

Thanksgiving Blends Past and Present Traditions



Americans cherish memories of the family Thanksgiving table filled with wonderful food lovingly and painstakingly prepared over days and days. But times change, and with them, traditions. Today relatives may be 2000 miles away, and Mom's schedule may be as busy as Dad's, yet everyone still looks forward to the traditional feast of turkey, gravy, stuffing, vegetables and pie. Nowadays when daily schedules are so busy, the key to putting together a "best-ever" holiday feast is to have everyone help by making some dishes ahead.

Allow 1 to 1½ pounds of turkey for each person. Store the turkey in the freezer and then transfer it to a tray in the refrigerator before the feast for easy defrosting.

Gravy, an essential part of the holiday feast, can be started in advance, as can Cranberry-Pear Sauce. Since it's traditional to prepare enough turkey for leftovers, make extra gravy and double the recipe for Cranberry-Pear Sauce too. The stock for the gravy can be prepared the day before the feast. To make the stock, cover the turkey giblets and neck with plenty of water, then add onion, celery, other seasonings and a small bay leaf. Simmer until the giblets are tender, then strain and refrigerate the stock and chop and refrigerate the giblets.

On Thanksgiving, move the roast turkey from the pan to platter. For easier carving let it stand 15 to 20 minutes. During this time begin making the gravy by spooning excess fat from the juices in the roasting pan; then pour the turkey stock into the roasting pan. Stir the liquid over medium heat, taking care to loosen brown bits from the pan. Stir corn starch together with a little cold liquid, add to the hot stock and stir until the gravy has thickened. The rule of thumb is to use a tablespoonful of starch for every cup of liquid. If the gravy recipe in your family calls for flour, use half as much corn starch in its place. The corn starch lets the flavor of the pan juices and giblets come through without any pasty aftertaste, and the gravy has an attractive translucent appearance.

TURKEY THAWING TIPS

The preferred way to thaw a turkey is in its original wrapper on a tray in the refrigerator. Another acceptable quick method is to place the bird in the unopened wrapper in cool water. Change the water frequently. Do not thaw a turkey at room temperature.

APPROXIMATE THAWING TIME

Purchased Weight	In Refrigerator	In Cool Water
4 to 8 pounds	1-1/2 to 2 days	4 to 5 hours
8 to 12 pounds	2 days	5 to 6 hours
12 to 16 pounds	2 to 3 days	6 to 9 hours
16 to 24 pounds	3 to 4 days	9 to 12 hours

Turkey Gravy

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| Turkey giblets and neck | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 10 cups water | 3 chicken-flavored bouillon cubes |
| 3 onions, peeled, quartered | 2 bay leaves |
| 3 ribs celery, cut into sticks | 1/3 cup turkey pan drippings |
| 2 carrots, peeled, cut into sticks | 1/2 cup corn starch |

In large saucepot place turkey giblets and neck, water, onion, celery, carrots, salt, bouillon cubes and bay leaves. Bring to boil; reduce heat and simmer 1-1/2 hours or until liquid is reduced by 1/2. Strain broth; reserve broth and giblets. Pour roasting pan drippings into large measuring cup. Let stand several minutes until fat drippings separate from turkey juices. Return 1/3 cup fat drippings to pan; discard remaining fat drippings. Add reserved broth to turkey juices to equal 5 cups. Sprinkle corn starch into drippings. Stir and cook over medium heat just until smooth; remove from heat. Gradually stir in broth until smooth. Return to heat. Stirring constantly, bring to boil over medium heat, stirring up brown bits from bottom of roasting pan and boil 1 minute. If desired, chop giblets and add to gravy. Makes 5 cups.

Alternate Method: Follow recipe for Turkey Gravy. Return 1/3 cup fat drippings and 4-1/2 cups turkey juices and broth to roasting pan. Stir together corn starch and remaining 1/2 cup turkey broth until smooth; add to roasting pan. Stirring constantly, bring to boil over medium heat, stirring up brown bits from bottom of pan and boil 1 minute. If desired, chop giblets and add to gravy. Makes 5 cups.



Vegetable Casserole

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| 1/4 cup corn oil margarine | 2 pounds potatoes, peeled, cubed, cooked (4 cups) |
| 1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced (2 cups) | 3 cups sliced cooked carrots |
| 1 cup coarsely chopped onion | 1/2 pound green beans, cut into 1-inch pieces, cooked (2 cups) |
| 1/4 cup corn starch | 1 cup soft bread crumbs |
| 1 teaspoon salt | 2 tablespoons corn oil margarine, melted |
| 1/8 teaspoon pepper | 3 cups milk |
| 3 cups milk | 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce |
| 1/2 pound Cheddar cheese, shredded | 1/2 pound Cheddar cheese, shredded |

In 5-quart dutch oven or saucepot melt 1/4 cup margarine over medium heat. Add mushrooms and onion; cook, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes or until tender. In medium bowl stir together corn starch, salt and pepper. Gradually stir in milk until smooth. Stir into mushroom mixture. Add Worcestershire sauce. Stirring constantly, bring to boil over medium heat and boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir in cheese until melted. Add potatoes, carrots and green beans; toss to coat well. Pour into 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish, or in 3-quart casserole. In small bowl stir together bread crumbs, margarine and parsley. Sprinkle over vegetable mixture. Bake in 325°F oven about 40 minutes or until heated through. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

Cranberry-Pear Sauce

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| 2 cups cranberries | 2 cups diced peeled pears |
| 1 cup sugar | 1 cup orange juice |
| 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon | 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger |
| 2 tablespoons corn starch | 1/4 cup water |
| 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts (optional) | |

In 3-quart saucepan stir together cranberries, pears, sugar, orange juice, cinnamon and ginger. Bring to boil over medium heat; reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes or until cranberry skins pop. Stir together corn starch and water until smooth. Stir into cranberry mixture. Stirring constantly, bring to boil over medium heat and boil 1 minute. Cover; refrigerate. If desired, just before serving, stir in walnuts. Makes 3 to 4 cups.

Note: Recipe may be doubled, and a portion used to make Cranberry Crunch Dessert.

Cranberry Crunch Dessert

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| 1 cup quick oats | 1/3 cup corn oil margarine |
| 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar | 1-1/2 cups Cranberry-Pear Sauce |
| 1/2 cup unsifted flour | |

Grease 8 x 8 x 2-inch baking pan. In medium bowl stir together oats, sugar and flour. With pastry blender or two knives cut in margarine until coarse crumbs form. Place 1-1/2 cups of the oat mixture evenly in bottom of prepared pan. Spread with Cranberry-Pear Sauce. Top with remaining oat mixture. Bake in 350°F oven 45 minutes or until lightly browned and bubbly. If desired, serve warm with vanilla ice cream. Makes 6 to 9 servings.

Florentine Turkey Noodle Casserole

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| 1/4 cup corn oil margarine | 3 cups 1/4-inch noodles, cooked, drained, divided |
| 1/2 cup chopped onion | 1 package (10 oz.) frozen chopped spinach, cooked, drained |
| 1/4 cup corn starch | 2 cups cubed roast turkey |
| 2 cups milk | 4 ounces Swiss cheese, shredded (2 cups), divided |
| 1 cup chicken bouillon | Paprika |
| 1 teaspoon salt | |
| 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg | |
| 1/4 teaspoon pepper | |

In 2 quart saucepan melt margarine over medium heat. Add onion; cook 2 to 3 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat. Stir in corn starch until blended. Gradually stir in milk until smooth. Stir in bouillon, salt, nutmeg and pepper. Stirring constantly, bring to boil over medium heat and boil 1 minute. In 11 x 7 x 2-inch baking dish pour 1 cup of the sauce to cover bottom. Layer 2-1/4 cups of the noodles, spinach, turkey and 1 cup of the cheese in baking dish. Top with remaining noodles. Pour sauce over noodles. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and paprika. Bake in 350°F oven 35 minutes or until heated through. Makes 6 servings.

