

1930

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1930

U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

ROASTING A TURKEY

Ever since 1621 when Governor Bradford of Massachusetts sent four men out in search of game, and they came back laden with wild turkey, the vain and strutting fowl has had the place of honor for the Thanksgiving feast. Of course, the traditional turkey dinner means much to the American people and no doubt will continue to be the main dish for the Thanksgiving dinner.

Since turkey raising has become one of Nebraska's profitable industries, why not plan to have turkey on the table at other festive occasions? Let us add turkey to the usual picture of harvest with its baskets of fruits and grains.

Selection of Turkey for Roasting

When roast turkey lacks the juicy deliciousness we associate with other roast fowl, it would be well to look to the selection of the turkey as well as the roasting of it. Turkeys without the proper finish and a covering of fat, cook dry and are often tasteless and fibrous. When turkeys are properly finished the fat particles are present thruout the muscle tissue and under the skin. This fatty tissue holds the juices and prevents the bird drying out so rapidly. In retaining the juice the fine flavors are also retained. Only well fattened birds have that tender deliciousness so necessary for the success of the turkey dinner. Insist upon a turkey with a good covering of fat.

Some confusion and uncertainty may occur regarding the size or weight of the turkey and the number of plates to be served. A live turkey loses ten to twelve per cent of its weight when dressed, and being dressed means killed and picked. When completely dressed and drawn, the loss in weight is about twelve to fifteen per cent more making a total loss of approximately 25 per cent from the live weight. Variations are due to the condition of the turkeys and the amount of feed in them at the time they are killed. Fat and plump birds that have been starved for 24 hours before killing lose the least when dressed.

A fifteen pound live turkey dressing out twelve pounds of edible turkey including the liver, gizzard, heart and neck is sufficient for amply serving a dinner to twelve people and leave something for turkey hash. Generally, about one pound of turkey, (drawn basis), per person is ample.

Trussing Fowl

To prepare a dressed fowl for roasting, rub inside and outside with salt, and then fill with hot stuffing but do not crowd stuffing in tightly. The dressing will have a light fluffy consistency if not packed into the turkey too tightly. Fold and sew down the skin of the neck over the back; after removing the oil bag, push the cushion of the tail into the opening in the back and sew securely. Fold the wings tightly against the body of the turkey and hold in position by means of skewers or by tying a strong string over them and around the body; press the legs close to the body and tie securely in place using the same string. The turkey, when all tied, should be neatly compact.

Different methods are used in roasting a turkey to prevent dryness in the meat. Some rub butter and flour to a paste and spread well over the wings, legs, and breast. Some dredge these parts with flour while still others may prefer to use slices of bacon or fat salt pork. If bacon is used, the slices may be held in place with toothpicks. With any of these methods, it is advisable to roast the turkey on the rack in the roaster. The cover may be placed on the roaster, after the searing period is completed.

Roasting a Turkey

500 degrees for 20 minutes or 450 degrees for 30 minutes - searing temperature.

Baking temperature, 300 degrees (Turkey weighing less than 8 lbs.))	
Baking temperature, 275 degrees (Turkey weighing 8 to 10 lbs.))	25 minutes per pound
Baking temperature, 250 degrees (Turkey weighing more than 10 lbs.))	

Place the turkey in a roasting pan. Sear at the temperature given above. Remove from oven. Sprinkle with at least one tablespoon salt, add one and one-half cups boiling water and return to the oven. Reduce heat to moderate temperature (300 degrees to 250 degrees depending on weight of turkey). At the end of one hour turn the turkey. This helps to brown the turkey more uniformly and the breast does not become too brown nor dry. It is necessary to baste the turkey with the drippings even tho a covered roaster is used.

An electric or gas oven with an oven control makes it possible to have an even flow of heat. The fowl may be placed in a cold oven and the oven quickly brought to the roasting temperature. A covered roaster is not necessary when roasting under these conditions.

Testing for "Doneness"

A good way to test a turkey for "doneness" is to lift a wing and see whether it will disjoint easily. If a fork is used for testing, pierce one of the legs near the breast bone. If done the liquid which oozes out will not show a red tinge.

When done place the bird on a large hot platter with breast up, remove the strings with which it is sewed and tied and garnish with parsley or vegetables.

Recipes

Many variations are found in the stuffings used for turkey. The recipes given are suggestions and other variations will doubtless be used by many. Whenever turkey heads the menu the stuffing may be made the day before. Then the bird can be stuffed and sewed in a short time, and be ready for the oven.

Plain Bread Stuffing

2 qt. stale (not hard) bread	1 t. ground sage	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. butter
2 t. salt	$\frac{1}{4}$ t. pepper	1 egg

Soak the bread in cold water or milk and squeeze quite dry. Melt the butter in a frying pan, add the bread and stir until well mixed and the bread is slightly browned. Place in a mixing bowl and add seasonings and egg. For a variation finely chopped onion may be slightly cooked in the butter before it is added to the bread or sliced apples may be added to this dressing if desired. If apples are added, add one tablespoon sugar to the dressing. One cup of soaked prunes may be added to the above recipe.

Potato and Bread Stuffing

2 qt. stale (not hard) bread	$\frac{3}{4}$ lb. butter
broken in pieces	3 t. salt
1 medium sized onion	1 t. ground sage
2 potatoes (rather large)	$\frac{1}{4}$ t. pepper
4 eggs	
$\frac{3}{4}$ qt. milk	

Pare potatoes and onions, slice thin and saute in butter until tender and slightly brown. Stir in bread and add enough boiling water to moisten slightly. Cover tightly. Stir frequently until all is a delicate brown. Remove from fire, place in a mixing bowl and add milk, eggs and seasonings. Stuff in turkey. (Makes a moist dressing).

Chestnut Stuffing

6 c. dry bread	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. minced onion
2 c. chopped celery and tops	$1\frac{1}{2}$ t. salt
2 T. parsley	$\frac{1}{2}$ t. savory seasoning
$\frac{1}{2}$ c. butter	2 c. chestnuts, coarsely chopped

Cook the chestnuts in boiling water to cover, for 15 to 20 minutes and remove the shells and the brown skin while hot. Melt the butter in a skillet and cook the onion, parsley and celery for five minutes, stirring frequently. Combine the bread crumbs, chestnuts, and seasonings and add to the celery mixture. Continue stirring until the ingredients are thoroly mixed. Some add a little milk to moisten stuffing. Fill the turkey with hot stuffing but do not pack.

Mushroom Stuffing

1 lb. fresh mushrooms	$\frac{1}{4}$ t. mixed dry herbs
Sprig of parsley	Bay leaf (broken in pieces)
1 leek or small onion	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. butter
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. stale bread	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. hot stock or gravy
$\frac{1}{4}$ lb. sliced ham	Seasonings

Peel mushrooms, chopped, add parsley, leek, mixed herbs, and bay leaf. Saute in butter and then cook slowly for ten minutes. Cook ham and grind in food chopper. Add bread crumbs and ham to mushrooms and mix well, then moisten with hot stock and season to taste.

Oyster Stuffing for Roast Turkey

$1\frac{1}{2}$ c. dried bread crumbs or toasted bread crumbs	$\frac{1}{4}$ t. mace or nutmeg
$1\frac{1}{2}$ c. cracker crumbs	1 pt. oysters
$\frac{1}{2}$ c. melted butter	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. oyster liquor
2 t. salt	
Pepper	

Add melted butter to the bread and cracker crumbs. Wash the oysters, remove the tough muscles, and combine and mix all ingredients. In stuffing the turkey or capon leave plenty of room for the stuffing to swell.

Bread and Celery Stuffing

2 qt. stale bread crumbs	1 c. melted fat
2 T. chopped parsley	$\frac{1}{2}$ t. pepper
1 apple, peeled and diced	2 T. finely chopped onion
1 c. seedless raisins	$1\frac{1}{2}$ c. chopped celery
2 eggs beaten lightly	3 t. salt

Moisten crumbs with melted fat, add beaten eggs, add onion, parsley, celery, apples, raisins, and seasonings.

Giblet Gravy

To the fat from the cooked fowl, add an equal amount of flour and blend. When brown add one cup of liquid (milk) for each two tablespoons of flour used. Cook until thick and then add the giblets (heart, liver and gizzard which have been cut fine). The giblets may be baked in the pan beside the fowl or put thru the meat chopper, and then simmered in a quart of water while the fowl is baking. If the latter is done, use the liquid in making the gravy.

Cold Turkey

Desirable ways to serve left-over turkey are sliced cold, in turkey salad, or creamed. However, there comes a time when there is only enough for hash. What remains may then be used for turkey hash.

Turkey Hash

2 or 3 c. minced turkey	Onion chopped fine or onion
3 boiled potatoes (chopped fine)	juice
$\frac{1}{2}$ c. turkey dressing	Pepper
	Salt

Mix potatoes, minced turkey, dressing and seasonings. Grease iron skillet and pat the hash in pan. Cook over a low heat until a golden brown crust is formed. Place a lid over skillet and invert pan so hash comes out on lid. Slip the uncooked side down into skillet and let brown. Turn onto platter and garnish with parsley. Turkey hash may also be baked in a loaf pan.

Turkey Salad

2 c. cold diced turkey	1 T. chopped green pepper
1 c. diced celery	6 olives

Marinate turkey with 2 T. French dressing and allow to stand 1 hour. Add other ingredients and mix with $\frac{1}{2}$ c. cooked or mayonnaise salad dressing. Arrange on lettuce leaf and garnish with pimento and hard cooked eggs.

MENUS

Tomato juice cocktail		
Roast Turkey with Chestnut Stuffing		
Mashed potatoes	Giblet gravy	
Brussels sprouts		
Celery	Cranberry sauce	Olives
Whole wheat bread	Butter	
	Raspberry Sherbet	
Milk		Coffee
	Nuts	

Grapefruit Salad

Roast turkey	Potato and Bread Stuffing
Giblet gravy	
Buttered cauliflower	or Rutabaga
String beans	Beet pickle
Ice box rolls	Butter Currant jelly
	Ice cream
Coffee	Cookies nuts

Roast Turkey

Giblet gravy	Plain bread stuffing
Baked sweet potatoes	Glazed onions
Head lettuce salad	Russian dressing
Cranberry sauce or cider ice	
Rolls	Butter
Pumpkin pie	
Coffee	Milk
	Assorted nuts

Carving a Turkey

A good carving set is the first essential for carving a fowl. An eight or nine inch blade is recommended for most roasts. The handle of the carving knife should be easy to grasp, and the blade should be long, thin and sharp pointed. The fork should be strong with long tines and a good guard. Keep the guard up, while carving.

It is necessary for the turkey to be on a large platter for carving. Ample space is needed so that there is no danger of getting pieces of food on the table cloth. The fowl should be on its back with its neck to the left. The carving fork is held in the left hand and inserted at the point of the breast bone. Cut off the right leg by cutting thru the skin, pull back the leg with the knife and disjoint from the body. Lay the disjointed leg on the platter and separate the drumstick from the thigh, cutting from the inside. The meat may cut from the thigh bone so as to make more than one serving.

The wing is cut off next. This is done by cutting down from the top of the joint that attaches the wing to the body. Insert the knife under the wing and cut thru the joint. The breast is next carved into thin slices.

Serve a piece of white and a piece of dark meat to each person unless a preference is expressed. Make an opening below breast bone and serve dressing with each portion of fowl. When thru serving place the carving implements neatly on the platter. Before asking the guests to take a second helping, carve a few extra portions of meat. However, it is not advisable to carve more than is needed because cut meat dries out more quickly.

(Prepared by Florence J. Atwood, approved by the Foods Division, Home Economics Department, University of Nebraska).