

Cooking with the Club

by our own
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Club Chef Offers Tips, Recipes to Ensure Thanksgiving Isn't a 'Turkey'

Thanksgiving is one of the American holiday classics, seemingly untouched by time. While we may not go "over the river and through the woods to Grandma's house" anymore, Thanksgiving is still the occasion to gather with family and friends to give thanks for our freedoms and the bounty of American life. We have been reminded that the ideals of democracy and freedom celebrated at the first Thanksgiving feast are the basis of a strong and enduring foundation for our great country.

Since that first American Thanksgiving, pilgrims gathered for a feast celebrated with turkey, and it has been a centerpiece of the Thanksgiving celebrations ever since. "When you serve turkey at Thanksgiving, you are sustaining an American tradition passed on through the ages", says Vanessa Johnson from the Bureau of Sanitation. Vanessa sent us a wonderful recipe called **Vanessa's Thanksgiving Dressing**. Additional dishes have arisen to complement the turkey including the ones offered in this article: **Thanksgiving Potatoes**, **Fancy Mashed Potatoes**, **Gary's Cole Slaw**, and finally the **Waldorf Salad**.

If you are an experienced professional at preparing the classic Thanksgiving feast, you know it is surprisingly easy for the wonderful results. The meal preparation requires advance planning and organization. To an inexperienced cook, the thought of being in charge of the entire Thanksgiving meal can be intimidating. Younger home chefs may not have had the opportunity to perfect their cooking skills. Have no fear; I offer several turkey preparation tips to help make this Thanksgiving feast a healthful one.

How much turkey should be purchased?

Allow one pound of uncooked turkey per person from an 8 to 12 pound turkey. Larger birds have a larger proportion of meat to bones, so one-half pound per person should be sufficient with leftovers for the beloved turkey sandwich or soup.

By purchasing a larger turkey than needed for the holiday feast, you can transform holiday extras into timesaving meals. Freeze the extra cooked turkey and you'll have your own ready-to-prepare healthy food for quick and easy post-holiday meals.

How should the turkey be thawed?

Frozen turkey, like all protein foods, should be thawed in the refrigerator, never at room

temperature. When foods are thawed at room temperature, surface bacteria can rapidly multiply to dangerous levels at temperatures of 40 degrees F and above.

For safety and superior quality, leave turkey in the original packaging and place in a shallow pan. Thaw in the refrigerator, using the simple formula: whole turkeys thaw at a rate of 4 to 5 pounds per 24 hours. Example: A 15-pound frozen bird will take 3 to 4 full days to thaw in the refrigerator.

To speed thawing, keep turkey in the original tightly sealed bag and place in a clean and sanitized sink or foodservice safe pan. Submerge in cold water and change the cold water every 30 minutes. The turkey will take about 30 minutes per pound to thaw.

Refrigerate (at 40 degrees F or below) or cook the turkey when it is thawed. Do not refreeze uncooked, defrosted turkey.

What are the key pointers for stuffing a turkey?

Stuffing should be prepared and stuffed into the turkey immediately before it is placed in the oven for roasting. If preparing the stuffing ahead-of-time, wet and dry ingredients should be refrigerated separately and combined right before stuffing the turkey.

Stuff the turkey loosely, about 3/4 cup of stuffing per pound of turkey.

Test the internal temperature of the stuffing as well as the turkey. The internal temperature in the center of the stuffing should register 160 to 165 degrees F.

When is the turkey done?

Since turkey is low in fat and high in protein, the meat is sensitive to extreme heat and prolonged cooking. Loosely place an aluminum foil tent over the turkey breast during the first hour to hour and a half of roasting, and then remove to allow the turkey to brown.

A turkey should be cooked just until it is done. The best way to determine the level of doneness is with a food thermometer. Use these tests to determine doneness and to keep the turkey juicy.

For whole turkey, place the food thermometer in the deepest part of the thigh, but not touching the bone. The internal temperature of the turkey should measure 180 degrees F in the thigh and 170 degrees F in the breast.

Juices should run clear and the drumsticks should be soft and move easily at the joint. 🍴

**Happy Thanksgiving
to everyone at the Club!**

Gary's Cole Slaw

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 of a small head of cabbage sliced as thinly as possible
- 5 oz. olive oil (extra virgin preferred)
- 4 oz. red wine vinegar
- Juice of one lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley

DIRECTIONS

- Place the sliced cabbage in a large mixing bowl. Combine the remaining ingredients and blend thoroughly. Season to taste. Pour over cabbage and toss well.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.



Thanksgiving Potatoes

INGREDIENTS

- 4 red potatoes
- 1/4 c. melted butter
- 1/2 c. cheddar cheese
- 4 oz. sour cream
- Salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 1/2 cup Parmesan Cheese

DIRECTIONS

- Boil potatoes until soft. Drain, cool, cut into one-inch cubes. Sauté 1/2 cup chopped onions in butter. Toss with potatoes and other ingredients. Spoon into greased baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until bubbling. Can be made the day before.



Fancy Mashed Potatoes

INGREDIENTS

- 5 lbs. Potatoes
- 2 cups sour cream
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1/4 lb. of margarine or butter
- 1 tablespoon dill weed
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Wash, peel and cook potatoes until soft. Turn in to an electric mixer and add sour cream, cream cheese and margarine (or butter) and other ingredients. Mix until smooth. Spoon into a greased 2 qt. casserole dish. Bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes, or until bubbly. The depth of the casserole dish may cause a variance in the baking time. These potatoes can be made days ahead of time and refrigerated.



Vanessa's Thanksgiving Dressing

Courtesy Vanessa Johnson, Bureau of Sanitation

INGREDIENTS

- 1 recipe baked cornbread
- 1 onion
- 1/2 loaf bread crumbs
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 stalk celery
- Salt and Pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Chop onion and celery and sauté in shortening or oil until tender. Add to bread mixture along with poultry seasoning, salt and pepper to taste and turkey broth as needed to moisten. Stir in a large pan, then add slightly beaten eggs and mix in well. Pour into well-greased pan and bake at 350 degrees for an hour, stirring several times. For additional broth, use canned broth.



Waldorf Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup plain yogurt
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2 apples
- 2 large celery stalks
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- In small salad bowl, combine mayonnaise, yogurt and lemon juice to taste. Core apples, cut into bite-size pieces, dice celery. Add both to salad bowl, fold in nuts. Chill up to two hours. Toss before serving.

