



Buzz, Body & Bites

A newsletter for actively aging adults
Virginia Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences
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History of the Turkey

The Thanksgiving holiday is a great time to spend with family and friends, reflect on our country's history, and give thanks. Most people also enjoy their traditional holiday foods! The most popular meat during this Holiday is the turkey. Although you might think its popularity grew from the "first Thanksgiving" shared between the Pilgrims and Wampanoag people at Plymouth in the early 1600s, that is not the case. In fact, there is no indication that turkey was served at that feast. The credit for elevating turkey as the centerpiece of the holiday meal goes to the writer Sarah Josepha Hale. She described a New England Thanksgiving in her popular 1827 novel "Northwood" featuring a roasted turkey at the head of the table. She also campaigned to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday to unify the country at the point of civil war. It was made a national holiday through a presidential proclamation by Abraham Lincoln in 1863. There are also some practical reasons for turkey to be served during holiday meals. In the 19th century, as now, turkey was plentiful. It is inexpensive compared to other meats, and is large enough to feed a whole family. Let's not forget that when cooked right it is also delicious.

Virginia is a major producer of turkeys for the country. As of the last grower survey (2021), family farms produced approximately 14.5 million turkeys in Virginia. The state ranks six nationally behind MN, NC, AR, IN, and MO. Turkeys are raised in large open houses to protect the birds from predators and disease. This is especially important this year as wild waterfowl are currently carrying a highly pathogenic strain of Avian Flu that can infect both large- and small-scale poultry. Turkey hens are generally used to produce whole birds for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, while toms (male turkeys) are raised to produce turkey deli meats and other further processed favorites. The difference is simply because the toms grow larger, and most families prefer the smaller hen that fits more easily in the oven and takes less time to cook.

So, if turkey is your featured meat this Thanksgiving, you will follow a national tradition of over 150 years. Enjoy your feast, and reflect on all the things for which we have to be thankful.

Contributed by Kayleigh Mize, Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, Spotsylvania, VA
www.britannica.com

Turkey Jokes:

Source: <https://ponly.com/turkey-jokes/>

1. Why did the turkey say no to dessert? He was already stuffed.
2. Why did cranberries turn red? They saw turkey dressing.
3. What happened when the turkey messed with bad boys? They beat the stuffing out of him.
4. What is the best thing to put into pumpkin pie? Your teeth.
5. Why are pilgrims' pants always too loose? Because they always wear buckles on their hats.
6. What music genre do pilgrims listen to? Plymouth Rock.
7. If pilgrims were alive today, what would be the most surprising thing about them? Their age.
8. April showers bring May flowers, guess what May flowers bring? Pilgrims.
9. What's one thing that you'll have in common with a teddy bear on Thanksgiving? You'll both be filled with stuffing.
10. When are the turkeys the most grateful? The day after Thanksgiving.

Flexibility Exercises: Hamstring Stretch

Standing:

1. Stand up straight. Put one leg out with heel on the ground and toes pointed to the sky.
2. Be sure to bend your knee on your supporting leg.
3. Hinge from the hips towards your pointed toe. Make sure your back is flat.
4. Hold and feel the stretch in your hamstring. Be sure to breathe in and out.
5. Slowly return to standing. Switch to the other side and repeat.

Sitting:

1. Sit straight up in the chair with feet on the floor. Come forward to sit on the edge of your chair.
2. Straighten one leg with heel on the floor and toes to the sky.
3. Hinge from your hip towards your toe. Be sure your back is flat.

Holiday Root Vegetable Roast

This recipe combines sweet potatoes with beets, parsnips, and carrots, seasoned with rosemary and thyme to make an aromatic sweet and savory combination perfect for the season.

Rich in nutrients, it is a great alternative to higher fat and sugar traditional sweet potato dishes.

Ingredients:

(Makes 6 servings):

- 4 large carrots (sliced at a diagonal)
- 3 parsnips (sliced at a diagonal)
- 2 large sweet potatoes (peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes)
- 3 beets (medium sized, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes)
- 3 cloves garlic (chopped)
- 1 ½ tablespoons fresh rosemary (chopped)
- ½ tablespoon fresh thyme (chopped)
- 1/4 cup olive oil salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Wash, peel and cut the vegetables. Place in a mixing bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, mix the olive oil, rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper.
3. Pour the oil over the vegetables and toss to coat thoroughly.
4. Spread on a non-stick jelly roll pan and cook at 425°F until tender, 40 - 45 minutes.

Resources

USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service

Let's Talk Turkey: A consumer guide to safely roasting a turkey.

www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/poultry/lets-talk-turkey-roasting

Turkey Recipes: www.eatturkey.org

University of California, Berkeley - Resistance Band and Body Weight Exercises
<https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/wellnessresistancebandexercises.pdf>

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