

Tips For A Tasty Thanksgiving From Empire Kosher Poultry

Although any time is fine to enjoy roast turkey, Thanksgiving is always this delicious bird's special time of the year. Make your Thanksgiving feast a great one with these "turkey tips" and stuffing recipes from Empire Kosher.

Selecting a Turkey

When buying a turkey, select the right size by allowing one pound of turkey for each person you are serving. This general rule will provide ample servings, with enough left over for fabulous second-day dishes and sandwiches. Young turkeys range in size from 8 to 24 pounds. You may want to place an order with your butcher or grocer early to reserve the right turkey for your Thanksgiving meal.

There is no significant difference in quality between a fresh turkey and a frozen one. If you prefer to shop in advance, select a frozen turkey and store it in the freezer until you are ready to thaw and prepare. Fresh turkeys are highly perishable and should be purchased no more than two days in advance of preparation.

Thawing Tips

The safest method of thawing a frozen turkey is to remove it from the freezer and place it in the refrigerator prior to preparing. Allow at least one full day of refrigeration for every four pounds of turkey.

A quicker method of thawing can be used if needed to save time by placing the unopened packaged turkey in a large container and covering it completely with cold water. To insure safe thawing, replace the water with fresh, cold water every 30 minutes. Allow at least 30 minutes of thawing for every pound of turkey when using the cold water method.

Microwave ovens can be used for thawing, if the turkey is not too large! Follow the recommended thawing instructions that accompany your oven.

NEVER thaw a turkey (or any meat) at room

temperature or in warm water, because bacteria will multiply rapidly at warm temperatures. Although cooking will destroy many bacteria, the risk of food poisoning increases dramatically when raw meats are allowed to sit at warm temperatures.

Preparation and Stuffing

When the turkey has thawed sufficiently, it requires little preparation before cooking. Remove the neck and giblets from the body cavity. Wash the turkey inside and out with cold water and drain well. Wrap the thawed turkey in a clean wet towel to retain moisture until preparation time. To prevent the spread of bacteria, wash hands, utensils and sinks thoroughly after handling raw turkey.

Although turkey is delicious plain, most cooks prefer the added flavors of stuffing. You may prepare the stuffing in advance, but, for best results, turkey should not be stuffed until the last minute.

Allow 3/4 cup of stuffing for each pound of turkey. Stuff the body cavity lightly, because stuffing expands as it cooks. To close the neck, fold the neck skin over the back and fasten with skewers, trussing pins or clean string. Pull the legs over the turkey and tie them together to secure further.

Follow the recipe ideas for stuffing given below, or "create your own."

Roasting

Place the turkey, breast side up, in a shallow pan. If basting is desired, brush lightly with oil before roasting. Basting a whole turkey is often not needed because cooking will release natural juices.

Cover the pan with an aluminum foil tent or a ventilated lid to avoid overbrowning and to reduce spattering. If a broiler turkey is preferred, remove the cover 30 minutes before roasting is finished.

Place the pan in an oven preheated to 325°F. A roasting time of 30 minutes per pound is recom-

mended, although cooking times may vary due to differences in ovens, how thoroughly the turkey has thawed, and how many times the oven door has been opened while roasting.

The turkey has been sufficiently roasted when the "Pop-Up" timer is activated by the proper temperature. To test for doneness, a meat thermometer can be used. The turkey is done when the thermometer inserted in the thick part of the inner thigh registers 180-185°F. Or, you can insert a long-tined fork into the meaty part of the thigh. If the juices run clear, not pink, the turkey is fully roasted.

Nutrition

Turkey is one of the most nutritious meats available because it's naturally low in fat and high in protein. A three-ounce serving of roasted, skinless turkey provides an average of only 129 calories, with 25 grams of protein, or 56% of the U.S. Recommended Daily Allowance. While breast meat is leanest, with an average of only 2% fat by weight. Darker leg or thigh meat averages 4 to 7% fat by weight.

Stuffing Recipes

Savory Bread Stuffing

- 3/4 cup celery, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp parsley, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp parv margarine, melted
- 1 quart soft bread crumbs
- 1/2 tsp savory
- dash black pepper

Lightly toss ingredients before stuffing. Only 100 calories per 4 ounce serving of cooked stuffing.

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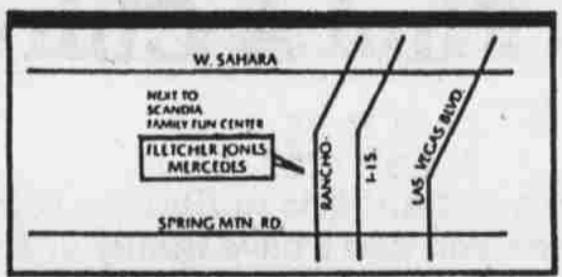
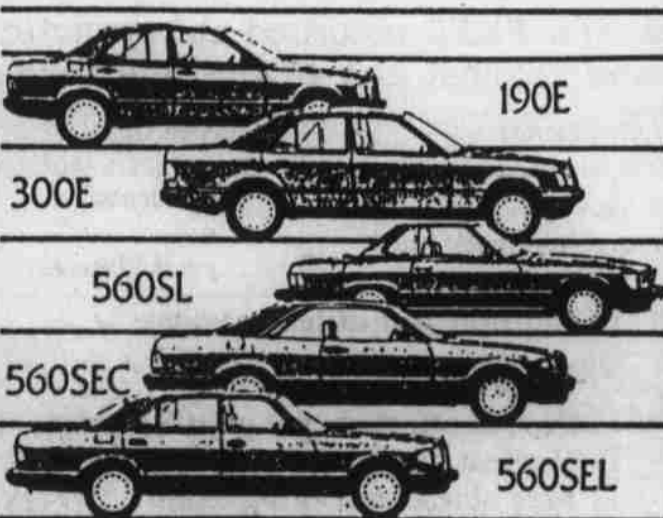
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