

Thanksgiving's the time for some turkey talk

I'm hosting my first Thanksgiving dinner this year and want it to go well, so I've been doing some research.

Mainly, I wanted to know how big a turkey I should get, if it matters if the bird is fresh or frozen, and if there are any neat kitchen tools out there that would make the meal easier to prepare.

As for size, the folks at Butterball recommend buying one pound of turkey per person that, when cooked, will yield about 10 ounces per person. Christine Repetti, one of the owners of Repetti's Turkey Farm in Livonia, recommended the same thing and said that 20- to 22-pound fresh turkeys are her biggest seller.

Frozen turkeys need a lot of time to thaw out (24 hours for every four to five pounds). Fresh turkeys can be cooked right away, but they tend to cost more than frozen. Fresh turkeys tend to be very juicy, but frozen ones can be, too, depending on how they're processed and cooked.

If a fresh turkey is what you're after, they don't come any fresher than at Repetti's. Its fresh, dressed, organically fed turkeys are killed the day before customer pick-up, Repetti said. They come with cooking instructions and are so tender and juicy from their corn and wheat diet that they don't require basting, she added.

Repetti's also sells smoked turkeys and as a convenience for customers who want to serve both a turkey and a ham, it takes ham orders for the Dearborn Sausage Co.

All of the turkeys are raised on the Repetti's 50-year-old farm. The farm and turkey store are located at 34700 Five Mile Road in Livonia. The store is only open Oct. 1 through Dec. 23, and it sells about 4,800 turkeys during that time, Repetti said.

Its fresh hen turkeys are \$2.29 a pound and are generally 15 to 23 pounds. Tom turkeys are \$2.10 a pound and are 28 to 39 pounds. The hens and Toms taste the same; the only difference is in their size, and all of the turkeys are four to six months old when sold, Repetti said.

Repetti's smoked turkeys come in two sizes, small and large, and cost \$3.69 a pound. Ham orders are \$3.59 a pound.

Because Repetti's has a limited turkey supply, it's best to order as early as possible, to make sure you get the size you want. For more information, call (734) 464-6546.

If you're in the market for a frozen turkey, then you may have noticed the ad that Farmer Jack has been running in its circulars. It says, "Farmer Jack will not be undersold on Grade A, 10-22 lb. frozen turkeys." If you see an ad for a lower price, Grade A turkey somewhere else, bring in the ad and Farmer Jack will match it.

However, Farmer Jack's ad goes on to say that its price-matching offer "excludes Butterball, HoneyBuckle, Kosher or fresh turkeys and other supermarkets' multi-week shopping programs."

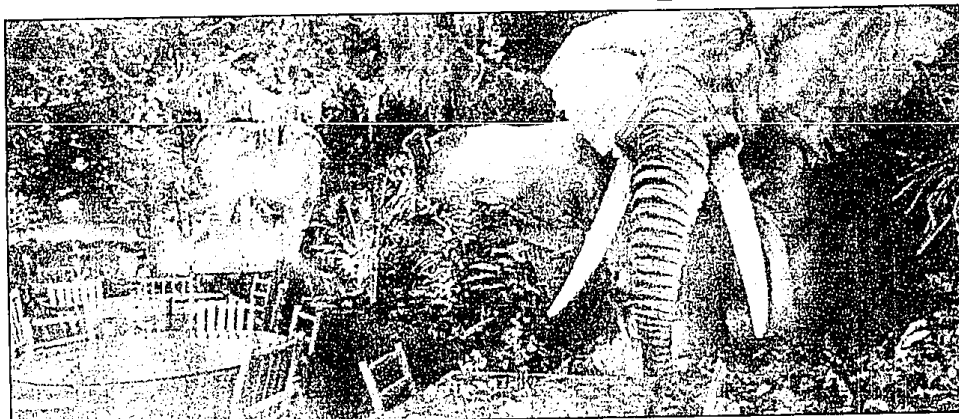
So what does that leave? Jennie-O brand, Grade A, frozen turkey, which was on sale at Farmer Jack for 49 cents a pound when I checked Nov. 2. (Butterball turkeys were \$1.39 a pound and HoneyBuckle White ones were \$1.29 a pound there.)

As for nifty kitchen gadgets, the one I want the most is a potato ricer, to make lump-free mashed potatoes without peeling. Williams-Sonoma carries two, a plastic one for \$12 and a stainless steel version for \$20. You can boil or roast potatoes in their skins, cut the potato in half, stick it cut side down in the ricer, and then squish out the potato, leaving the skin behind.

I also like the non-stick turkey lifter/rack, \$16, and the digital meat thermometer, timer, \$30, that Williams-Sonoma sells (the thermometer probe is connected by a long wire to a magnetic display unit that sticks to the outside of the oven, and you can set the alarm to go off when the meat reaches a certain temperature or when a certain amount of time has passed). Williams-Sonoma is located at Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi, Laurel Park Place in Livonia and the Somerset Collection in Troy.

Great Lakes Crossing bridges the retail gap

Auburn Hills value shopping mall is an entertainment destination



Jungle Juice: Rainforest Cafe is a tropical-themed restaurant and gift village filled with live and animated animals, rain storms, a talking tree and aquariums. Safari guides serve up the family fare. (Top photo) The Great Lakes food court looks like an outdoor pavilion complete with roadside stands, fruit crate tables and picnic-themed play equipment.

BY LINDA BACHRACK
STAFF WRITER

The concept is not entirely new, but the scope is enormous and the idea is unique to Michigan. Minneapolis has its Mall of America, a mega shopping/entertainment destination, and now Auburn Hills has Great Lakes Crossing, a retail tourist attraction with a twist — value shopping. Yes, it's a giant outlet mall complete with themed restaurants, an indoor high-tech playground and a 25-screen theater.

When Great Lakes Crossing opens its doors on Nov. 12, Michigan shoppers will be treated to a 1.4 million-square-foot mall featuring 11 anchor stores and 200 specialty retailers and restaurants, plus a 1,000-seat themed food court. If you can't imagine covering the entire center in one day, the mall offers a Grand Opening Getaway (Nov. 12-Dec. 31) that includes an overnight hotel stay and breakfast, complimentary shuttle and dinner at one of Great Lakes Crossing's restaurants (\$49-\$132 per person). Just think — 24 hours of non-stop shopping.

If you plan to tackle the gigantic complex on opening day, you'll be in for lots of celebrations, including prize giveaways, strolling characters, live radio broadcasts and family entertainment. The U-M Marching Band and cheerleaders will lead shoppers in a pep rally, which should help get you revved up for your day-long power walk through the enclosed, one-level center. You'll need a map, though the mall's simple one-mile "race-track" design with short-cut paths helps organize your precision shopping. Stores are clustered in six individually themed areas. Ready for a shopping and entertainment adventure? We'll help navigate the way:

• **Town & Country** is the mall's

fashion hub featuring retailers such as Neiman Marcus LAST CALL, OFF 5TH — Saks Fifth Avenue Outlet, Ann Taylor Loft and Jones New York Company Store. Also find Bed Bath and Beyond, Group USA for classic fashions, T.J. Maxx, bebe Outlet, a Brooks Brothers Factory Store, Bella Luna for Venetian handmade objects, Country Clutter for country col-

lectibles, and Harry and David, the acclaimed gourmet food purveyor. The sophisticated decor blends club chairs and sofas with custom-designed apple blossom lighting and a Capuccino Court with café seating. Enter the mall through Entry 1 or Entry 2.

Birch Run aficionado Jennifer Shirlan of Oakland Township is especially excited about the "name brand" stores — Saks, Neiman's and her favorite, Ann Taylor. "Having Great Lakes Crossing within commuting distance will make 'bargain shopping' all the more convenient," she says. "Combine the easy drive and great stores with a state-of-the-art setting and you have an exciting shopping experience."

• **North Dale and South Dale** are check full of general merchandise retailers and the ambience recreates a Michigan bed-and-breakfast

lifestyle with porch furniture, wood platform seating areas, galvanized planters and lots of skylights. Anchored by JC Penney Outlet Store and Burlington Coat Factory, the area also boasts a Marshalls, The Jewelers of Las Vegas, Merlo's Cutting Edge specialty utensils, Sibley's Shoes, Eye Cam for junior fashions and Wal-Mart Works for leather goods. Enter the mall through Entry 4 or Entry 8.

• **The Sporting Life** celebrates Michigan's great outdoors where shoppers can hunt down merchandise and fish for bargains at stores such as Finish Line, Foot Locker Outlet, Track 'n' Trail Warehouse, Bass Pro Outdoor World, Big Dog, Earthbound Trading Company, Fila Outlet, Hill & Hill Tobacconists and Urban Planet. The rustic decor sports fish trophies, hunting-lodge furniture and a Trophy Room seating area. Enter the mall through Entry 4 or Entry 8.

• **Fit for Life** offers a gymnasium-like atmosphere with bleacher-style seating and wooden floors. It features F.Y.E. Entertainment, a 22,000-square-foot store offering more than 75,000 CDs and cassettes and Oshman's SuperSports USA, opening

in the spring. Also find GameStop, Just Sports, Love From Michigan, Vans, Worldtraveler and Toys International. Enter the mall through Entry 4 or Entry 8.

• **Great Lakes Walk** is the entertainment center of the mall. Neon and theatrical swap lighting simulate a dramatic nightclub-like setting. Projected lighting creates the effect of autumn leaves rustling on the ground. This world of fun, much of it exclusive to Great Lakes Crossing, includes themed restaurants such as Rainforest Cafe, Johnny Rockets, Alcatraz Brewing Co and Wolfgang Puck Cafe. Steven Spielberg's GameWorks, and Jeepers!, an amusement park/family restaurant, add to the playful scene. A Star Theatre megaplex opens in January. Enter the mall through Entry 6 or Entry 7.

• **Just before Great Lakes Walk**, find the picnic-themed food court, designed to look like a large outdoor pavilion. The floor even resembles green grass. Structures reminiscent of roadside fruit and vegetable stands sell everything from Japanese sushi to Cajun jambalaya and Texas tacos. Diners eat on tables fashioned after wooden fruit crates. Centered in the food court is the children's play area where kids can romp on oversized foam hot dogs, cupcakes, pickles and watermelon slices. Colorful ladybugs make uninvited, but charming, picnic guests.

"This is what I'm looking forward to," says Megan Grishki of Troy. "I can't wait to take my kids to the Rainforest Cafe and the play area. It sounds like I could spend the day at the mall with my toddlers."

Great Lakes Crossing, 1-75 at Baldwin Road, Auburn Hills.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

LOVE BOAT FASHIONS

Neiman Marcus and the Lovelight Foundation invite you to a fashion show and luncheon featuring the Cruise 1999 Collection from St. John with special guest designer Marie Gray. \$99-\$100. Your support directly benefits Mayor Archer's "A Special Gift" holiday party for homeless and needy children. 11 a.m., level two, Somerset Collection.

BRIDAL CREATIONS

Alvin's Bride presents bridal gown designer Judd Waddell who designed the dresses for "The Object of My Affection." Trunk show continues through Saturday, 249 Pierce Street, Birmingham.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

MOTORING

Borders Book Shop welcomes Detroit Free Press' automotive columnist Lesley Hazleton who will sign and discuss her new book, *Driving to Detroit*, a memoir and exploration of her personal love affair

with cars. 7:30 p.m., 31150 Southfield Road, Birmingham.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

SUPER SATURDAY

The Star Southfield Entertainment Centre holds a bug dance contest in conjunction with the Thanksgiving release of Disney's *A Bug's Life*. The best bug dancer receives a large plush bug and family four-pack of tickets to any Star Theater. Bring music. 9:30 a.m., 25333 W. Twelve Mile, (248) 368-1802.

TABLETOP CREATIONS

Designers for Art Van share ideas for holiday decorating with centerpieces. Discover unique options for filling crystal bowls and vases, pottery and baskets. Different holiday themes will be presented. 1-3 p.m., Art Van Furniture in Royal Oak and Dearborn.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

HOLIDAY SHOW

Hudson's Somerset Collection store features a holiday fashion show to put you in a festive holiday mood. Fashions for men, women and children. 1:30 p.m.

For special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, AL 35209; or fax (205) 641-1741. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

FALL SALES

Specialty shops in The Boardwalk shopping center on Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield hold their annual fall sales today through Saturday, Nov. 14. Fashion retailers participating are Hersch's, Sundance Shoes and Solomon & Son.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

ARTFUL MODERNISM

Gorman's Gallery in Southfield presents "A Special Opening Night" unveiling of the exclusive John Widdicombe collection of T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings, whose classic and timeless creations can be seen at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. 6-9 p.m., 20145 Telegraph Road.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12