softened
3/4 C all-purpose flour

DIRECTIONS:

Use your fingers to carefully loosen the skin over turkey breast & thighs (try not to tear skin) - set large over roasting bag in a very large bowl - put turkey in bag, cavity end up.

In a bowl, mix bourbon, orange juice, maple syrup, thyme + 1 1/2 tsp each salt & pepper. Slowly pour mixture under turkey skin - press to distribute evenly over breast & thighs. Wrap turkey tightly in bag - seal with twist tie - refrigerate overnight - bring to room temp before roasting.

Preheat oven to 325° F - remove turkey from bag & set in large roasting pan. Pour marinade into large measuring cup. Rub 6 TBS butter under breast skin & rub remaining 2 TBS butter over skin. Tie turkey legs with twine.

Pour 1/2 C of reserved marinade into pan - roast turkey 30 minutes. Baste turkey with pan juices - add 1 C water to pan. Roast turkey 1 hour more, basting every half hour. Add remaining marinade to pan. Cover turkey loosely with foil - roast 2 more hours (or till thermometer in thick part of thigh says 165° F).

Carefully transfer turkey to carving board, allowing juices in cavity to run into pan. Cover loosely with foil & let rest 30 minutes. Pour pan juices into bowl & skim fat: reserve 6 TBS of the fat.

In large saucepan, mix fat with flour to form a paste. In medium saucepan, warm rich turkey stock & slowly whisk it into flour paste. Bring to boil over moderate heat, whisking constantly. Whisk in reserved pan juices & simmer over low heat, whisking frequently, till thickened & flavorful (about 25 minutes). Season with salt & pepper - stir in pecans - transfer to large gravy boat.

Carve turkey & arrange on platter - serve with pecan gravy.