You will need: a large roasting pan fitted with a roasting rack; a brush or turkey baster; a meat thermometer; a 12- to 15-pound turkey; salt and pepper; vegetable oil; a half stick of butter; half a lemon; half an onion, cut into four pieces; one celery stick, cut into three pieces

The night before you roast the turkey, make sure it is fully defrosted (a frozen bird must go in the fridge three to four days ahead to thaw). Remove the contents from the cavity. Discard the giblets and reserve the neck. Rub the turkey all over with several generous pinches of salt, including a few under the skin covering the breast. Place in a dish or on a baking sheet, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until the next day.

Heat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit (it will take at least 20 minutes to warm up) and place a rack in the lower third.

Pat the turkey dry inside and out with paper towels and tuck the wing tips back and underneath. Season well with salt and pepper, including inside the cavity, then rub a generous amount of vegetable oil inside the cavity, all over the outside, and under the skin.

Break the butter into little chunks and place them under the skin covering the breast. Put the lemon, onion, and celery inside the cavity.

*From the store to the kitchen to the table: We outline the steps that get you from raw ingredients to your dinner tonight, free of measurements and complicated techniques. It’s a method you’ll remember and whip out whenever you like. It is the most basic way to make the thing you’re making.

Illustrations by Bill Russell. Find this online at www.chow.com/stories/11940.
After 45 minutes, flip the turkey onto its back and continue to baste and roast for about 2 to 2 1/2 hours.

When a meat thermometer inserted into the inner thigh registers 170 degrees Fahrenheit and the juices run clear, remove the turkey from the oven and let it rest 20 to 30 minutes before carving. (If you’re planning on making your own gravy, be sure to set aside the roasting pan and reserve both the vegetables from inside the bird’s cavity and the neck.)