

Feast like a Pilgrim

By Chef Michael Altenberg, Owner of Bistro Campagne

During the holidays, most Americans will be eating "Broad Breasted White" turkeys, whose bodies have been morphed to promote the development of meat. These birds, which account for 99.99% of the current super-market trade, have shorter legs and breastbones which render them incapable of mating naturally, laying eggs and flying. When they mature, their altered body composition weighs so heavily upon them that they are also unable to walk. Furthermore, because Broad Breasted Whites are bred in cramped quarters, antibiotic injections and other harmful chemicals are necessitated.

It is for these reasons that pasture-raised turkeys and other free and open range bred animals have become the preferred choice of the health conscious movement in recent years. Turkeys raised in natural environments eat green grass, plants, insects and grain. They have a richer, fuller flavor and are much juicier than industrial confined birds; the more an animal moves around, the richer the flavor. These turkeys are also usually free to fly and live outdoors as nature intended; they are the kind of turkeys the Pilgrims ate.

I purchase my turkeys and poultry from Gifts From the Good Earth, an 80 acre farm in central Wisconsin. The owners, Mike and Deb Hansen, pasture-raise their chickens and turkeys free range on a level that exceeds the National Organic Program standards; like myself they have a strong belief in the benefits of organic production. You can place an order to the Hansen's farm at: goodearthfarms.com or look for other farmers in your area online at: www.localharvest.org. Once you get a taste of a pasture-raised turkey, I assure you will agree it is well worth the cost and wait.



Pasture-raised free range turkeys at home on the Hansen's Farm

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RECIPES

Fresh Holiday Turkey

Serves 10-12 people

- 15 Lb fresh Heritage Turkey at room temperature
- 1 Lb. Hotel Butter
- 4 Cups Giblet Broth
- Kosher or Sea Salt & fresh Ground Pepper
- Parchment Paper & Oil

Rub Turkey inside and out with S & P

Loosen the skin around the breast with your fingers

Insert Hotel Butter between meat and skin; finish with cavity

Set bird in deep roasting pan atop wire rack

Add Giblet Broth to pan

Lightly brush both sides of a piece of parchment paper with oil

Tent the pan with the parchment paper, attaching to pan with a strip of foil on each side or with oiled toothpicks

Roast in a 425° - 450° pre-heated oven until thigh temperature reaches 140-160F.

Remove parchment paper during last 30 minutes of cooking for crispy golden skin. Let bird rest 10-15 minutes before carving for juices to settle.

Hotel Butter

- 7 Garlic Cloves
- 1 Shallot
- 1/2 C Bread crumbs
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- 1/2 Bunch Parsley
- 1 Lb. Softened Butter
- 2 T Pernod
- 2 T White Wine

Wash parsley and squeeze out excess water

Blend parsley, garlic and shallot using a robocoup (vegetable cutter)

Continue blending, adding butter gradually

Transfer mixture to large mixing bowl and add Pernod *, white wine, any remaining butter, bread crumbs and salt & pepper

Mix thoroughly

** Pernod is the brand name of a type of liqueur called a pastis. Its relative in Greece is ouzo and in Spain ojen. (Another French brand name is Ricard). The leading characteristic of these drinks is their licorice flavor, which is produced either with licorice (the plant, not the candy) or anise. Its other interesting feature is that it clouds up with the addition of water.*

Giblet Broth

- 2 C each: White Wine & Water
- Giblets & Neck
- 1 Bay Leaf

Combine all ingredients in saucepan. Simmer for 15 minutes.

Discard bay leaf & neck. Remove giblets if desired or, chop finely and return to broth

To Stuff or not to Stuff?

Bacteria grows between 40°-140°, which means the inside of the bird would have to be 160° to kill bacteria. Most cooked turkeys don't reach that cooked temperature which is why people who eat stuffing from inside of the bird tend to feel sick afterwards.

It is for these reasons, combined with the fact that the inside cavity is the dirtiest part of the bird to begin with, that I absolutely say, 'NO!' to stuffing turkeys. - Chef Michael



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