



WILD. NATURAL. SUSTAINABLE.



Thanksgiving Entertainment Guide

2023

A woman with blonde hair is smiling warmly at a dining table. In the foreground, a young child with blonde hair is also smiling. The table is set with various dishes, including what appears to be a turkey, corn, and other Thanksgiving fare. The background shows a window with a view of trees.

Tradition Brings People Together

The holidays we celebrate are steeped in tradition and while each has its own meanings and customs associated with it, Thanksgiving is synonymous with traveling near and far to break bread with those near and dear to us, express our gratitude for each other's support through another year of life's ups and downs, and celebrate the spirit of togetherness and thankfulness.

Wherever people gather for holidays, a feast will certainly follow, and Thanksgiving is no exception! In fact, Thanksgiving may have the greatest number of food traditions associated with it, especially because the meal itself is such a significant part of the celebration. While we honor our ancestors by preparing their recipes, we also build upon their legacy by making traditions of our own.

Whether it's putting a spin on that handed down recipe or trying a new one altogether, that's so well-received it becomes a mainstay, this is the kind of lifeblood that keeps tradition alive in our families, generation after generation.

Create a Warm & Inviting Atmosphere

The cornucopia of rich, earthy hues and magnificent textures the Fall season ushers in are elements we can thoughtfully integrate across our home décor and tablescape for Thanksgiving. Embrace nature's charm with pumpkins, gourds, mums, and foraged plants that can not only elegantly decorate the entryway of your home but bring festive flair to the dinner table as well.



Add a thoughtful touch to each table setting with personalized place cards that will not only guide your loved ones to their seats, but also convey the warmth of your welcome as they gather around for the main event of Thanksgiving Day.

When it comes to the kids' table, consider using paper placemats and leaving a cup of crayons at the center of the table so they can doodle away after they've finished eating.

Perhaps just as sacred as sitting down together for Thanksgiving dinner itself is when everyone migrates to the living room to hang out for the rest of the night, savoring the sheer delight of dinner, dessert, and each other's company.

Elevate the warmth in your living room with candlelight and have a plethora of throw blankets around so people can cozy up while relaxing, conversing, and reveling in the joy of the holiday.

Time is on Your Side

3-4 Weeks Before

- Start gauging how many people will be on your guest list for this year's feast. While on the phone with your loved ones, find out what they plan on bringing to the table.
- If you haven't already, order an appropriately sized Turkey for the number of guests you're hosting and be sure to tack on a few extra pounds if you want leftover Turkey. The general rule of thumb is to account for 1 lb. of Turkey per guest.

2 Weeks Before

- Gather your Thanksgiving recipes and draft a grocery shopping list. Purchase non-perishables as far in advance as you please, but wait to shop for perishables no more than a week in advance of the holiday.
- Whether you're a minimalist or a maximalist in the department of décor, your tablescape can be set up weeks in advance of Thanksgiving, whereas floral and foraged arrangements should wait until 1-2 days out.

3-7 Days Before

- Pick up any remaining items you may need at the grocery store or farmers market!
- Recipes like the compound butter rub for your Turkey and homemade cranberry sauce can be prepared in advance and refrigerated for up to a week before Thanksgiving.

1-2 Days Before

- Take a look at the recipes you're featuring on your menu and determine what other prep work can be achieved before Thanksgiving Day, from assembling charcuterie boards and chopping vegetables to preparing dough for biscuits and pies.
- Remove Turkey from packaging and pat excess moisture from the bird. Pull giblets out of cavity and refrigerate in airtight container. Set Turkey on a wire rack within roasting pan and place in refrigerator overnight, uncovered, to dry skin out before cooking and achieve a perfectly golden brown and crispy Turkey.

Thanksgiving Day

- Wake up on the early side and enjoy a light breakfast
- Pull Turkey out of refrigerator about 2-3 hours before cook time so it has plenty of time to come up to room temperature.
- Set up satellite stations for appetizers, drinks, and desserts so guests have a designated place to set down what they're contributing to your Thanksgiving feast beyond the main dishes that will land in the kitchen.
- Accept all the help you can get and have a list in mind of what volunteers can achieve, from greeting guests and getting their casserole dishes into the oven to cleaning dishes along the way and carving the Turkey.



Cooking Tips & Recipe Inspiration

This Thanksgiving, let our cooking tips and recipe inspiration be your culinary compass. We've honed our expertise to provide you valuable insights into brining and roasting your Turkey to ensure it not only looks like a succulent masterpiece, but tastes like it too!

We also touch upon Thanksgiving's classic accoutrements, providing traditional recipes and flavor profiles to delve into for Turkey stuffing, gravy, and cranberry sauce.

At Fossil Farms, we believe that the true magic of Thanksgiving lies in sharing. If you share what you prepare on social media, tag us [@fossilfarms](https://www.instagram.com/fossilfarms), so we can celebrate the richness of flavors that this season brings with you and the rest of our audience.

To Brine or Not to Brine



While Fossil Farms' Nicholas breed Turkeys are touted for being naturally flavorful and notably tender on their own, you may still be wondering if you should brine your bird because adding extra flavor and moisture is never a bad thing, right?

We're here with some considerations and step-by-step instructions to help make up your mind and ease any apprehension about potentially overdoing it. The first question you must ask yourself is whether you need to add more moisture to the bird or want to simply add more flavor.

With a wet brine, the Turkey is submerged in a saltwater solution. While the salt breaks down the proteins in the meat, the water gets absorbed into the bird.

With a dry brine, the salt extracts some of the moisture from the meat and deeply infuses the flavors of the dry brine as the juices soak back into the bird. Elements like citrus zest, herbs, and sugar can be added to either type of brine, however, more flavors will be transferred with the dry brine.

The other consideration, which may be the deciding-factor for which brining method you ultimately choose, is how much space you have to store your Turkey. When it comes to holiday menu planning, real estate in the refrigerator becomes a commodity and wet brining occupies more space than dry brining.

To safely wet brine Turkey, it must be stored in a food safe container that's large enough for the bird to be fully submerged in the saltwater solution and refrigerated to prevent the growth of any bacteria.

For a dry brine, the roasting pan it will sit in overnight is more manageable to store in the refrigerator.

Wet Brine

Active Time: 24 hours

Method:

1. Select a food grade bucket or container with a lid, such as a stock pot. Place Turkey in container, still in its original packaging, and cover with water. This will enable you to not only ensure that the container is large enough, but will also provide the exact amount of water needed for the brining process.
2. Remove Turkey from container and set aside. Measure how much water is in the vessel and add 1 cup of salt for every gallon of water. Then, stir to dissolve salt into water and add fresh herbs and aromatics.
3. Remove Turkey from its packaging and pull giblets out of cavity. Carefully lower Turkey inside container and ensure it's fully submerged in the brine solution. Place a plate or platter on top of Turkey to prevent it from floating to the top of the container and cover.
4. Place your brining container in the coldest part of your refrigerator for 24 hours.
5. Pull Turkey out of refrigerator and pat dry. Place on a wire rack within roasting pan and let rest for a couple of hours before cook time to allow bird to come up to room temperature. You can also add an extra day to your preparation time and set Turkey back in refrigerator for 12-24 hours to pull moisture from skin deeper into the bird and allow the outside to dry.

Dry Brine

Active Time: 12-24 hours

Method:

1. Add 1 tbsp. Kosher salt per 2 lbs. of Turkey to a small bowl. Add other herbs and spices to the bowl, like sage, thyme, and fresh citrus zest before mixing.
2. Remove giblets from Turkey cavity and pat the inside and outside of the bird dry. This is an important step because excess moisture in the Turkey will prevent the bird from achieving golden and crispy skin.
3. Apply salt mixture gently to both the skin and interior cavity of Turkey.
4. Place Turkey on a wire rack within roasting pan and set inside the coldest part of your refrigerator for 12-24 hours.
5. Pull Turkey out of refrigerator a couple of hours before cook time to allow the bird to come up to room temperature. You can choose to either wipe off excess salt mixture or leave it on the skin, which will only add more flavor to the roasted Turkey.



Turkey Essentials

Whether or not you've brined your Turkey, you don't want to miss out on the opportunity to introduce an element of fat to your bird before roasting it.

Fat plays a significant role in tenderizing the meat and enhancing its flavor in several ways, which is why the application of a compound butter rub under the skin of the Turkey is essential, especially for those with an affinity for exceptionally crispy, golden skin.

Spiced Compound Butter Rub

Prep Time: 15 minutes • Yields: for 14-16 lb. Turkey

- 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature**
- 2 tsp. salt**
- 2 tbsp. ground black pepper**
- 2 tbsp. fresh thyme, minced**
- 2 tbsp. fresh sage, minced**
- 5 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- 1 tsp. Chinese five spice powder**

Method:

1. Mix all ingredients in a small bowl until well combined.
2. Set Turkey on working surface so cavity is closest to you. Using a long, flexible rubber or silicone spatula, slowly slide the tool between the skin and the flesh of the breasts on both sides of the breastbone. Note: the skin is fairly tough and won't tear easily as long as you work gently.
3. Separate the skin all the way from the cavity to the front of the breast and down toward the wing joint. Do this on both sides of the breast, but leave the skin attached to the center of the breastbone itself.
4. Divide the butter mixture in half and stuff it under the skin on both sides. Then, massage skin to spread butter down toward the front of the bird.
5. Distribute butter as evenly as possible, but don't worry about being perfect, as the butter will melt and spread out as the Turkey roasts.
6. Discard any leftover compound butter that has come into contact with the raw meat.
7. Truss Turkey and roast using preferred method or recipe.

Other Flavors to Explore:

Herbes de Provence, fresh rosemary, saffron, fennel seeds, star anise, cloves, cinnamon, lemon or orange zest

With origins in European culinary traditions, stuffing was a contribution English Pilgrims brought to the first Thanksgiving dinner and it remains a staple on the menu today.

While each family surely has their own recipe, it can be fun to change up the flavor profile from time to time, or at least we think so!

Beyond utilizing different types of bread in your stuffing recipe, like cornbread and sourdough, or different fruits and vegetables, like apple, shallot, and mushroom, have you ever thought about sourcing something else beyond plain old pork sausage to add to the mix?

Outlined below are a list of game meat sausages available at Fossil Farms that will bring different flavors to traditional Thanksgiving stuffing:

Nutty & Sweet Stuffing:

[Wild Boar Sausage with Cranberries](#)

Pair With:

Brown Butter, Thyme, Allspice, Celeriac, Fennel

Nutty & Savory Stuffing:

[Wild Boar Sausage with Roasted Garlic & Marsala Wine](#)

Pair With:

Rosemary, Sage, Chestnut, Chilis, Whiskey or Bourbon

Bold & Sweet Stuffing:

[Elk Sausage with Apples & Pears](#)

Pair With:

Cinnamon, Clove, Star Anise, Black Peppercorn, Orange Zest

Rich & Sweet Stuffing:

[Venison Sausage with Blueberries & Merlot Wine](#)

Pair With:

Juniper, Mushroom, Thyme, Rosemary, Black Peppercorn

The Main Event

HOLIDAY ALTERNATIVES

For those of you who have small family gatherings, know that game birds can serve as lovely alternatives to Turkey for your Thanksgiving dinner. Explore recipes like Oven-roasted Pheasant and Partridge Rilette on [The Grazing Files](#) blog!

The centerpiece of most every family's dinner table on Thanksgiving is a golden, oven-roasted Turkey. While game meat was served at the first Thanksgiving in 1621, Turkey has triumphed as the most widely consumed roast for a few practical reasons, including availability, due to the advent of farm raised Turkey rather than relying on hunting.

Additionally, due to the larger size of a Turkey compared to game birds, it's the perfect size to feed a crowd and thus more accommodating.

To ensure your holiday centerpiece is cooked to perfection, follow our oven-roasted Turkey recipes below!

Oven-roasted Turkey

Active Time: ~20 minutes per lb. • Yields: varies

[1 Fossil Farms' Whole Turkey](#)

Salt and pepper, to taste
Compound butter rub

Method:

1. Remove Turkey from packaging 24-48 hours before preparing and set in roasting pan. At this point in time, take out the packet of giblets from the Turkey cavity and refrigerate so you don't forget the next day.
2. Refrigerate Turkey uncovered, which allows the skin to dry out before cooking, making for a perfectly brown and crispy Turkey.
3. Pull Turkey out of refrigerator and let come to room temperature before cooking, about 2-3 hours.
4. Preheat oven to 450°F. Position oven rack in the bottom third of the oven.
5. Stuff your Turkey before trussing, which keeps the wings and legs close to the body of the bird, ensuring the meat cooks evenly throughout.
6. Whether you are using our compound butter rub recipe or regular butter, use a silicone spatula or your hands to apply butter between the skin and flesh of the bird. Try to spread butter as far down on both sides of the breastbone as possible.
7. Place Turkey on roasting rack within roasting pan. Then, apply butter or olive oil all over the flesh of the bird. If you have not brined your Turkey, be sure to add seasonings, such as salt, pepper, and your favorite spices.

8. Plack Turkey in oven and lower temperature to 335°F. If you have added stuffing to the cavity, cook time will be approximately 20 minutes per pound; without stuffing, cook time will be approximately 13 minutes per pound.

9. Baste Turkey with pan drippings every 45 minutes to promote even browning while roasting.

10. When nearing completion, use meat thermometer to gauge internal temperature of thickest part of Turkey Breast and Thigh. Pull from oven once 160°F is reached.

11. Loosely cover with foil and let rest for 25-30 minutes. Internal temperature will rise to 165°F while it rests and juices will redistribute throughout the Turkey, ensuring it remains moist and tender upon carving.

Oven-roasted Bone-in Turkey Breast

Active Time: ~13 minutes per lb. • Yields: varies

1 Fossil Farms' Bone-in Turkey Breast
Salt and pepper, to taste
Compound butter rub

Method:

1. Remove Turkey Breast from packaging the day before preparing and set in roasting pan.
2. Refrigerate Turkey Breast uncovered, which allows the skin to dry out before cooking.
3. Pull Turkey Breast out of refrigerator and let come to room temperature before cooking, about one hour.
4. Preheat oven to 450°F. Position oven rack in the bottom third of the oven.
5. Whether you are using our compound butter rub recipe or regular butter, use a silicone spatula or your hands to apply butter between the skin and flesh of the bird. Try to spread butter as far down on both sides of the breastbone as possible.
6. Place Turkey Breast on a roasting rack inside roasting pan. Then, apply butter or olive oil all over the flesh of the bird. If you have not brined your Turkey Breast, be sure to add seasonings, including salt, pepper, and your favorite spices.
7. Place Turkey Breast in the oven and turn down the temperature to 335°F. Cook time for the Turkey Breast will be approximately 13 minutes per pound.
8. When nearing completion, use meat thermometer to gauge internal temperature of the thickest part of Turkey Breast. Pull from oven once 160°F is reached.
9. Loosely cover with foil and let rest for 15-20 minutes. Internal temperature will rise to 165°F while it rests and juices will redistribute throughout the Turkey Breast, ensuring it remains moist and tender upon carving.

Quintessential Accompaniments



A delicacy in its own right, the silky texture and savory richness of Turkey gravy make it the crowning jewel of our holiday dinner plates.

Some of you may whisk a roux as dinner comes together, while others simply can't be bothered after spending the afternoon cooking and opt for the convenience of shelf stable gravy.

We hear both sides of this because, while ease is always a factor in the kitchen, there are also certain things you can't skimp on, which is why we're sharing recipes for both camps of cooks.

Traditional Turkey Gravy

Prep Time: 1 hour 20 minutes • Yields: 12 servings

Turkey giblets
2 tbsp. salted butter
½ cup carrots, diced
½ cup celery, diced
1 sweet onion, diced
1 tbsp. garlic, minced
1 bay leaf
5 sprigs fresh thyme
5 cups water
1 cup or more Turkey drippings
4 tbsp. flour
Salt and pepper, to taste

Method:

1. Rinse giblets in cold water.
2. Put a medium-sized saucepan over medium-high heat and melt butter. Add giblets to pan and brown them on both sides.
3. Add carrots, celery, and onion to pan. Sauté for about 5 minutes or until onions are translucent. Then, add garlic and sauté for another minute or so.
4. Add bay leaf, thyme, and water to pan. Turn heat to low and simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour with lid slightly offset to let some steam escape.
5. Once Turkey has been pulled out of oven, strain solids from stock and discard giblets. Set stock aside.
6. Gather about 1 cup of Turkey drippings from roasting pan. Pour into a medium-sized saucepan over medium heat.
7. Add flour to pan to form a roux. Mix for 2-3 minutes before adding stock to pan.
8. Stir until gravy thickens. Then, add salt and pepper to taste before pouring into gravy boat.

Simple Turkey Gravy

Prep Time: 15 minutes (+45 minutes for giblets)

Yields: for 15 servings

2 packages Turkey gravy seasoning mix
¼ cup flour
3 cups water
1 cup or more Turkey drippings
1 cup Turkey giblets (optional)

Method:

1. If preparing gravy with giblets, add them to a small saucepan filled with water over medium heat.
2. Once the water has come to a boil, reduce the heat to low and cover pan with a lid. Simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until the meat is cooked through.
3. Strain giblets from water and let cool. Then, chop and set aside.
4. Once Turkey comes out of oven, gather drippings, and set aside.
5. Add gravy seasoning mix and flour to a large saucepan.
6. Gradually pour water and Turkey drippings to pan, whisking at the same time until smooth. Add giblets to pan as well if you're including them in your recipe.
7. Put heat on medium-high and frequently stir gravy until it comes to a boil. Then, reduce heat to low and simmer for at least 5 minutes or until gravy thickens.
8. Turn off heat and pour into gravy boat. Note: gravy will continue to thicken upon standing so don't worry about adding more flour to give the gravy more body.

Similar to Turkey gravy, cranberry sauce is yet another accoutrement that can fall victim to the woes of convenience after marathon cooking a Thanksgiving feast.

While some households may prefer canned or jellied cranberries, for us, nothing beats a few spoonfuls of warm, homemade cranberry sauce on the plate!

We promise making it yourself isn't nearly as cumbersome as it may seem, especially since it can be made up to a week in advance of Thanksgiving. Plus, preparing it at home enables you to integrate a medley of flavors and spices that are reminiscent of the season. If you want

to try a recipe that will make your tastebuds sing, try the one we serve at Fossil Farms' company Thanksgiving gathering every year.

Outlined below are a list of game meat sausages available at Fossil Farms that will bring different flavors to traditional Thanksgiving stuffing:

Orange Ginger Cranberry Sauce

Prep Time: 25 minutes • Yields: for 10-12 servings

1 cup honey
¾ cup granulated sugar
½ cup water
½ cup orange juice, freshly squeezed
Zest from freshly squeezed orange
½ tbsp. fresh ginger, finely grated
1 cinnamon stick
16 oz. fresh cranberries

Method:

1. Combine honey, granulated sugar, water, and orange juice in a medium-sized saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring constantly until honey and sugar dissolve.
2. Add cranberries, orange zest, ginger, and cinnamon stick to pan and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat to let mixture cook at a low boil for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Before removing from heat, taste to determine if you want to add more honey or sugar for a sweeter sauce.
5. Remove from heat and discard cinnamon stick.
6. If you want a less chunky cranberry sauce, use a fork or potato masher to pop cranberries before sauce cools and thickens.
7. Let rest until sauce reaches room temperature and serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve.

Other Flavors to Explore:

Nutmeg, allspice, cardamom, maple syrup, apple cider, vanilla bean, lemon, cherry, currants

For customers local to Fossil Farms Market & Kitchen in Boonton, NJ, check out our [Thanksgiving Catering menu](#) for appetizers and desserts to serve alongside your main and side dishes!

Thanksgiving is a feast that often yields leftovers to pick at for days to come. While Turkey and sides can be heated up and served as is, they can also be transformed into dishes of their own to avoid the aversion children and adults alike tend to have for leftovers.

Thanksgiving Dinner Sando

Perhaps the least transformed leftover idea, but the one people adore so much they buy it before the holiday itself, is the Thanksgiving Dinner Sando. Heat up any of the leftovers you want on your sandwich, assemble, and enjoy! If there's enough stuffing on hand, consider pressing a couple of spoonfuls in a waffle maker until crispy to use in place of bread for the sandwich.

Turkey Soup

Once the Turkey has been carved, it tends to hang out in the roasting pan for a few hours while conversation continues around the dinner table. Passersby may pick at it as they walk in and out of the kitchen before the carcass lands in the garbage by night's end.

Rather than tossing the Turkey carcass, use it to make homemade bone broth! Simply add water, vegetables, and aromatics like onion, garlic, carrot, celery, and bay leaf to either a Dutch oven or pressure cooker and let simmer for 3-12 hours. The longer the bones cook, the more collagen is released, maximizing the flavor and nutrients that are released into the broth.

With a high-quality bone broth on hand, add shredded leftover Turkey to the Dutch oven, along with a medley of vegetables and either egg noodles or wild rice to make this hearty soup a truly nourishing meal.

Turkey Pot Pie

Few meals warm the soul more than a casserole-like filling baked in pie dough, which is why Turkey Pot Pie is a comfort food classic; not to mention the fact that most every ingredient required to make it are Thanksgiving necessities, including the vegetables and herbs for mirepoix, the broth for gravy, and the pastry for pies.

The simplicity of sautéing mirepoix, preparing a roux, and crimping pie dough makes Turkey Pot Pie an equally convenient and satisfying dinner idea for post-Thanksgiving meal planning.





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For anyone out there who loves to cook or eat for that matter, we have a plethora of content that will serve as a feast for the eyes so if you don't follow us already, what are you waiting for?

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