



pilot light

Greg Melikov

Forget about the eels, stuff a turkey instead

If Benjamin Franklin had had his way, we might be stuffing an eagle instead of a turkey for Thanksgiving.

Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national emblem. He was outvoted, but evidence of his influence can be seen on the stenciled walls of historic New England houses. The turkey doesn't look bad in his patriotic pose.

Franklin is credited with the first electric cooking experiment, performed on the banks of the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia in 1749. In a letter dated April 25 to Peter Collinson, he wrote:

"A turkey is to be killed for our dinner by the electrical shock and roasted by the electrical jack, before a fire, kindled by the electrified bottle. . . . If the Plymouth Colony's first Thanksgiving had been reported accurately from the beginning, we might be eating eel instead of turkey on the traditional holiday.

"THE PLYMOUTH people, who were mostly lower or lower middle class in English society, were not very good hunters. It's not likely they were able to get any turkeys for that first Thanksgiving," says Dr. Eldon Turner,

colonial history professor at the University of Florida. "Although plentiful, the turkey was not easy to hunt."

James Deetz, anthropology professor at the University of California, who spent 20 years at the first settlers' plantation at Plymouth, Mass., says: "In 20 years we excavated, we found only one turkey bone."

Turner and Deetz agree that the Pilgrims dined on eel, which were abundant in the creek near the settlement.

"And while pumpkin was grown," Deetz says, "it wasn't used for pie, but possibly soup."

Scratch cranberries, too. The Pil-

grims didn't have sugar to make cranberry sauce, Deetz says. They did enjoy wild plums, plus duck, goose, venison and clams.

How in the heck would you stuff an eel?

PINEAPPLE YAMS
3 cans (1 lb. 1 oz.) yams
Brown sugar
2 tbsp. cinnamon
1/4 cup white sugar
1 lemon, thinly sliced
1 can (1 lb. 4 oz.) pineapple chunks
3 tbsp. butter, cut in bits

Place yams with some of their syrup

In 2-quart casserole. Sprinkle on brown sugar to taste. Combine cinnamon and white sugar and sprinkle on yams. Top with lemon and pineapple, pour on pineapple juice and bake uncovered in 350-degree oven 40 minutes. Serves 8.

BRAZIL NUT STUFFING
1/2 cup margarine
2 1/2 cups chopped Brazil nuts
2 1/2 cups finely chopped celery
1/2 cup chopped onion
6 cups cooked long-grain white rice
1 1/2 cups seedless raisins
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. black pepper
1/2 tsp. dried rosemary

1/2 tsp. poultry seasoning

In large skillet, melt margarine, add nuts, celery and onion and cook over low heat 5 minutes, stirring. In 8-quart bowl or pot, toss rice with remaining

ingredients and nut mixture until well combined. Stuff 20-pound turkey. Place rest of stuffing in small casserole, top with some turkey juices, cover with foil and bake in 350-degree oven 30 minutes.

Help yourself to some cheesy chili 'n' chips

"Help yourself." Most often we hear these inviting words while seated at a dinner table. The statement gives your company the go-ahead to enjoy a meal. Helping yourself also pertains to the

cook, especially when time is of the essence in getting the food prepared.

That's where Cheesy Chili 'N' Chips come in to lend a hand. This recipe can be prepared in 20 minutes.

CHEESY CHILI 'N' CHIPS
1 lb. ground beef
1 1/2-cup can tomatoes
1 6-oz. can tomato paste
1 tbsp. chili powder

1 tbsp. dehydrated minced onions
1/2 cup salt
1 1/2 cups (6 oz.) shredded sharp natural cheddar cheese
2 cups corn chips
Brown meat; drain. Stir in tomatoes, tomato paste and seasonings. Cover; simmer 10 minutes. Add 1 cup cheese; stir until melted. Arrange corn chips on platter. Spoon chili over chips; top with remaining cheese.

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