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Local chef offers holiday recipes

For many families Thanksgiving wouldn't be complete without the traditional turkey dinner. However, one local chef offers his alternative for those who yearn to try something different.

Michael Moylan is a chef at Detroit's Hotel St. Regis. Born and raised in Galway on the west coast of Ireland, Moylan is a European-trained chef who moved to the Detroit area in 1981. He has worked for several well-known area restaurants, and has been at the St. Regis since 1985. He is anxious to share these special holiday recipes with you, a reader of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

HERB ROAST LEG OF LAMB with Natural Gravy and Fresh Mint Sauce

1 leg of lamb, 5-6 lbs.
1 cup olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced

1 1/2 tsp. fresh rosemary (or 1/2 tsp. dried rosemary)
1/4 tsp. dried thyme
1/4 tsp. dried savory
1/4 tsp. herbed salt (see recipe below)

HERB SALT

2 tsp. garlic salt
4 tsp. onion salt
3 tsp. fresh basil (or 1 1/4 tsp. dried basil)
3 tsp. fresh marjoram (or 1 1/4 tsp. dried marjoram)
1 tsp. chopped parsley
1 tsp. dried chervil

To prepare marinade, combine olive oil, garlic, thyme, rosemary, savory, and herb salt in a blender and blend well.

To prepare leg of lamb, cut incisions into the fat layer using a very sharp knife. Do not cut into the

meat. Rub marinade into the leg of lamb and refrigerate 24 hours.

To roast, remove lamb from refrigerator and allow to stand until it reaches room temperature. Place lamb in an oven preheated to 350°F and roast for 1 1/4 hours for medium rare and 2 1/4 hours for well done. Baste frequently with pan juices as needed. When lamb is ready, remove from oven, allow to rest for 30 minutes before carving.

Remove fat from pan juices, correct seasoning and serve as jus roll (natural roast gravy) in a bowl on the side.

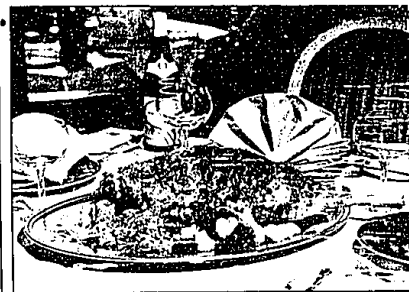
Fresh Mint Sauce
1/2 cup minced fresh mint
3 tbsp. dark sugar or brown sugar
1 cup white wine vinegar

To prepare mint, wash and thoroughly dry leaves, then mince as fine as coarsely ground pepper. Place mint in nonmetal bowl, add sugar and mix well. Pour vinegar over mint mixture and allow to stand for at least 3 hours at room temperature before serving. Make only the amount of sauce you plan to use because it loses the fresh mint flavor if stored. Makes approximately one cup.

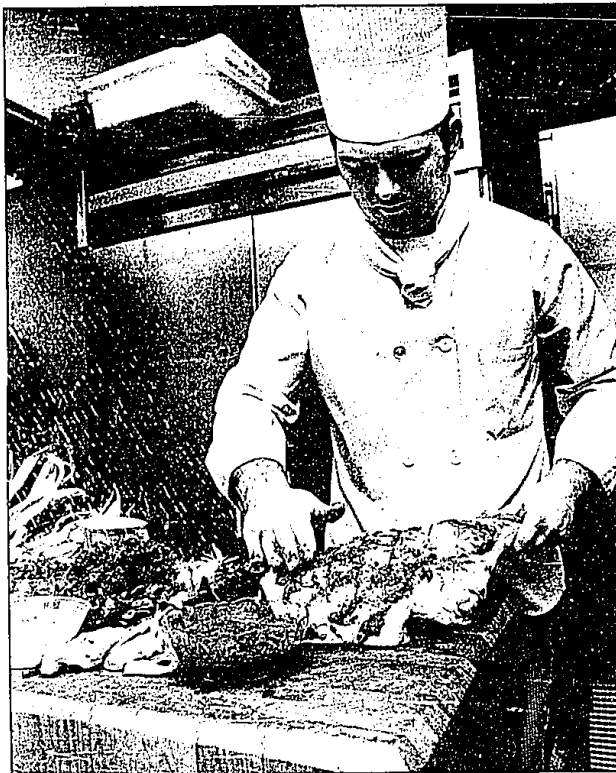
CORN BREAD STUFFING (with apples and chestnuts)

1 loaf cornbread (see recipe below)
8 oz. butter or margarine
1/2 lb. granny smith apples
4 oz. chopped shallots or spanish onion
1 tsp. sage
1 tsp. chopped parsley
1/2 lb. chopped cooked chestnuts*
3 cups milk or water
eggs
salt and pepper

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Herb Roast Leg of Lamb



Chef Michael Moylan prepares his special herb roast leg of lamb. The marinade is rubbed into the meat, which is then refrigerated for 24 hours before cooking. The result is a moist, tender and tasty main course.

'Turkey day trauma' and how to avoid it

A successful Thanksgiving dinner takes organization. If you plan carefully, you too can relax and enjoy the meal.

A few days before the holiday, begin defrosting the turkey in the refrigerator (large birds defrost in two to four days). Do not defrost the bird at room temperature.

If you haven't purchased your turkey yet, remember, the larger the turkey the less cost per serving. The smart shopper will buy a turkey big enough for several meals. A family of four can have five or six meals from a 12 1/2 pound turkey. A good rule of thumb to use in purchasing a turkey is one pound per person. This allows for generous servings and leftovers for additional meals.

Chores that can be done ahead of time to avoid the last minute rush include making a list for each day. Mark off the tasks as accomplished. Find the roaster and organize all the other cooking equipment you'll need. Make room in the refrigerator — during holiday times — no refrigerator never seems to be large enough. Polish the silver, order or make the



This is the premiere column by Lois Thiloloka, a home economist with the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service. The Birmingham Resident has worked for the Extension Service for the past 10 years, specializing in food and nutrition. She holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in home economics and has been involved extensively in adult education. She will write a food column twice monthly. Watch for her next column, "Gifts from the Kitchen."

table centerpiece, get the dishes ready and iron the tablecloth. If your carving knives need sharpening do it before the big day. Make or buy additional ice cubes and do your grocery shopping.

Chop the bread for dressing. If you're serving rolls, bake them and

freeze. If you're serving a cheese ball and crackers before dinner it's better if it sets in the refrigerator a couple days before serving.

The day before Thanksgiving mix the punch ingredients so you only have to add the sparkling water at the last minute, make the jello salad,

wash the lettuce and refrigerate in a plastic bag. Make the cranberry relish and cut up other relishes (carrot sticks and celery keep well when refrigerated in a jar filled with cold water). Make the pie crust, roll it out and put it in the pie pans and refrigerate or bake the pies and warm on Thanksgiving Day. Peel potatoes, white and sweet, and keep covered in cold water. Mix the dressing (if sausage is being used keep it separate from the bread and celery until oven time). Refrigerate, do not stuff the bird until it is ready to go into the oven.

Thanksgiving morning the challenge is to coordinate cooking times for the oven. Remember this number — 325. Roast your turkey at 325°F. This low temperature assures better flavor, appearance, less shrinkage and less loss of juices. For a turkey over 10 pounds allow about 25 minutes a pound for a stuffed bird, 20 minutes for unstuffed. Use a meat thermometer to make sure the stuffing temperature is 165°F, and the bird temperature registers 185°F. Let the turkey stand 20 to 30 minutes before carving.

If you are trying your turkey in your microwave this year, choose a small turkey, under 12 pounds. Cook breast side down on high power for four minutes per pound. Then switch to breast side up at medium power for eight minutes per pound. Check instruction for your particular microwave.

If you're baking your pies and other vegetable dishes at the same time as roasting the turkey, check oven temperatures.

While the turkey is resting the half hour before carving, cook the potatoes and whip the cream for the pies. At the last minute heat the rolls, mash the potatoes, make the gravy and carve the turkey.

Skilful carving of the turkey is an art. If you feel uneasy about carving, practice. Carving the turkey in the kitchen will keep the grease spatters off the tablecloth and you.

Put yourself on the back, you have just put together a tasty, wonderful Thanksgiving meal.

Unfortunately, you can't relax yet. Do not leave the turkey on the dinner

table all afternoon. The cooked bird should be refrigerated two hours after leaving the oven. Be sure to take the stuffing out of the bird and separate the meat from the bones. Refrigerate as soon as possible.

Leftover turkey can be kept in the refrigerator for three to four days. Stuffing and gravy should be used within one or two days. For longer storage, freeze. Place meal-sized portions of sliced or diced turkey in moisture — vapor proof package — to freeze and use later.

Change from Pilgrim to Oriental by making sweet and sour turkey or turkey chop suey with your leftovers. Turkey a la king, turkey pot pie, and turkey casseroles will add variety. Don't forget the bones to make a tasty soup.

The turkey and all the other leftovers have been put away, dishes are in the dishwasher, now take a look at the tablecloth. Check for gravy, coffee, grease, butter or jelly spots. These spots need to be treated as soon as possible so your tablecloth

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Tips for carving the holiday bird

On Thanksgiving Day many of us will labor in the kitchen preparing the traditional turkey dinner.

Hours are put into planning and cooking the feast, but usually little forethought is used on carving the big bird. What comes out of the oven as a culinary masterpiece is often spoiled with the carver's knife.

The Michigan Restaurant Association asked its chefs for the best advice on how to carve a turkey. Here are their suggestions:

- Carving the breast meat is much simpler if you remove the wishbone before cooking the turkey. The wishbone is located directly in front of the breast and is easily eliminated with a knife.

- Wait 20 minutes after taking the turkey out of the oven before carving. A slightly cooler turkey is less awkward to handle and slices easier.

- When you are ready to carve, place the turkey on the counter in

front of you, breast side up with the legs to your right, neck cavity to your left. Gently pull the leg away from the body and cut through the joint, removing the leg (thigh and drumstick).

- Place leg on service platter and cut through the joint between thigh and drumstick to separate.

- Slice drumstick meat by holding the drumstick upright and cutting down toward plate. Turn the drumstick and slice from all sides.

- Next hold the thigh firmly on the service plate with a fork and cut slices of meat parallel to the bone. Drumsticks and thighs from turkeys under 10 pounds are usually served without slicing.

- Now slice the white meat of the breast. Begin by making a deep horizontal cut into the breast just above the wing. Then, beginning at the front and starting inlin-

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Turkey techniques

Proper thawing helps keep family healthy

- 16-20 pounds — three to four days

- 20-24 pounds — four to five days

Large pieces of turkey will take one to two days to thaw.

Thawing in cold water

If the day before you plan to serve your turkey you remember that it's still sitting in the freezer, don't despair. Check the wrapping to make sure there are no tears, and simply place the bird in its unopened bag in the sink or in a large container and cover it with cold water. If the wrapping is torn, place the turkey in another plastic bag, close securely, and then place in water. You will need to change the water frequently to assure safe but effective thawing.

The National Turkey Federation recommends every 30 minutes as a rule of thumb. Following are suggested thawing times for a whole turkey:

- Eight to 12 pounds — one to two days

- 12-16 pounds — two to three days

- 12-16 pounds — six to nine hours

- 16-20 pounds — nine to 11 hours

- 20-24 pounds — 11-12 hours

Thawing in a microwave

A turkey can also be thawed in a microwave oven. Since microwaves vary in what they can accommodate, check the manufacturer's instruction for the size turkey that will fit in your oven, the minutes per pound, and the power level to use for thawing.

Again, remember that frozen, prestuffed turkeys should not be thawed before cooking. Frozen, unstuffed turkeys can also be cooked without being thawed.

If necessary, you can refreeze a partially thawed turkey as long as ice crystals are still visible in the cavity and the neck and giblets remain frozen. However, keep in mind that thawing and refreezing can af-

fect the juiciness and flavor of the turkey.

You may be wondering why thawing your turkey on the kitchen counter isn't recommended. The reason is that room temperatures fall within the danger zone of 60°F to 125°F that promotes active growth of bacteria. Left on a kitchen counter, a frozen turkey will thaw from the outside in. As its surface warms, bacteria multiply. In the time that elapses while the turkey is thawing, the surface bacteria could multiply to dangerous levels. You can't rely on cooking to destroy all bacteria. Some food poisoning organisms produce toxins that withstand heat.

Once your turkey has thawed, it requires little preparation before cooking. Remove the neck and giblets from the neck and/or body cavities. Wash the inside and outside of the turkey and the giblets in cold water and drain well. To prevent the spread of bacteria, wash your hands, utensils and sink after they have come in contact with the raw turkey.