

Sense from page B1

safety hazard. Do not partially cook a turkey one day and finish the next day.

An unstuffed 18 to 22 pound turkey only takes 3 1/2 hours to 4 hours to roast. Always allow at least 30 minutes for the roasted turkey to sit before carving. The turkey will carve better and easier if you have a sharp knife.

The best way to roast a turkey is in an open pan. You'll get a juicy, tender golden brown turkey. You can rub or spray the skin with oil to prevent the skin from drying. If parts start to get too brown, wrap them with foil. Don't use a brown paper bag to roast a turkey, they aren't food grade and you could have an oven fire.

Timing is everything, and getting a large meal on the table takes timing. As you plan your menu, think about the timing for all the food involved. How many foods fit into your oven at one time, is there room for a turkey, and a couple of casserole dishes? What can go into the microwave or cooked on top of the stove?

Food safety

To serve that perfect meal, all the hot foods should be kept hot and cold foods cold.

Another safety issue is the storing of leftovers. You have two hours left after roasting, carving and eating to get the leftovers back into the refrigerator. As much as you hate the

idea, separate the turkey from the bones before refrigerating or freezing.

Wrap turkey, stuffing and gravy separately and use within three days. Freeze for longer storage. Use frozen roasted turkey to sit before carving. The turkey will carve better and easier if you have a sharp knife.

Bake the stuffing in a nonstick pan instead of inside the bird. The advantages are: the bird cooks faster, you know when the stuffing is fully cooked when it's in a casserole dish, and you can use chicken stock instead of butter to mix in the dressing.

Make "skinny" mashed potatoes by using evaporated skim milk instead of whole milk, and forget the butter.

Serve sweet potatoes minus the butter, brown sugar and marshmallows. Bake sweet potatoes rather than using canned sweet potatoes in syrup. Forget the pecan pie, eat pumpkin pie instead, which has half the calories and fat as pecan.

Don't let this be a stressed-out, unpleasant time. Holidays are about families being together to enjoy a delicious, safe, picture perfect meal.

Lois M. Thieleke of Birmingham is an Extension Home Economist for the Michigan State University Extension - Oakland County.

Readers share family-tested side dish recipes

See related story on Taste front.

SPINACH CASSEROLE

2 eggs, well beaten
6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped spinach, thawed
1 1/2 cups cottage cheese
1 1/2 cups grated Cheddar cheese
1/2 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350° F. Beat eggs and flour in bowl until smooth. Stir in spinach, cottage cheese, Cheddar cheese and salt; mix well. Pour into greased 1-quart casserole. Bake in oven for 1 hour. Serves 4-6.

Recipe compliments of Carolyn Rushlow.

AUNTIE FLO'S FRUIT SALAD

1 small package time Jell-O (3 ounces)
1 cup hot water
1/2 pint whipped cream
1 cup finely chopped marshmallows
2 packages cream cheese (3 ounces each)
1 (9 ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained

1 cup chopped walnuts
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1/4 cup sugar
Pinch of salt

Dissolve Jell-O in hot water and cool. Put sugar in whipped cream. Mix marshmallows, nuts, pineapple and cream cheese. Fold in whipped cream and sugar mixture. Add to Jell-O. Chill until firm.

Recipe compliments of Peggy Peck who said this recipe can be easily doubled.

MAKE-A-HEAD MASHED POTATOES

5 pounds potatoes
1/2 cup margarine
2 (3 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
1 cup sour cream
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Salt and pepper to taste

Cook potatoes until tender, mash. Add other ingredients and beat well.

Put into 3-quart casserole, greased with some margarine. Can cover and put into the refrigerator

at this point. Take out of the refrigerator 1 hour before baking. Bake uncovered at 350° F. for 45 minutes.

Recipe compliments of Joyce Weigel who said this recipe is easily cut in half and baked in an 8 by 8-inch pan at the same temperature and same time.

PEAR AND CRANBERRY RELISH

1 can pear nectar
1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons honey
8 ounces (about 2 cups) whole fresh cranberries.

Frozen can be used, but do not thaw

2 stalks celery, diced
1 pear, halved, cored and diced
1/3 cup pecans, chopped

In a saucepan bring pear nectar, sugar and honey to a boil over medium heat. Boil about 3-5 minutes. Stir occasionally, until sugar is dissolved.

Add cranberries to saucepan. Return to a boil then reduce heat to medium, cover and simmer 5 minutes, until cranberries begin to pop open. Put into a bowl, cool

slightly and refrigerate until well chilled.

To serve, stir in celery, pear and nuts.

Recipe compliments of Jovon Alber.

SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

1 large can of sweet potatoes
3/4 stick butter
3 well beaten eggs
1/2 cup sugar
dash cinnamon
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 cup milk

Dissolve cornstarch in a little cold milk. Mix with all other ingredients with mixer. Pour into a large casserole dish sprayed with nonstick spray. Bake 15-20 minutes at 400° F. covered.

TOPPING

1 cup crushed corn flakes
1/2 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup butter
1 cup coconut
1/2 cup chopped nuts

Melt butter, mix in other ingredients. Spread topping over sweet potatoes. Return to oven and bake 15-20 minutes, uncovered.

Recipe compliments of Deanna Werner.

Tea from page B1

Cozy in Farmington, has celebrated "The Twelve Days of

Christmas" for the past four years. Guests are greeted with a cup of mulled cider and variety of relishes to nosh on. A barber shop quartet performs holiday music, while guests wait for dinner to be served.

During the festive seven-course dinner, which features a Cornish hen with holiday dressing, a harpist and flutist perform. After dinner two guitarists lead a holiday sing-along.

Victorian Rose in Rochester is hosting a holiday dinner with entertainment on Dec. 12, and the Townsend Hotel and Ritz Carlton are also planning sweet surprises.

Having friends over for tea is a not-too-complicated way to entertain, but "you've got to

make a ceremony out of it," said Lovill. "There's a ritual. Set aside a little bit of time, the more elegant you make it the better."

Lovill said tea is not "apart of the moment like coffee you pour in a cup." Tea is for lingering.

Charles Dickens observed tea time as being a moment "in which we were perfectly contented with ourselves and one another."

Nancy Reagan said "a woman is like a tea bag. You never know how strong she is until she gets into hot water."

Tea can be a dinner, or a simple gathering. If you're real busy, make reservations and arrange to meet friends for tea. Getting together is what counts.

Dishes from page B1

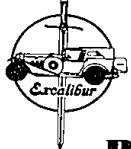
One of Joyce Weigel's favorite vegetable dishes is Make-A-Head Mashed Potatoes, a recipe she got from her friend Isobel Van Akin.

"I met her through church, and she would make these potatoes," said Weigel who lives in Farmington. "It's delicious."

Jovon Alber's Pear and Cranberry Relish is always a favorite with her guests, and children. This year Alber, who lives in Canton, is planning dinner for 22.

Deanna Werner's Sweet Potato Casserole topped with corn flakes, coconut, brown sugar and nuts sounds a lot more like dessert than a vegetable.

"This recipe is excellent," she said. "It tastes like a dessert."



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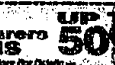
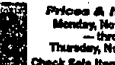
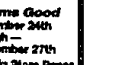
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