

[Brandywine Table]

Grazing Gobblers

A LOOK AT LOCAL PASTURED-POULTRY AND THE PUNNY FARMER BEHIND IT ALL.

Alyssa Thayer

YOU MAY HAVE SEEN HIM AROUND ... HE'S THE GUY at farmers' market with a shirt that says "Turkey Whisperer." That's Axel Linde, informally known as the King of Puns. He's the owner and operator of **Lindenhof Farm** in southeastern Lancaster County.

Lindenhof Farm has been in the family for over 60 years and was originally purchased by Axel's parents, Karl and Else Linde, as a dairy farm. "We've had three generations helping with daily chores," Axel recounts proudly. Axel and his wife, Susan, raised their six kids on the farm. Although several are now grown up, the kids still help out at market, on social media and with weekend farm work.

For the last 13 years Axel has had a wide-range of livestock on the land, including chickens, turkeys, cattle, sheep and hogs. "We like to have them outside on fresh green grass as much as possible," says Axel. He also notes that the farm land is "permanent pasture," meaning it remains seeded for animal grazing and is never plowed.

"I don't like to think of my fields as having weeds," he chuckled. "I like to think of them as having diverse plants for the animals to enjoy." The variety of plants and grasses provides the animals with a healthy diet, which Axel supplements with local corn, soybeans and whole-grain wheat.

Pasture-raised animals have unique characteristics, which include a richer flavor, leaner meat and greater nutrients. "It's just a more

natural way of raising animals," explains Axel. "Nothing artificial, lots of sunshine and air."

Axel is just as excited to talk about what his animals don't get as what they do. On Lindenhof Farm they use no hormones, no antibiotics, and no artificial flavor enhancers, and all the meat raised there is processed at a local Amish facility.

This will be Axel's 12th year providing fresh holiday turkeys to the community. Not surprisingly, Thanksgiving accounts for the bulk of yearly turkey sales, which includes both traditional pasture-raised white turkeys, as well as several heritage breeds. What started as a humble business of around 100 birds a year, has taken off, reaching an impressive 660 orders last year. "It's a fun time," says Axel "and the whole family helps out."

You'll find Lindenhof Farm products at the West Chester Growers' Market and the Eagleview and Oakmont Farmers' Markets. Or order ahead from their website and pick up at their farm store in Kirkwood.

This year consider a locally raised gobbler for Thanksgiving.



Axel the "Turkey Whisperer" and wife Susan



Axel feeding turkeys and moving the turkey feeders and waterers to new section of green grass



Karl and Else Linde, Axel's parents and original purchasers of Lindenhof Farm

Classic Herb-Roasted Turkey with Giblet Gravy Herb Butter



Enough to accommodate up to 20 pounds of turkey.

- 1 Tb. coarse salt
- 1 Tb. freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 Tb. fresh thyme
- 2 Tb. finely minced fresh oregano
- 1 Tb. minced fresh rosemary
- 1 tsp. dried lavender
- ½ lb. unsalted butter (2 sticks), softened, or 1 cup olive oil

Combine all in a food processor and puree until smooth.

Traditional Turkey

- 1 turkey, room temperature
- ½ lb. herb butter (recipe above)
- 3 medium onions, coarsely chopped
- 2 carrots, scraped and coarsely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, coarsely chopped
- 4 to 6 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 leaves fresh sage
- 2 sprigs fresh marjoram or oregano
- 4 Tb. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 C. water
- 4 C. chicken or turkey broth (Giblet Broth is recommended.
See the recipe online at CountyLinesMagazine.com)

Place oven rack in the lowest position and preheat oven to 325°.

Rinse the turkey, inside and out, and pat dry with paper towels. Rub ¼ of herb butter under the skin of the breast. Rub the remainder all over the outside of the bird—including the back, breast, legs, and thighs. Set turkey breast side down on a well-oiled rack in a large roasting pan.

Toss ½ of chopped onions, carrots and celery into the cavity of the bird. Mix other half of vegetables with fresh herbs and 1 tsp. of melted butter and spread out in the bottom of the roasting pan. Pour 1 cup of water over the vegetables (not on the turkey).

Heritage Turkey Talk

In recent years, heritage turkeys have come into favor for their taste, texture and nutrients, as well as their role in preserving species diversity.

What are some common breeds? Bourbon Red, Narragansett, Standard Bronze and Spanish Black

What's different about heritage breeds and what do you need to know if you're cooking one for your holiday meal?

- **Body Type:** Traditional turkeys, also called broad-breasted whites, were bred in response to the demand for larger birds and more white meat. Heritage breeds by contrast, have an equal ratio of dark to light meat.
- **Growth Cycle:** Commercial white turkeys have been bred to mature as quickly as possible and maximize yields and profits. Heritage birds have a much slower growth rate, taking up to 7 months to reach full market size.
- **Taste and Texture:** Heritage birds have a richer more intense flavor and a denser texture, while broad-breasted turkeys tend to be described as being more mild.
- **Order More:** Heritage breeds (and pasture-raised in general), have stronger and heavier bones due to their rugged outdoor lifestyle, so it's important to order more pounds than you would for a broad-breasted variety (1½ lbs./person is recommended).
- **Cooking Time:** The slimmer body, smaller breasts and lower fat ratio make heritage and pasture-raised birds more likely to overcook. See the Tips Sidebar and recipes.

Roast the turkey (time dependent on weight), basting every hour.

** Early in the roasting, before you have pan juices, use the remaining 3 tablespoons melted butter to baste the bird. If vegetables in the pan look dry, add another ½ cup water until the turkey starts releasing juices.*

Halfway through the estimated cooking time, pour broth into the bottom of the pan, covering the bottom of pan with around ½ inch of liquid. Carefully turn the bird breast-side up. Continue roasting, basting regularly with pan juices, until the thigh registers 170°F to 175°F.

Remove the bird from oven, transferring it to a warm platter. Tent loosely with foil, and rest for about 30 minutes while you make the gravy.

**** Variation:** To make your turkey like the Lindes do, follow this recipe but stuff the neck and cavity of the bird with 5 to 10 cored and sliced raw apples to give the meat some moisture and sweetness.

Giblet Gravy

Pan juices from turkey

4 Tb. unsalted butter

¼ C. all-purpose flour

1 C. dry white wine

Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Pour pan juices into a large measuring cup or bowl. Strain and discard the vegetables and herbs.

Heat the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in flour, stirring constantly, until it turns a deep caramel color.

Pour in all but 1 cup of the pan juices. Keep stirring the mixture until it comes to a boil. Reduce the heat, and simmer the gravy for about 5 minutes, until it is slightly thickened. Be sure to stir the mixture frequently.

Set the roasting pan over two stove burners. Add the wine to the pan, and bring to a simmer, scraping up any browned bits. Add the gravy, and continue cooking until the sauce is reduced by $\frac{1}{3}$ (about 5 minutes). Add remaining broth and chopped giblets, and return the mixture to a boil, stirring constantly. Adjust the seasonings for salt and pepper.

Serve gravy alongside the carved turkey.

Rosemary Maple Heritage Turkey

If you're new to the heritage turkey world, no need to reinvent the wheel and risk your holiday dinner. Use this tried and true recipe adapted from PA farmer and chef Sandra Kay Miller.



15-lb. free range, heritage turkey brought up to room temperature
1 batch Rosemary Maple Butter mixture
4 C. broth for moisture
1 large sheet of oiled parchment paper

Rosemary Maple Butter Mixture:

2 C. butter at room temperature
 $\frac{1}{2}$ C. pure maple syrup
1 Tb. fresh rosemary, finely minced
Salt and pepper to taste

Other Tips From the Farm:

Pasture-raised turkeys tend to be lower in fat than other turkeys, so they may cook a bit faster.

Most chefs and farmers recommend that you cook the stuffing separately from the turkey for food safety reasons and because of the faster cooking time of heritage birds.

If you stuff your bird, cook stuffing ahead of time so it's already warm. Always start cooking with the bird at room temperature.

Size of Turkey ...	Estimated Cooking Time
10 to 14 lbs ...	2 to 3 hours
15 to 17 lbs ...	3 to 3½ hours
18 to 20 lbs ...	3½ to 4 hours
21 to 22 lbs ...	4 to 4½ hours
23 to 24 lbs ...	4½ to 4¾ hours

Preheat oven to 425–450°. Rinse turkey and pat dry, making sure no giblets or wrapping remain inside the cavity.

Whip together all butter ingredients. Rub over outside of turkey, using the last few tablespoons to slide under the skin of the breast.

*** When fast roasting, you want to maintain a high oven temperature (meaning don't be tempted to open the oven and peek at the bird). Adding fat under the skin of the bird helps makes the turkey self-basting.*

Place buttered bird onto a wire rack inside a deep roasting pan. Add 4 cups of broth under the rack.

Use a large sheet of oiled parchment paper to tent roasting pan (any cooking oil will work, just coat both sides of the paper with pastry brush). Keep oiled paper in place with oiled wooden clothespins or a strip of aluminum foil. Remove parchment paper during the last 30 minutes of cooking for a nice golden skin.

Slide turkey into oven and roast until thigh temperature reaches approximately 150°. This should take about 2.5 to 3.5 hours, but start checking the temperature after 1.5 hours to avoid overcooking.

Let the bird rest at least 15 minutes before carving. Note: Temperature will most likely rise another 5–10 degrees while it rests.

Next Day Turkey Broth

Waste not want not! Make a delicious broth from pasture-raised bones!

4–5 lbs. turkey parts, including backs and wings, rinsed and dried

**For a rich golden-brown stock, make sure chicken pieces are dry.*

2 Tb. extra virgin olive oil

2 medium yellow onions, quartered

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 medium to large carrot, cut into chunks

$\frac{1}{2}$ C. flat-leaf parsley

2 bay leaves

1 tsp. dried thyme, crumbled

1, 3-inch cinnamon stick (optional)

10–12 cups cold water

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste



Place turkey pieces, olive oil and onions in large stock pot and brown over medium heat. Turn frequently until turkey and onions are golden, about 20–30 minutes. Note: If you prefer a clear, light stock, omit this first step and simply put the pieces in a stockpot.

Add garlic, carrot, parsley, bay leaves, thyme, cinnamon, water, and salt and pepper. Set over medium-low heat and slowly bring to a simmer.

For the clearest stock, carefully skim off foam as it rises to the top. When the foam has ceased rising, cover the pot and simmer very slowly for at least 1.5 hours, or longer if necessary (turkey should be so thoroughly cooked that it is falling apart).

At the end of the cooking time, strain the stock through double layered cheesecloth or a fine-meshed sieve and discard solids. Taste the stock and add more salt and pepper to taste. (Remember that if stock is to be reduced later, that will concentrate the salt.)

Transfer stock to the refrigerator to let the fat rise and solidify. (This makes it easy to remove with a slotted spoon.) Once fat has been removed, stock can be frozen.

**Note: The cinnamon adds a delicious Mediterranean flavor to this both but can be omitted if the stock will be further reduced to be an all-purpose stock base (called a demi-glace).*

To make a demi-glace, cook skimmed stock over a very low flame until it has ¼ or less of its original mass. Tip: freeze in small cubes to use as a flavor base for sautes, stir-fries and many French sauces.

**Tip 2: never let it come to a boil or it will become cloudy. Make sure it stays on a very low simmer with barely a bubble for the demi-glace. ♦*

Alyssa Thayer found her love of food at an early age, frolicking around her mother's organic farm and eating her weight in berries and snap peas each summer. She is a self-proclaimed urban farm girl, whose mission is to bring inspired ideas to life, passionate people together, and good food to every table.



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FOR THE Wine Connoisseur

FINE WINE & GOOD SPIRITS



APPETIZER

Cheese, crackers, cured meats



1ST COURSE

Soups, salads, vegetables



2ND COURSE

Turkey, ham, dark meats



DESSERT

Cheesecake, apple pie, pecan pie

SPARKLING

A brut style pairs with fried or fatty appetizers.

MOSCATO

Sweet with a fizz, the bubbles cleanse the palate.

VINHO VERDE

Effervescent, crisp and light to match salty foods.

PINOT GRIGIO

The dry, fruity citrus flavors will match with salads.

SAUVIGNON BLANC

Pineapple and grass notes pair with green vegetables.

GEWÜRZTRAMINER

Semi-sweet apricot and spice aromas pair with rich soups.

CHARDONNAY

Rich, full-bodied and oak-aged matches earthy dishes.

ROSÉ

Dry or sweet, this fruit-driven style will match saltiness.

ZINFANDEL

Smoky, fruit-forward notes match well-seasoned red meats.

RIESLING

Ranging from dry to sweet, pair it with fruit-focused desserts.

TAWNY PORT

Rich nuttiness that matches pecan, almond or hazelnut desserts.

LATE HARVEST

Very sweet and pairs well with sweet, confectionary desserts.