

[Brandywine Table]

Variations on a Theme of Turkey

GRILL IT, BRAISE IT, FRY IT, STUFF IT ...
WE'RE TALKING TURKEY HERE.

Laura Muzzi Brennan

WHEN IT COMES TO THANKSGIVING, MOST OF us are creatures of habit. We want turkey, and we want it the way we remember as children: roasted for hours, basted with butter and large enough for leftovers.

But if you find yourself craving a little variety—maybe a different cut, cooking technique or seasoning—the turkey experts at **Janssen's Market** in Greenville, Delaware stand at the ready to help.

At the time of this writing, general manager Paula Janssen, executive chef Shawn Marshall and meat manager Marcus Dalnogare were in the process of finalizing their Thanksgiving offerings. The extensive menu includes everything you need for the holiday: vegetables, starches, pies and turkey, of course. Their 500+ whole turkeys and turkey breasts come from TA Farms in Wyoming, DE where they are harvested just days before Thanksgiving. Turkeys range in size from 5–10 pounds for a breast to 10–30 pounds for a whole bird. They can be ordered raw or cooked.

Tofurky (tofu “turkey”) and turduckens (chicken stuffed inside duck stuffed inside turkey) are also available for order. Janssen's assembles turduckens in house using local poultry. Their signature corn stuffing goes in between each layer to hold the Frankenbird together. (Unless you've got crackerjack deboning and stitching skills—not to mention a free afternoon during busy

holiday times—then its best to leave the assembly to the pros.) Luckily, cooking turducken requires just a roasting pan and good instructions. Look for Janssen's recipe below.

When it comes to tweaking the centerpiece of the Thanksgiving table, Janssen's suggests home cooks try the technique called “spatchcocking.” It takes a little elbow grease to remove the turkey's backbone and crack the breastbone, but the result is an evenly cooked turkey with crisp skin that's ready in half the usual time.

Other techniques like grilling, braising and deep-frying are also worth a try. And if you really want to push the boundaries, proceed directly to the “Truly Madly Turkey” sidebar in this article.

Perhaps the easiest way to change up your bird is to play around with the spices. While the folks at Janssen's say most people like simple brines—just salt, pepper and herbs—they've had customers request coffee-rubbed turkeys as well as sundried tomato turkey breasts. One woman asked for Greek-style, the crushed olives adding briny flavor.

For home cooks who want to do the brining themselves, Janssen's sells kits that include spice blends and brining bags. They recommend dry-brining one-half hour before cooking and wet-brining overnight in the refrigerator or cooler filled with ice.

Whether you brine, baste, roast or spatchcock, here's wishing you a very flavorful bird and a very happy Turkey Day!



The Janssen Family outside the market in Greenville



Janssen's Market in Greenville



Linda Seidenstat and Karen Cianci, of Janssen's Market, prepare the turkeys.

Turducken Cooking

With stuffing between each layer, turduckens are solid and ideal for feeding a crowd. Sizes range from small, which can serve ten hungry diners, to large, which serves 25! Whether you assemble the turducken yourself or pick up your uncooked bird from Janssen's Market, these cooking instructions guarantee a Thanksgiving centerpiece that's perfect inside and out.



Preheat to 225°. Remember that you're cooking low and slow, so temperature control is very important! If you don't have an oven thermometer, you may want to invest in one to guarantee that your oven is at the correct temperature.

Give your turducken an hour at room temperature before cooking. This will help with cooking evenly.

Place your turducken breast side up on a flat wire rack set in your roasting pan. Tuck the wing tips back under the shoulders of the bird.

Bake the turducken uncovered for 4 hours. Baste the skin with olive oil, then cover the turducken with aluminum foil. Cook for an additional 4 to 5 hours (depending on the size of your bird) until a meat thermometer reads 165° in the center of the thickest part of the turducken.

Remove the turducken from the oven. Tent with aluminum foil and let it rest for one hour. Slice crosswise so you see all the layers.

Sausage Cornbread Stuffing

Janssen's puts this stuffing in between the turducken's layers (see photo) to help bind the layers—and, of course, it tastes great, too! To cook it outside your bird, spoon the stuffing into a greased casserole dish and bake.

- 1 Tb. olive oil
- 1 Tb. unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- ½ tsp. salt
- 4 large stalks celery, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ lb. spicy sausage, crumbled, cooked and drained
- 2 Tb. chopped fresh sage
- 1 Tb. fresh thyme leaves

Truly Madly Turkey

We searched high and low for new takes on turkey for those looking for something a little different this year. What we found was a world full of turkey-philes who think far outside the roasting pan. Here are our picks for the most whimsical, sometimes dangerous, definitely innovative twists on the Thanksgiving icon.

Trash Can Turkey: This one will get the neighbors talking! Sit the turkey on an aluminum covered stake. Cover with a metal trash can. Distribute coals around the circumference of the can and on top. Gobble up this quick-cooking turkey before the fire department shows up!

Designer Turkey: Who says a turkey can't sport stripes, your monogram or even a bronze bikini? Simply cut out aluminum foil in any shape you like, place it on the bird and roast away. Don't forget to Instagram your work.

Turkey Jerky: Want turkey that lasts well beyond the fourth Thursday in November? Slice turkey breast thinly. Season with salt and pepper. Thread onto skewers and hang skewers from the top rack of your oven. Cook for 6–10 hours at 200°. Leave oven door slightly ajar to let the moisture escape. Settle in for a day of football watching.

Turkey Cake: This dish truly takes the you-know-what! Layer ground turkey, sausage stuffing, sweet potatoes and cranberry sauce. Top with mashed potato icing, place on a silver cake stand and wait for puzzled looks. Then followed by oohs and aahs.

Beer Can Turkey: It's good enough for chicken so try it with the bigger bird. Add chopped herbs to a 24–32 oz. can of your favorite beer. Insert the can into the turkey's cavity. Using the can as a stand, place turkey upright on grill over indirect heat. Kick back, forget about basting and pop open another beer.



- ½ C. flat leaf parsley, chopped
- ¼ tsp. ground pepper
- Cornbread (store bought or made from your favorite mix, about a 9x9 pan's worth), crumbled and left to become stale for a couple hours
- ½ C. milk

Heat oil and butter over medium heat in a large skillet. Add the onion and stir often, for about 3 minutes. Add the salt and celery and cook until the vegetables are soft and translucent. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Transfer to a large mixing bowl.

Add the sausage, sage, thyme, parsley and pepper and mix well. Slowly add the cornbread to the mixture, combining everything well. If it's too dry, add some of the milk, as needed.

Use as the stuffing for your turducken or put it in a greased baking dish and bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Makes enough to stuff one turducken or 8–10 side servings.

Tandoori Turkey London Broil

Turkey London broil is simply a thick cut of skinless, boneless turkey breast. You can serve with classic mashed potatoes or rice.



1½ lbs. turkey London broil, about 1" thick
1 C. plain low-fat or whole milk Greek yogurt
Juice of 1 small lemon, plus lemon wedges for serving
1 Tb. tandoori seasoning (more to taste)
Salt and pepper to taste

Whisk together yogurt, lemon juice, tandoori season, salt and pepper. Spoon into a large resealable plastic bag. Add turkey and toss to coat. Refrigerate overnight.

Using either a gas or charcoal grill, grill over indirect medium heat with the cover on, flipping once or twice until the thickest part of the turkey reaches 165°. If you like grill marks bold and brazen, move turkey to direct heat for a minute or so on each side.

Rest for 10–15 minutes and slice against the grain. Serve with lemon wedges.

Makes 4 servings.

Spatchcocked Turkey

You need a pair of poultry shears and a sharp carving knife, but other than that, no fancy equipment is required for spatchcocking (also called butterflying) your bird. One great advantage of this technique is it cuts down on cooking time. Another is that carving is much easier.



10–12 lb. turkey

Seasoning: salt, pepper, thyme and sage

Wine and chicken stock for roasting

Preheat the oven to 350°.

Place your turkey upside down (breast-side down) on an easily cleanable cutting surface. Using your poultry shears, cut along both sides of the backbone to remove it. (This will take some elbow grease, and you may need to use the knife to get through tougher places.) Save the backbone and giblets for making turkey stock or the base for your gravy.

Turn over your turkey and press firmly on both sides of the breastbone until it cracks. You want it as flat as possible to cook the most evenly. Rub seasonings on turkey and allow to brine for ½ hour.

Place the turkey on a flat wire rack inside your roasting pan and tuck the wings under the breast. Add wine and chicken stock to pan to provide moisture during cooking.

Roast for 1½ hours. Turn up the heat to 400° for 15 minutes more for crispier skin. Check the internal temperature at the thickest part of the thigh with your meat thermometer. It should be 165°.

Remove turkey from oven and tent it loosely with aluminum foil. Let it rest for 15–20 minutes before carving.

Stuffed Turkey Tenderloins

The tenderloin is the tender strip of white meat hidden under the turkey breast. Since the portion size is generous, the recipe

works especially well for a small but hungry group. Serve with your favorite gravy. Recipe inspired by Lynne Webb of MyGourmetConnection.



2–4 turkey tenderloins, about ½ lb. each
2 Tb. butter
¼ C. finely chopped celery (1 stalk)
¾ C. finely chopped onion (½ medium onion)
1 C. chicken broth
6 oz. (½ package) Pepperidge Farm (or cook's choice)
Herb seasoned cubed stuffing
1 egg, beaten
½ C. dried cranberries (If you can find the plump whole jumbo dried cranberries, use those.)
2 Tb. fresh chopped sage
2 Tb. fresh chopped parsley
Salt and pepper to taste
Celery salt, optional

Preheat oven to 375°. Slice turkey tenderloins horizontally, but don't cut all the way through. The tenderloin should look like an open book. Set aside.

Melt butter over medium high heat. Stirring frequently, cook celery and onion until softened but not brown. Set aside to cool.

In a large bowl, add chicken broth to stuffing and allow bread cubes to absorb the broth. Mix in egg, cranberries, sage, parsley, celery and onion. Season with salt, pepper and celery salt if using.

Place a generous amount of stuffing down the center of each tenderloin and



fold the tenderloin around the stuffing so it resembles a taco. Secure with toothpicks. Place in a baking dish and surround with remaining stuffing. You can also bake the stuffing in a separate casserole dish.

Cover loosely with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake for another 10–15 minutes until stuffing is browned and turkey is cooked to 165°. Rest for 5–10 minutes and remove toothpicks.

Serves 2–4. ♦

the excitement most people reserve for winning a Mega Millions jackpot.



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