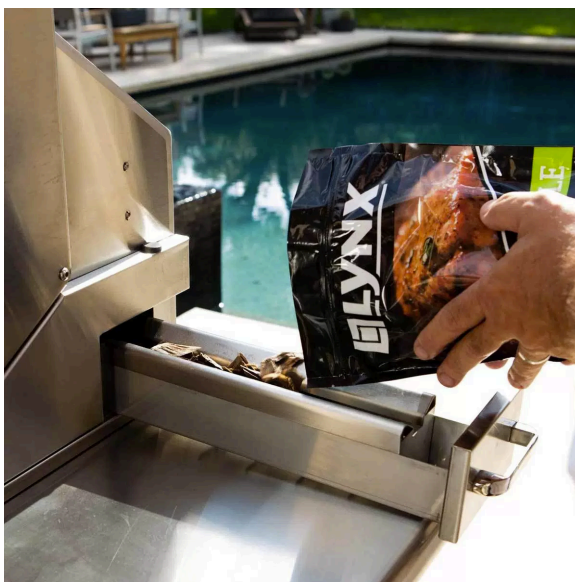
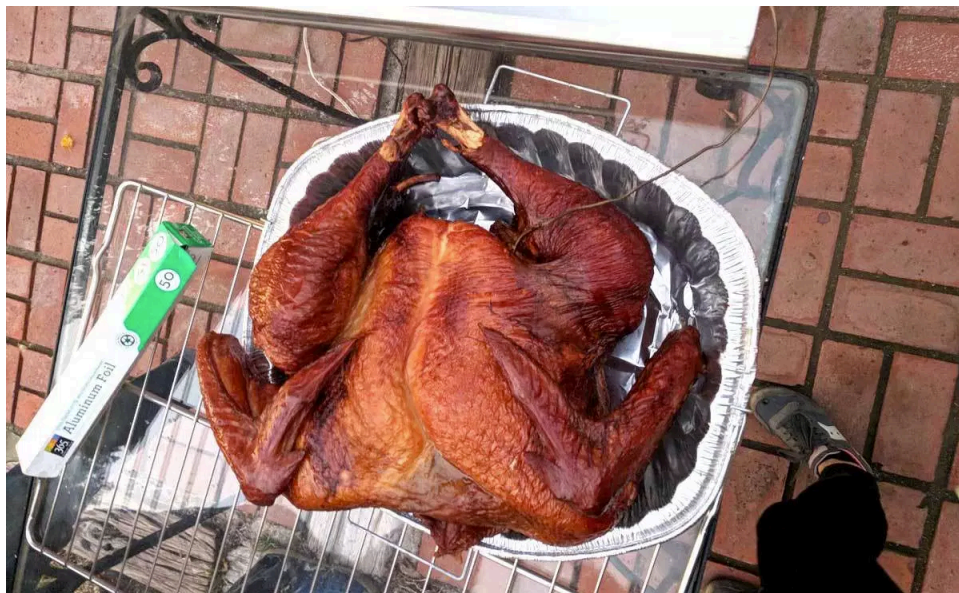


boingboing

Review: Lynx Sonoma smoker makes the perfect turkey

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Every year we invite a bunch of friends over for Christmas dinner. We always have oven roasted turkey. But for 2017, I was given a loaner unit of the Lynx Sonoma Propane Gas Smoker, so I decided to smoke the turkey this time. The smoker sells for about \$3200. It arrived on a truck. It's made of stainless steel and looks beautiful. It weighs 250 pounds, and wasn't easy to roll across the lawn because gophers have turned it into Swiss cheese. After I got the metal beast settled on the back porch, I opened the instruction manual.

The first step (after buying a tank of propane) was to download an app for my smartphone and connect it to the wifi radio in the smoker. This took a long time. The app needed the smoker's serial number. I couldn't find it. I had to call Lynx to find out where the PIN code on the smoker was. It turns out it's under a little drawer that contains the control panel. I had to get on my hands and knees and crane my neck to see the tiny numbers printed on a sticker, which doesn't peel off. I took a photo of the sticker and zoomed to see the numbers (note to Lynx - please move the sticker, or better yet, let people use the app without requiring a serial number). It also took several attempts to connect to the smoker, but once I got it, the app worked fine. The main purpose of the app is to let you see a temperature graph on your phone. I love this feature, because it takes a long time to smoke meat, and it let me do other things in the house and check on the progress remotely.

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, I practiced with chickens. The Sonoma has a tray to fill with wood chips, which get heated by the propane heater to produce smoke. The chickens were smoked to perfection, giving me confidence that the 25 pound turkey I was going to smoke wouldn't be a half-charred/half-frozen disaster. I told Cory about my plans, and he suggested I tell the butcher to spatchcock the turkey. Spatchcock is a fun word for cutting the turkey's backbone and butterflying it. When a bird is prepared this way, it cooks more evenly, because it increases the surface-area-to-volume ratio.

Carla picked up our turkey at Whole Foods a couple of days before Christmas. When she asked the butcher to spatchcock it, he looked at her as if she'd asked him to do something obscene to the turkey. Another customer overheard and told the butcher what spatchcocking was. The butcher found a co-worker who knew how to perform the operation, and he did it, albeit reluctantly, since there were a lot of customers clamoring for their turkeys.

Prep was easy. I just used the app to select the "smoked turkey" recipe and it heated the smoker and alerted me when it was time to put the turkey in. There was plenty of room in the gigantic smoker. I went inside and set up my iPad to monitor the temperature. It took a long time to smoke a big turkey - about 5 hours.

Cory snapped the above photo of the turkey when it was ready. Fortunately, he'd brought along some out-of-town guests, one of whom was a professional chef, and she sliced the turkey masterfully (thanks, Pheobe!).

If I had \$3000 to spare, this is something I would consider buying, because it does a great job, and smoking is a fun way to make delicious food. For now, I'm thinking about making the "Nellie Bly Smoker" that Bill Gurstelle wrote about in MAKE. I also learned that Lynx carries nifty smoker box that you can include in your existing grill. It's just \$60, and is from Lynx Grills:

