



FREE
EBOOK

COMPLETE AND TOTAL GUIDE TO THANKSGIVING

by Cheryl Malik of 40 Aprons



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Let's do this, shall we?

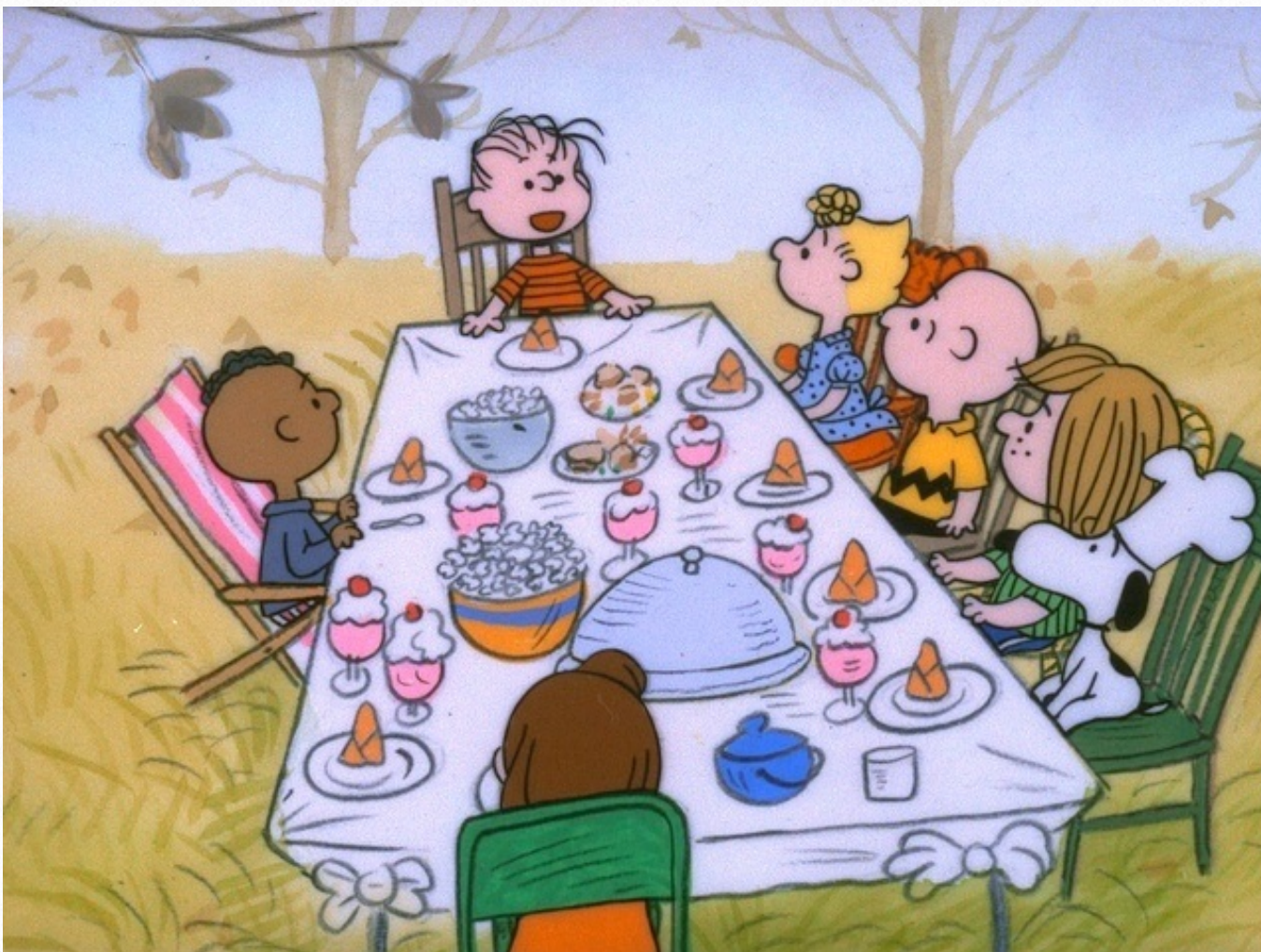


Thanksgiving is, as far as I know, the only national holiday centered entirely around food, so to say the expectations are high is a bit of an understatement. The sheer quantity of food is intimidating in and of itself, especially for a first-timer. That's why I'm here.

I started hosting entire Thanksgiving dinners about six years ago, so it's fresh enough in my mind to remember the virgin experience, but I've done it enough to know a thing or two about pulling it off. Here is Thanksgiving: The Complete and Total Guide to Thanksgiving Dinner. We'll start with de-

tailed information on the food information, menu, tablescape and centerpieces. I'm providing a menu that I think works for most people, and I'll be basing the timeline and schedule the day-of on this menu, for simplicity's sake. However, feel free to substitute other favorites as desired. If you need help inserting a different dish into the timeline or schedule, feel free to contact me! I know how stressful, yet important, timing is, but luckily, my compulsive nature makes me quite good at time organization.

It probably won't look like this, if I do my job right.



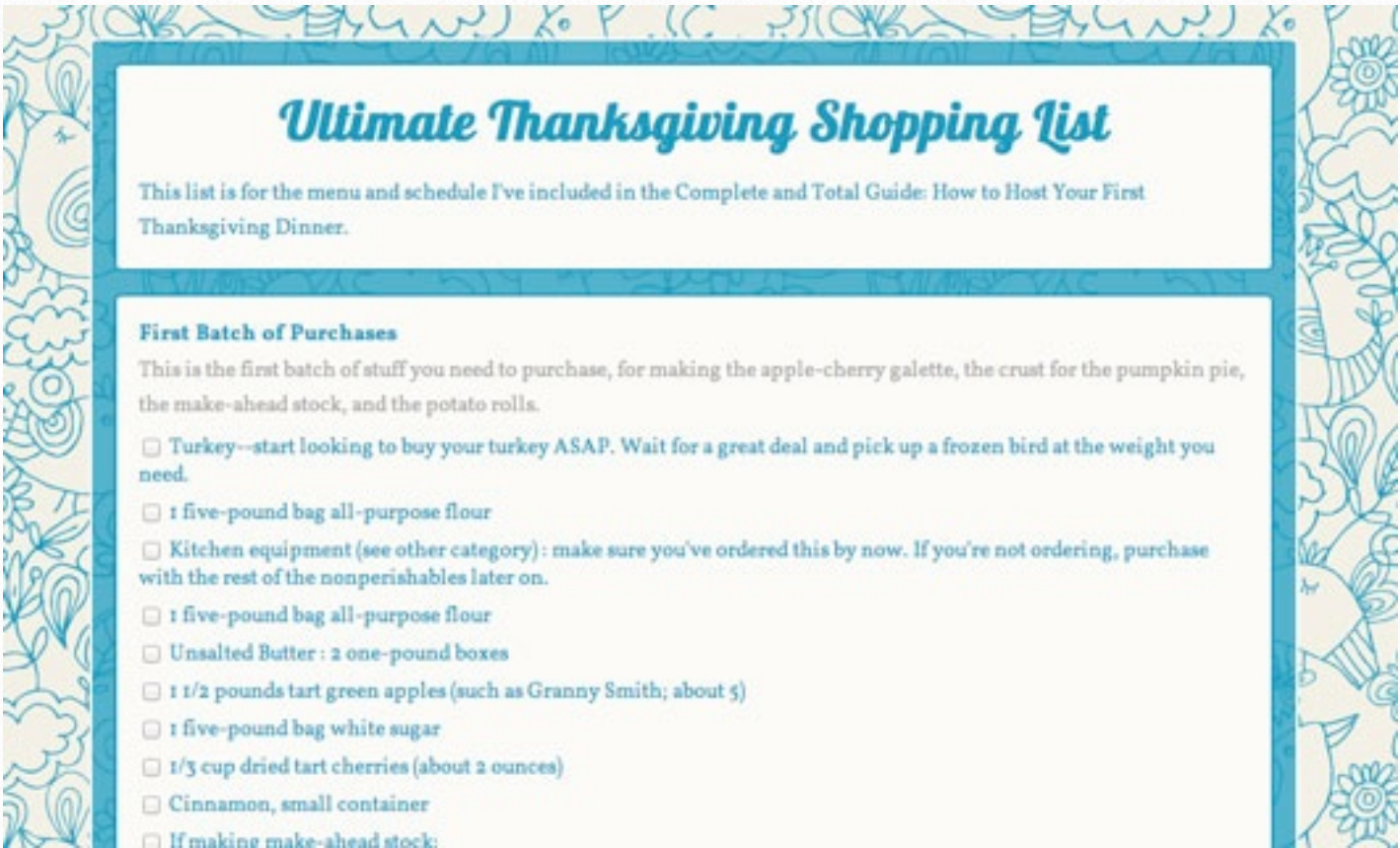
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The Menu

- Appetizer: Smoked Salmon Dip, Mushroom-Bacon Dip, or a light antipasto platter with cheese, fruit, jams, and some mild cured meats
- Make-Ahead Turkey Stock / Day-of Turkey Giblet Stock
- Actually Perfect Turkey and Gravy, the Best Parts of All "Perfect Turkey" Recipes
- Grandma's Grandma's Grandma's Sausage Stuffing
- Make-Ahead Mashed Potatoes, consistently requested by everyone who's ever had them
- Sweet Potatoes with Blue Cheese and Pecans
- Cranberry Sauce with Rosemary
- Green Bean Casserole, because you don't always have to be fancy
- Mom's Amazing Potato Rolls
- Pumpkin Pie with Make-Ahead Crust
- Apple-Cherry Galette with Caramel Sauce and Crème Fraîche

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Master Shopping List



[You can find the master shopping list for this menu here](#), split up into different shopping times, equipment, nonperishables, and perishables. You can combine all the nonperishables, perishables, and second batch of purchases into one big shopping trip and purchase at the time you buy all the perishables, but I recommend spreading it out to help with sales, sanity, and make-ahead items.

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Equipment List

What equipment will you need to make this the *best Thanksgiving ever*? Not too much, really! Here's the list:

- Five-gallon plastic bucket AND/OR large cooler (if you have no room in your fridge)
- Large brining bag
- Kitchen twine
- Meat thermometer
- 9-inch-diameter tart pan with removable bottom (great for the apple-cherry galette but not required.. though a great item to have in the kitchen)

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The Timeline

Note: For schedule purposes, our dinner will be at 6 p.m. Make sure you alter the schedule times earlier or later based on when your actual dinner is. For quantity purposes, we'll be serving 12.

As Soon as Possible

- Figure out how many people you'll be serving. Decide if you want to send invitations of some form. Paperless Post offers free online invites that we use each year and adore! Learn more about those in the next section.

- Decide what time of day you'll be hosting

- Decide if you'll be roasting a whole turkey, a stuffed turkey, a turkey breast, or a boneless turkey breast. If this is an annoying question to your already overwhelmed self, just go with a whole turkey. It's my best bet.

- Decide if you'll be roasting a turkey that's organic, natural, or none of the above.

Three Weeks Before

- Start watching for sales on your turkey, at the organic level you chose (organic, natural, neither). You can find killer sales leading up to Thanksgiving, so buy when you come across a great one.

- Plan the rest of your menu.

- Compile your ultimate shopping list based off your menu--don't forget to include perishables, nonperishables, and equipment. Check and double-check!

- Plan the equipment you'll need based off your menu.

- If you prefer to order your equipment, do so now. Amazon is a great resource here.

Two Weeks Before:

- Shop for the ingredients for your apple-cherry galette, the crust for your pumpkin pie, your potato rolls, and your turkey stock if you're making ahead and freezing. If you're making ahead and refrigerating, wait to make the stock until Tuesday or Wednesday of Thanksgiving week.

- Make the apple-cherry galette and the crust for your pumpkin pie. Freeze.

- Make the turkey stock. Freeze.

- Make the potato rolls. Freeze.

- Watch for sales on your other nonperishables.

- Start purchasing nonperishables that are on sale.

- Check all of your serving pieces, serving-ware, drinkware, and linens. Make sure you have enough, and that they're all clean. Wash and press your linens, if that's your sort of thing.

One Week Before:

- Finish purchasing all your nonperishables.
- Purchase the ingredients for your cranberry sauce.
- If you haven't yet, purchase your turkey.
- Plan and execute your tablescape and centerpiece--detailed post to come. I'll be making this and these.
- Create a timeline for your cooking, if you're not using mine (jerk). Include a schedule for the day-of.

Saturday Before Thanksgiving:

- Make cranberry sauce, cover, and refrigerate.
- You can, of course, make the cranberry sauce a bit later, but I find spreading it all out helps me.

Sunday Before Thanksgiving:

- Take the turkey out of the freezer around 8 o'clock at night, if you're using a 12 pound turkey. If you're using a 14 pound turkey, take out around that o'clock in the morning. If you're using a 16 pound turkey, take out around 8 p.m. on Saturday night. Remember that a turkey needs 24

hours for every 4 pounds to defrost, and we want the turkey to be completely thawed by Tuesday early evening.

Monday Before Thanksgiving:

- Purchase all your perishable items and anything else you might need that you missed.

Tuesday Before Thanksgiving:

- If you didn't already make the turkey stock, do so today. Save in an airtight container and refrigerate.
- If making, make mushroom bacon dip one of your appetizers. If you're making smoked salmon dip instead, wait until tomorrow.
- Take out the cream cheese for the mashed potatoes. Yeah, I always forget to do this, so... learn from my mistakes.
- Make the mashed potatoes and refrigerate in an oven-safe casserole or serving dish.
- Make the sweet potato purée and refrigerate in an oven-safe casserole or serving dish.

Day Before Thanksgiving:

- If brining: In the morning, make your brine and brine the turkey for twelve hours.
- If brining: That night, remove the turkey from the brine, rinse, and dry off with paper towels (don't forget the cavity!). Return to the fridge in a roasting pan and let air-dry overnight.
- If making, make the smoked salmon dip as one of your appetizers.

- Place the frozen stock you need for tomorrow in the freezer to thaw.

- Chop vegetables you need for stuffing.

Thanksgiving Day:

- In the morning: Remove frozen rolls from freezer and thaw completely in refrigerator.

- Around 2:00 p.m.: Start the turkey about 4 hours in advance; for our 6 p.m. dinner time, start working on him at 2 p.m. Actual time is more like 3h25m, but give yourself some extra time in case the turkey takes longer to cook than expected or some other totally foreseeable but usually ignored possibility of terror.

- Around 2:30 to 2:45 p.m.: Make sure the turkey is in the oven.

- Around 2:35 to 2:50 p.m.: Right after you pop the turkey in the oven, make your stock, if you're using Thanksgiving Day Giblet Stock.

- Around 2:35 to 2:50 p.m.: Right after you pop the turkey in the oven, thaw your frozen stock, if you didn't yesterday. Place the frozen stock in its freezer bag in a larger microwave-safe bowl (in case anything spills out) and thaw slowly in the microwave.

- Around 3:30 p.m.: Assemble your pumpkin pie. Roll the crust out and place in a pie pan. Fill.

- Around 4:00 p.m.: Bake pumpkin pie about 40 - 50 minutes. Meanwhile, whip some fresh cream and keep in the fridge until serving.

- About an hour before guests arrive: If you choose a light antipasto platter over either of the dips, assemble it about a half hour before guests

arrive. If you're serving either of the dips instead, take the Smoked Salmon Dip or Mushroom-Bacon Dip out of the fridge and plate with crackers, breads, toasts, etc., about a half hour to an hour before guests arrive.

- 4:30 p.m.: Remove sweet potatoes and mashed potatoes from the refrigerator.

- 4:40 p.m.: Start sautéing sausage for stuffing. Assemble stuffing.

- 4:40 p.m. - 4:50 p.m.: Remove pumpkin pie from oven and let cool on a wire rack.

- 5:00 p.m.: Flip turkey and put back in the oven.

- 5:10 p.m.: Put sweet potatoes and stuffing in the oven.

- 5:15 p.m.: Prepare the green bean casserole.

- 5:25 p.m.: Put green bean casserole in the oven for 30 minutes.

- 5:30 p.m.: Take turkey out of oven-- assuming meat thermometer reads appropriate temperature (165 degrees fahrenheit for FDA standards). Put mashed potatoes in the oven for 30 minutes.

- 5:35 p.m.: Make gravy.

- 5:45 p.m.: Place thawed rolls in the oven. Place thawed galette in the oven.

- 5:50 p.m.: Take sweet potatoes out of the oven, spoon into a serving dish, and garnish with blue cheese and pecans.

- 5:50 p.m.: Take out stuffing from oven and set aside. Get someone to carve the turkey. It's the least they can do, and um, you're busy. If you have to do it yourself, use this video. It helps.

- 5:55 p.m.: Take green bean casserole out of the oven, sprinkle with remaining onions, and put back in the oven for 5 minutes.

- 6:00 p.m.:

- Take out rolls and place in bowl, lined with a cloth napkin that you can fold over the rolls in between noshing.

- Take mashed potatoes out of the oven and spoon into a serving dish.

- Take green bean casserole out of the oven and put on table on a trivet or potholder (if you spoon into a serving dish, you'll lose the look of onions on top of the casserole. No one will see the potholder, I promise).

- Spoon stuffing into serving dish.

- Crank up oven heat to 375 degrees fahrenheit for the galette.

- 6:35 p.m.: Remove galette from oven. Re-heat caramel sauce on low heat while galette cools. If you're all still eating, just quickly pop the galette out of the oven and place on a rack to cool; quickly plop the caramel sauce in a small saucepan over low and stir when you're back to serve the galette.

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Free Thanksgiving Invitations

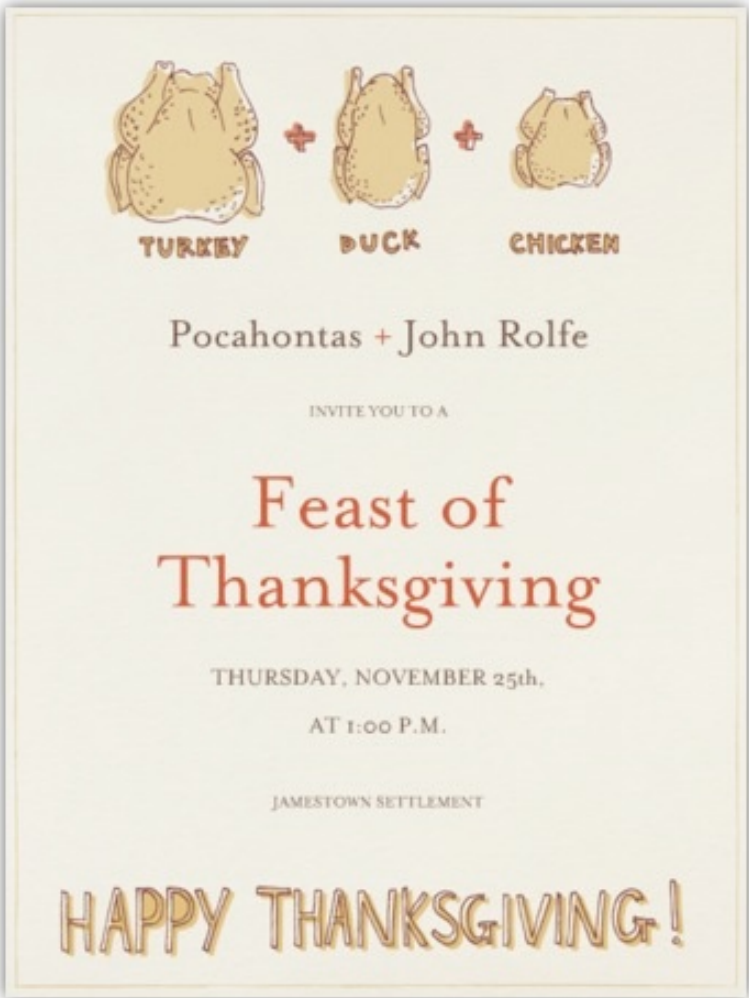


Since you're hosting Thanksgiving, you understand how much work goes into the preparation, the shopping, the planning, the cleaning, the cooking.. In my opinion, with all that work, the day should be treated as a big affair!

I found these gorgeous online invitations at Paperless Post when I was looking at options for a friend's wedding, and I'm obsessed. Paperless Post is an interesting concept--the idea of sending and receiving mail-quality invitations, but online. While online invites will never truly replace a physical card

in the mail, these come pretty darn close. Additionally, you can keep up with RSVP's, send through Facebook, and setup automatic reminders.

I wanted to share these designs, because they're an easy, elegant, and free way to upgrade your Thanksgiving Day event a bit! They'll make your guests feel special, and make you look like a domestic badass.



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The Information

“You are but a gentle river, winding through the autumn countryside.. You are but a gentle river...”
and repeat thirty times.



Got questions about basting, bagging, brining, buying? This is your section, you curious Thanksgiving-ger, you! Some of the answers might surprise you, so make sure you give this section a read, even if you feel pretty positive that organic turkeys are best (think again!) and that basting is a tried-and-true

method for perfectly moist turkeys. Or that you should turn children head-first into brining buckets... just saying. Someone out there must think so, otherwise there wouldn't be the cartoon, am I right? (Hopefully not.)

Buy a Frozen Turkey

I know, I know. It's not the foodie thing to say, or is it? Cook's Illustrated found that frozen turkeys are actually moister and that fresh turkeys can be tougher. Why? A whole lot of science regarding the fluctuation of temperatures when refrigerating a turkey, versus the constant of a frozen bird.¹ However, if "fresh" means "from the neighbor's farm", then go with that. Otherwise, buy frozen.

Furthermore, you can plan ahead and snatch up a killer deal on a frozen turkey. With fresh, you have to buy at a certain time, and this can keep you from as good of a deal.

Thaw early. A frozen turkey needs 24 hours for every 4 pounds, so a 12 pound turkey would need 3 full days to defrost. Dealing with a half-frozen turkey on Thanksgiving Day is a total nightmare, so start early. Clear out a spot in the fridge, stick it in there plenty early, and rest easy on the big day.²

Conventional or Organic?

If you *always* eat organic, for health or moral reasons, then go with it on Thanksgiving. However, Cook's Illustrated found that conventional turkeys, for the most part, taste just as good, if not better, than natural, organic, or heritage turkeys. They found one heritage turkey that did, however, greatly surpass conventional turkeys in a taste test, but good luck getting one. Not only do they sell out well in advance of the holiday, but they clock in around \$50 for a 13- to 15-pound bird. A better option? A bird that actually scored higher on the Cook's Illustrated preference--a Rubashkin's Aaron's Best kosher turkey. Kosher turkeys have essentially been brined already, giving them great flavor.. but make sure you absolutely don't brine a kosher turkey! The

result will be an inedibly salty bird. But if you pop him in the oven as is, you'll end up with a highly flavorful turkey.¹

The bottom line:

- Unless you eat organic 100% of the time for health or moral reasons, skip it on Thanksgiving Day, and pick up a conventional turkey.
- If possible, buy a kosher turkey, which has a higher salt and fat content, which translates readily to a higher deliciousness content.
- Do not brine a kosher turkey!

To Stuff or Not to Stuff

I'm a huge fan of stuffing--or dressing, as we like to call it in the South--but I'm not a huge fan of salmonella. Hence, I cook my stuffing in a casserole dish separate from the turkey. Lost? If you remove the turkey before the stuffing itself reaches 165°, you run the risk of allowing those pesky bacteria to live another day, in your stuffing and then in your body.

However, I know that baking your stuffing is just not an option to some of you; it's straight-up blasphemy! In this case, take this advice from Epicurious (paraphrased by yours truly):

Do not stuff your turkey in advance, unless you like hosting a salmonella playground. The night before, cook the vegetables (onions, celery, etc.) for your stuffing and keep them separate from the bread, egg, stock. The morning of, when you're ready to pop the turkey in the oven, heat the stock you'll be using for the stuffing and then combine with the rest of the ingredients. Stuff your turkey then immediately stick in the oven. The warm stuffing and imme-

diate roasting will keep your stuffing "out of the danger zone", as Epi likes to say.

Then, when you think your turkey is about ready to come out of the oven, perfectly moist and tender, take the temperature of the stuffing. Insert the thermometer into the very center of the cavity. You need the stuffing to read at 165°, the temperature at which salmonella can no longer survive. However, if your turkey is done but your stuffing isn't, simply spoon the stuffing out of the bird and into a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave the stuffing until it reaches 165°, while your turkey rests before carving.³

If you're cooking your stuffing in a casserole dish, add a bit of extra stock to begin with, to replace the juices that would flow from the bird. You might want to baste the stuffing with more stock as the cooking goes along, depending on how moist you like your stuffing. Just make sure you don't do this while the turkey is in the oven--this humid environment created by the basting will prevent crispy skin.

How Much?

How heavy a turkey do you need to buy? If you're roasting a whole turkey (most likely), figure one pound per person. If you're roasting a bone-in turkey breast, figure 3/4 pound per person. If you're roasting a boneless turkey breast, figure 1/2 pound per person.²

Roast Breast-Side Down

Perhaps we've always roasted a turkey breast-side up for looks, but doing this can dry out your white meat. Roast your turkey breast-side down for a moister bird, as the juices flow from the dark meat into the white meat and keeps the breast from the

direct heat.⁴ Use a roasting pan and a roasting rack and roast the turkey this way until the last half hour to hour. Flip the bird so the breast-side is up, allowing the skin to brown. Brush some canola oil on the breast at this point to encourage this browning.

Brining, Basting, Butter Rubs, and Injecting

Brining

Brining means soaking your turkey in a salt solution, creating a moist and flavorful bird. It also means balancing a huge bucket in your fridge in which to dunk your turkey, which is about twice the size of a newborn human. If you buy a kosher turkey, do not brine, as it already has a high salt content. This, however, means that a kosher bird is essentially already brined for you and results in a highly flavorful bird without the threat of flooding your kitchen floor with saltwater. The point? Get a kosher turkey if you can. If you can't, or don't want to, try getting a self-basting bird, which has the same effect. No go? Brine, baby. Brining really will make quite a difference, and it's pretty simple.

- To brine:
 - Mix 1/2 cup table salt for every 1 gallon water. This is the ratio you're working with, though you'll need more than one gallon of water. Do not use another type of salt here, guys. If you read another recipe that sounds rad, follow it exactly. Different types of salt (sea salt, kosher salt, table salt) have different levels of saltiness, and you can end up with an unintended result if you stray from the recipe.⁵
 - Dissolve the salt in the water, put your brining bag in the 5-gallon bucket, put the turkey in

the bag, and pour in your brine. Make sure to submerge the turkey completely. You don't want any naked part of the turkey sticking out of the brine. Cover with a lid and refrigerate for about 12 hours.

- If you're using just a bucket and no bag, pour enough brine in to cover the bird completely. If it floats up, cover with a plate and some cans to weight that sucker down. Cover the bucket with a lid and refrigerate for about 12 hours.

- Take the turkey out and rinse under cold water. Pat dry with paper towels, making sure to dry the inside of the cavity, too.

- Got enough salt in your brine? If your brine is salty enough, a raw egg will float in it.⁶ What else floats in water? Churches and very small rocks.

- Try brining your turkey in a large plastic brining bag--this will prevent the flooding of the kitchen floor as previously feared. You place the bag in the bucket, and in goes the turkey, followed by the brine. Lid on and into the fridge.

- If you don't have room in the fridge, brine in a cooler.

Want to know more about brining? Try the Serious Eats Food Lab for the science and a comparison, the basic Cook's Illustrated recipe we use, or try a fancier recipe at Good Eats by Alton Brown.

Basting

Basting is best done before the bird ever hits the oven. Basting during the roasting process creates a humid environment, which prevents the skin from crisping. If you've brined the turkey or bought a kosher or self-brining bird, you'll have a moist, flavorful roast to begin with. But try this: rub your entire tur-

key with softened butter everywhere, including under the wings and thighs. You can make a compound butter, mixing in fresh herbs--try thyme, sage, rosemary--or garlic, lemon, even white wine or maple syrup. As the butter melts, it will essentially baste the bird without risking that crispy skin.

Try rubbing the butter underneath the skin, directly on the meat, too, which promotes a juicier, more delicious bird than you could previously imagine, especially helping the white meat. You might have to break a thin membrane that connects the skin to the bird to get your hands underneath the skin, but once you're done, just press the skin back on and move along. Check out this Epicurious guide for more information on butter rubs.

Injecting

I personally have never injected a turkey, which is surprising, considering how much I love bringing third grade science gear into the kitchen (lab goggles a must-have for chopping onions). With the brining, roasting breast-down, and the butter rub, my turkey is to-die-for, but if you pick up a turkey that's not self-basting or kosher, try a flavor injection. Melt some butter and use a turkey injector to inject it straight into the breast and thigh meat.⁷ What could be bad about that?

Get a Meat Thermometer

Your turkey came with a built-in pop-up thermometer you say? You also enjoy eating way-overcooked meat you say?

I don't blame the turkey companies for designing their thermometers to pop out once the bird is already overcooked--better safe than sorry, right? However, we don't have to stick to this to know when the turkey's ready: invest in a meat thermome-

ter. Stick the thermometer into the fleshy part of the thigh, close to but not touching the bone. To be on the safe side, also take the temperature under the wing, especially since we're roasting breast-side down. The thermometer should read 165°. Let rest for 20 minutes before carving, during which time the temperature will rise.

A meat thermometer is safer than the juices-run-clear test--you know, you pierce the turkey with a knife, and if the juices are pink, it's not done yet. If they were clear, it's ready! However, pinkness can disappear before the turkey reaches a safe temperature, and alternately, some turkeys will still be pink, even after the meat reaches a safe temperature. Get a meat thermometer and stop the guesswork. Bored by this? Get an iGrill--a meat thermometer that sends temperature alerts to your iPhone or Android. Aren't you just a techy badass?

Some people like to take their turkey out once it reaches 150°, so it only rises to 165° while it rests. This results in a juicier turkey, but can risk harboring salmonella, if it doesn't reach the magic temperature--165°. It's safer to do this with an organic or heritage turkey.

Why not play it safe on the wild side? Take your bird out around 155° and let it rise to 170°.8

However, if you're going to say I told you to do anything, go with a first read at 165°. That's the safest bet.

Tie Your Turkey

Tying your turkey promotes even cooking and better presentation, and you don't have to do a formal truss. Simply use kitchen twine to loosely tie the legs together, and tuck the wings under the body.

Need help? Let my dear friend Alton Brown help you.

Hey... Don't Bake the Bag

Of course you know there's a little bag stuffed in the cavity of the turkey filled with giblets and the neck. But have you ever roasted a whole bird having forgotten this neat little gift from Butterball? Um, I have.

Don't forget to remove the bag of giblets before seasoning the cavity or stuffing. If you didn't make stock ahead of the big day, now's a great time to do so. I'll include this recipe, as well as a make-ahead stock, on the menu and schedule.

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The Recipes



Make-Ahead Rustic Apple and Dried Cherry Galette with Crème Fraîche and Caramel Sauce

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 4 tablespoons (about) ice water filling
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 pounds tart green apples (such as Granny Smith; about 5), peeled, cored, each cut into 8 wedges
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 1/3 cup dried tart cherries (about 2 ounces)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup Crème Fraîche or sour cream
- Equipment: [9-inch-diameter tart pan with removable bottom](#), or small baking sheet.

Caramel Sauce:

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 cup whipping cream

Directions

On Saturday:

1. Soak dried cherries in water or brandy to plump, so as not to burn them while baking.
2. For crust: Mix flour and salt in processor. Add butter and cut in using on/off turns until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add 3 tablespoons ice water and process until moist clumps form, adding more water by teaspoonfuls if dough is dry. Gather dough into ball; flatten into disk. Wrap in plastic and chill 30 minutes. (Can even be made 2 days ahead. Soften slightly at room temperature before rolling out.)
3. For filling: Melt butter in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add apples to skillet; sprinkle 3 tablespoons sugar over. Sauté until apples are golden and begin to soften, about 8 minutes (but it takes me longer than this, for some reason). Add dried soaked cherries and cinnamon and stir 30 seconds. Remove from heat and cool completely.
4. Grease a 9-inch-diameter tart pan bottom and cut out a 9-inch-diameter circular piece of parchment. Place on 9-inch-diameter tart pan bottom. Grease parchment. If you don't have a tart pan with removable bottom, clear space in your freezer and you can use a regular small baking sheet. Just cut out a piece of parchment to fit; otherwise do exactly the same. The reason for the parchment is to free up your baking sheet or tart pan after you've frozen the galette. If you can live without the sheet or tart pan until you've eaten the pie, just grease the bottom of the tart pan or baking sheet and move on to the next step.
5. Roll out dough on floured surface to 12-inch round. Center dough on this parchment-lined tart pan bottom. Arrange apple mixture atop dough,

leaving 3-inch border. Fold edge of dough over apple mixture, pinching to seal any cracks in dough. Sprinkle remaining 1 tablespoon sugar over apple mixture and dough edge.

6. Cover with a large plastic bag (Remember those brining bags? They work fantastically here) and seal air out. Freeze for several hours or until very frozen and stiff.

7. If you are removing the pan or sheet at this point, take the frozen galette out of the freezer. Set the pan in a slightly larger pan of warm water, to thaw the underside a little, enough to free it from the pan. Once the galette has been released, peel off the parchment and discard. Place the galette (without the pan or sheet) back into the plastic bag and place back in the freezer.¹¹

Two Days Before, on Tuesday:

8. Make the caramel sauce: Stir sugar and 1/2 cup water in heavy large saucepan over medium-low heat until sugar dissolves.

9. Increase heat; boil without stirring until syrup turns deep amber, occasionally brushing down sides of pan with pastry brush dipped into water and swirling pan, about 12 minutes.

10. Remove from heat. Whisk in butter. Gradually add cream (mixture will bubble vigorously). Stir over low heat until smooth.

11. Let cool. Place in an airtight container and refrigerate.

The Day Before:

12. Remove galette from the freezer and place in the refrigerator to thaw overnight.

The Day Of:

13. Remove caramel sauce from refrigerator.

14. Preheat oven to 350 degrees fahrenheit. Bake galette 15 minutes.

15. Increase oven temperature to 375°F. Continue to bake galette until crust is light golden around edges and apples are tender, about 35 minutes longer. Using tart pan bottom as aid, transfer galette to rack; cool 15 minutes.

16. In the meantime, rewarm caramel sauce over low heat for about fifteen minutes. Serve the galette warm with crème fraîche and caramel sauce.

Pumpkin Pie with Make-Ahead Crust

Crust

Note: This makes two crusts, but since they're frozen, just save one for later use, or make two pumpkin pies. Problem solved. Adapted from two recipes.¹²

Crust Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, (spooned and leveled)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 16 tablespoons cold (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup ice water

Directions

1. In a food processor, combine flour, salt, and sugar; pulse to combine. Add butter; pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal, with just a few pea-size pieces of butter remaining.

2. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup ice water. Pulse until dough is crumbly but holds together when squeezed with fingers (if necessary, add up to 1/4 cup more water, 1 tablespoon at a time). To help ensure a flaky crust, do not overprocess.

3. Transfer half of dough (still crumbly) onto a piece of plastic wrap. Form dough into a disk 3/4 inch thick; wrap tightly in plastic. Should make two disks. Freeze.

Pie and Filling

Note: Substitute 1-3/4 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice instead of cinnamon, ginger, and cloves; the taste will be slightly different. Try to bake the day you will serve the pie. Cooking in advance can make the crust soggy. If you have to bake a day before serving, pop the pie in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes and it should bring the crust back to life! Do not overcook; overcooking leads to pie cracking in the middle.

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon (See note)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger (See note)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves (See note)
- 2 large eggs
- 1 (15 ounce) can Libby's 100% pumpkin puree
- 1 (12 ounce) can Carnation Evaporated Milk
- 1 unbaked 9-inch deep dish pie pastry
- whipping cream--about a pint

Directions

Night before Thanksgiving:

1. Take one pie crust from the freezer and place in the freezer to thaw overnight.

Morning of Thanksgiving:

2. In the morning, assemble your pie. Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.
3. Mix sugar, salt, cinnamon, ginger, and cloves in small bowl.
4. Beat eggs in large bowl.
5. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture.
6. Gradually stir in evaporated milk.
7. Pour mixture into pie shell.
8. Bake at 425 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 minutes.
9. Reduce temperature to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
10. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean.
11. Cool on wire rack for 2 hours. In the meantime, whip your whipping cream--place a metal bowl in the freezer for a few minutes, then pour in whipping cream, and beat with electric beaters until soft peaks form. Refrigerate until serving.
12. Serve immediately.
13. Top with real whipped cream.

Make-Ahead Turkey Stock

Note: This stock should be made ahead (in this case) and frozen up to 6 months or refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 days. Reheat in saucepan over low heat before using for stuffing and turkey. You'll need 4 cups of stock for the gravy and up to 2 cups for the stuffing, depending on how moist you want it. This recipe makes 10 cups, so you'll have some leftover. If you're freezing after making this, freeze 6 cups in one bag and 4 in another. If you're refrigerating it after making it (ie., making it on Tuesday or Wednesday), then freeze the remainder after you've used what you need.

Ingredients

- 3 pounds turkey wings (about 3 large wings)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped (about 2 cups)
- 1 medium carrot, chopped (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 medium stalk celery with leaves, chopped (about 1/2 cup)
- 6 sprigs fresh parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme, crumbled
- 1/4 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 1 dried bay leaf

Directions

1. Position rack in top third of oven and preheat to 450°F.

2. Using heavy cleaver, chop wings into 2-inch pieces. (See Test-Kitchen Tips, below.) Spread wings in roasting pan and roast, turning with tongs after 20 minutes, until deeply browned, about 45 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, in 6-quart stock pot over moderate heat, heat oil until hot but not smoking. Add onion, carrot, and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Add wings and any pan juices and reduce heat to low.

4. Straddle roasting pan across 2 burners on high heat and cook until browned bits are sizzling, about 1 minute. Add 2 cups cold water and bring to boil, scraping up browned bits with flat wooden spatula or spoon. Pour liquid into pot and add enough cold water to cover ingredients by 1 inch, about 14 cups.

5. Raise heat to high and bring to boil, skimming foam from surface. Add parsley, thyme, peppercorns, and bay leaf. Reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, 3 hours, adding water as needed to keep wings covered.

6. Pour stock through fine-mesh sieve into large bowl, discarding solids. If using immediately, let stand until yellow fat rises to surface, 1 to 2 minutes, then skim off and discard fat. If not using immediately, place bowl in larger bowl of iced water. Let stand, changing ice water as it warms, until stock is tepid, at least 30 minutes. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, then scrape off and discard fat.

Test-Kitchen Tips:

• Turkey wings, with a good combination of skin, meat, and bones, make great stock. The wings should be chopped up before adding to the pot—not only will they fit better than whole ones, but

they'll release more gelatin and collagen to give the stock richness. If you don't have a heavy cleaver for the job, ask the butcher to do this for you, or chop the wings as best as you can just between the natural separations at the wing joints. Don't try to hack at the thick turkey bones with a knife, as you are likely to chip the blade.

- If a large amount of hot stock is placed in a refrigerator (especially a full one where the air circulation has been curtailed by lots of holiday groceries), the steam given off by the stock could raise the fridge temperature to an unsafe level. On the other hand, you don't want to let the stock cool naturally on the counter because bacteria could breed during this slow process. The solution is to cool the stock quickly before refrigerating it by placing the bowl in an iced water bath, changing the water as needed until the stock is lukewarm.

Mom's Amazing Potato Rolls

Note: If this is your first Thanksgiving, I'd honestly recommend skipping making rolls from scratch; you're taking on enough! If you want to, feel free, by all means. But, you can easily just pick up a few tins of Sister Schubert rolls, which everyone loves always. These particular potato rolls, though, if you're up for it, are absolutely amazing. The recipe was in one of my mom's cookbooks from 1987, the year I was born, so that may be why they're so magical, but who can say for sure?

Ingredients

- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 2 packages dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1/4 cup shortening, melted
- 1/2 cup honey
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 teaspoons salt
- About 6 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Directions

In advance (up to 4 weeks):

1. Cook potatoes in boiling water to cover 15 minutes or until tender. Drain, reserving 1 cup water; set potatoes aside. Cool water to 105 - 115 degrees

fahrenheit. Stir yeast and sugar into water; let stand 5 minutes.

2. Mash enough potatoes to measure 1 cup; place in a large mixing bowl. Add butter, shortening, honey, eggs, salt, yeast mixture, and 2 1/2 cups flour. Beat at medium speed of an electric mixer 2 minutes. Gradually stir in enough remaining flour to make a soft dough.

3. Turn dough out onto a floured surface, and knead until smooth and elastic¹³ (about 8 to 10 minutes). Place in a well-greased bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85 degrees fahrenheit), free from drafts, 1 hour or until doubled in bulk.

4. Punch dough down, and divide into thirds. Shape each third into 15 balls. Place in three greased 9-inch round cake pans. Cover and let rise in a warm place, free from drafts, 40 to 50 minutes or until doubled in bulk.

5. Bake at 400 degrees fahrenheit for 20 to 25 minutes. Keep in mind you'll be reheating these, so don't let them get too brown. Cool baked rolls completely, wrap in heavy-duty aluminum foil (still in pan), and freeze.

Thanksgiving Day:

6. In the morning: Place rolls in the refrigerator to thaw completely.

7. Reheat (still wrapped in foil) at 350° for 12 to 15 minutes or until warm¹⁵.

Cranberry Sauce with Rosemary

Note: You can omit the rosemary, but why?

Ingredients

- 2 (12 ounce) bag fresh cranberries
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups orange juice or 2 cups water
- 3 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients in a med sauce pan.
2. Bring to boil; simmer until berries pop.
3. Chill until ready to serve.

Smoked Salmon Dip

Ingredients

- 12 ounces smoked salmon, roughly chopped
- 8 ounces cream cheese, warmed
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 bunch green onion, finely chopped

Directions

1. Warm cream cheese in the microwave until slightly runny.
2. Mix cream cheese with chopped smoked salmon until combined.
3. Stir in Tabasco, sour cream and mayonnaise until smoothly combined.
4. Stir in garlic and green onions.
5. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours (to let the flavors mingle and get to know each other).
6. Original recipe: Serve with crackers, tortilla chips, french bread, pretzel rods, celery sticks or your favorite dip-delivery implement! I say: Serve with crostini, toasts, or water crackers.

Mushroom-and-Bacon Dip

Note: This is best made two days in advance. Keep it in the fridge and let the flavors meld. You might even get to sneak an episode of *Breaking Amish* with all of this beautifully spread-out work...

Ingredients

- 3 dried porcini mushrooms
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 8 slices thick-cut bacon
- 1 large or 2 small leeks, white and pale-green parts only, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced crosswise, and washed well
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 pound cremini, white, or shiitake mushrooms, cleaned and chopped, plus sliced mushrooms for garnish (optional)
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh thyme
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups sour cream (16 ounces)
- 3 tablespoons sliced scallions (dark-green parts only), plus more for garnish

Directions

1. In a small bowl, soak porcini in the boiling water until soft, about 20 minutes. Working over the bowl, lift out porcini, and squeeze out liquid. Coarsely chop porcini. Pour liquid through a fine sieve into another bowl, and reserve.
2. Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium heat until crisp, about 5 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels. Pour off rendered bacon fat, reserving 1/4 cup. Wipe skillet clean. Coarsely chop bacon.
3. Return 3 tablespoons bacon fat to skillet. Add leek and garlic; cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until trans-lucent, about 2 minutes. Add fresh mushrooms and porcini, then the salt and pepper. Raise heat to high; cook, stirring, until mushrooms are tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Add thyme; cook 2 minutes more. Transfer to a plate; let cool.
4. With an electric mixer, whisk cream cheese in a medium bowl until smooth. Gradually add sour cream; whisk until smooth. By hand, stir in mushrooms, three-quarters of the bacon, scallions, and 2 tablespoons porcini liquid. If necessary, add more porcini liquid to reach desired consistency. Save the remaining bacon and scallions for serving.
5. Refrigerate until the day of.
6. The day of, remove from refrigerator about an hour before guests arrive.
7. Garnish dip with scallions and remaining bacon. Martha says serve with waffle chips, but I say try pretzel chips or water crackers, for sanity's sake.

Make-Ahead Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients

- 3 lbs potatoes (about 4 large)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter or 2 tablespoons margarine
- 2 (3 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 2/3 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup milk
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon butter or 1 tablespoon margarine, melted
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika

Directions

1. Place potatoes in a saucepan; add water to cover and 1/2 teaspoon salt.
2. Bring to a boil; cover, reduce heat to medium and simmer for 25 minutes or until potatoes are tender.
3. Drain.
4. Peel potatoes; place in a large mixing bowl, and mash with a potato masher.
5. Add 2 tablespoons butter, cream cheese, sour cream, milk and 3/4 teaspoon salt.
6. Mix until all ingredients are blended.

7. Spoon mixture into a lightly greased 12X8X2-inch baking dish.

8. Brush top of mixture with melted butter; sprinkle with paprika.

9. Cover and refrigerate.

10. The day of, let stand at room temperature for 1 hour before baking.

11. Bake at 350F, uncovered for 30 minutes or until hot.

Sweet Potatoes with Blue Cheese and Pecans

Note: If you, like me, can't stand the taste of standard blue cheese, try Roquefort or Gorgonzola. How luxe, right? If you can't do blue at all, feta is a good option. Add a drizzle of honey on top and you're in business. Adapted from Epicurious.

Ingredients

- 4 pounds sweet potatoes (about 8)
- 1 cup (two 8-ounce packages) cream cheese, room temperature
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into 1" cubes, room temperature
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 cup mild blue cheese
- 1/2 cup store-bought candied pecans

Directions

1. On Tuesday: Preheat oven to 350°F. Roast sweet potatoes on a rimmed baking sheet until tender, about 1 hour. Let cool slightly.
2. Remove skins and transfer sweet potatoes to a large heavy saucepan over low heat. Add cream cheese and butter. Mash until well blended and creamy. Season with salt and pepper.
3. The day of: Take sweet potatoes out of the refrigerator and let stand for 1 hour before baking.

4. Bake for 30 - 40 minutes. Spoon into a warm serving dish and garnish with 1/3 to 1/2 cup blue cheese and pecans.

Actually Perfect Turkey and Gravy, the Best Parts of All "Perfect Turkey" Recipes

Note: I essentially doubled the butter rub that I use for a medium-size chicken. You may have too much, but that's OK. I won't judge if you just eat it with a spoon (unless you neglect to share with me, or at least Instagram it). Recipe adapted.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups table salt
- 3 gallons water
- 5 gallon plastic bucket
- Large plastic brining bag
- 1 stick unsalted butter, room temperature
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 6 tablespoons chopped thyme
- 1 12-pound thawed turkey
- 4 tablespoons canola oil
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 8 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 4 cups turkey stock^{2,5}

Directions

Brine:

1. The day before roasting, first thing in the morning, make your brine. Mix salt and water together until dissolved.

2. Place the brining bag in the bucket and put the bird in breast-side down. Pour the brine into the bag, making sure the entire bird is covered--no naked bits. Zip the bag up, cover, and put in the fridge. If you don't have space in your fridge, you can use a cooler.

3. Refrigerate for 12 hours. Dissolve the salt in the water, pour into a 5-gallon bucket, and submerge the turkey completely. You don't want any naked part of the turkey sticking out of the brine. Cover and refrigerate for about 12 hours. Take the turkey out and rinse under cold water. Pat dry with paper towels, making sure to dry the inside of the cavity, too.

Air-Dry:

4. Return to the refrigerator in a roasting pan and let air-dry overnight.³

Roast:

5. The day of roasting, preheat your oven to 350 degrees fahrenheit.

6. Combine butter, garlic, and thyme in a bowl until soft.

7. Carefully, using your fingers, peel the skin away from the turkey breast (you may have to break a membrane; that's OK) and rub the butter mixture under the skin.

8. Truss the turkey. Need help? Alton Brown always comes to the rescue.

9. Rub the outside of the skin with the canola oil and season pepper. I know, I know; it's so hard not to sprinkle salt all over the skin at this point! But please, don't. Your bird is already plenty salty from the brine!

10. Roast turkey breast down³ for 2 hours. After 2 hours, flip the turkey very carefully so that the breast side is up and return to the oven for 30 minutes to finish cooking and browning the skin on the breast. Remove the turkey to a cutting board and cover with foil; let it rest for 20 minutes. Slice the turkey and serve hot.⁴

Gravy:

11. While the turkey is resting, Put the roasting pan on a burner over low heat, sprinkle in the flour, and stir to incorporate any liquid in the pan.

12. Gradually add the turkey stock, stirring constantly. Transfer the gravy into a small pot, and simmer over low heat until it has the preferred consistency.

13. Add additional pepper to taste and strain the gravy through a fine mesh sieve before serving.

Grandma's Grandma's Grandma's Sausage Stuffing

Note: This is my favorite stuffing, ever. A very important recipe note.

Ingredients

- 10 cups dry seasoned stuffing (two 16 ounce bag of Pepperidge Farms seasoned stuffing. The big bag. Pretty sure they didn't have that stuff in the 1400s or whatever, guess we just updated a bit.)
- 1 pound sausage, just the regular roll. I use sage sausage, because I obviously love sage, but you can use regular. Or spicy.. if you want to go wild.
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon parsley, fresh or dried, whatever
- 1 egg, beaten
- About 2 cups turkey broth, depending on how moist you like the stuffing

Directions

1. The night before, chop onion and celery.
2. The day of, cook sausage over medium heat until brown and crumbled.
3. Add in onions and celery and cook til soft.
4. Combine stuffing mix, sausage, onion, and celery.

5. Pour the beaten egg over that and add turkey broth until the right texture for your preference. Some like it moister than others; it's a crazy world we live in.

6. Cook at 350° for about forty minutes.

Thanksgiving Day Turkey Stock

Note: This stock only makes 3 cups, but it uses the neck and giblets from the turkey you're roasting. You need 6 cups for the gravy and stuffing in this particular menu. I'd recommend combining this 3 cups with 3 cups of plain chicken broth to make enough broth for the stuffing and gravy. If you're using a different stuffing or gravy recipe, make a note of how much stock you'll need total, and make sure to get enough to meet your needs.

Ingredients

- Neck and giblets (excluding liver) from turkey , cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 celery rib, coarsely chopped
- 1 carrot, coarsely chopped
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, smashed
- 2 fresh thyme sprigs
- 4 whole black peppercorns
- 5 cups water
- 3 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth (24 fl oz)

Directions

Pat neck and giblets dry. Heat oil in a 6-quart heavy pot over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then brown neck and giblets, turning occasionally, 8 to 10 minutes. Add celery, carrot, onion,

garlic, thyme, and peppercorns and sauté, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are browned, 7 to 9 minutes. Add water and broth and bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, until liquid is reduced to about 3 cups, 45 to 60 minutes.

Pour stock through a fine-mesh sieve into a large bowl, discarding solids. If using stock right away, skim off and discard any fat.

Light Antipasto Platter

To assemble a light antipasto platter, I'd include a wheel of brie, marinated mozzarella balls, a mild blue cheese (I prefer Gorgonzola or Roquefort, but most people can deal with a traditional blue, like Stilton), an aged cheddar, and manchego. Serve with peeled and sliced pear and slices of honeycrisp apple or Asian pears (neither brown easily). If you want, add a bunch of grapes, because, while they're not a quite traditional fall and winter fruit, they're a traditional antipasto platter guest. Add a few slices of prosciutto and salami. Serve with artisan jams--or canned jams you made in the summer, fig is a great addition--and a drizzle of honey over the slices of fruit and brie.

Green Bean Casserole

Note: You're allowed to make this, because of all of the other homemade, truly wonderful dishes you've prepared. Oh, and I would leave your Thanksgiving if this weren't on the table. I'm just sayin'.

Ingredients

- 2 (10 3/4 oz.) cans Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 4 cans of cut green beans, drained, or 4 9 oz. packages of frozen cut green beans, thawed
- 1 1/3 cups French's Original French Fried Onions

Directions

1. Mix soup, milk and pepper in a 3-qt. baking or casserole dish, or oven-safe serving dish. Stir in beans and 1 1/3 cup French Fried Onions.
2. Bake at 350°F for 30 min. or until hot.
3. Stir. Top with remaining 1 1/3 cup onions. Bake 5 min. until onions are golden