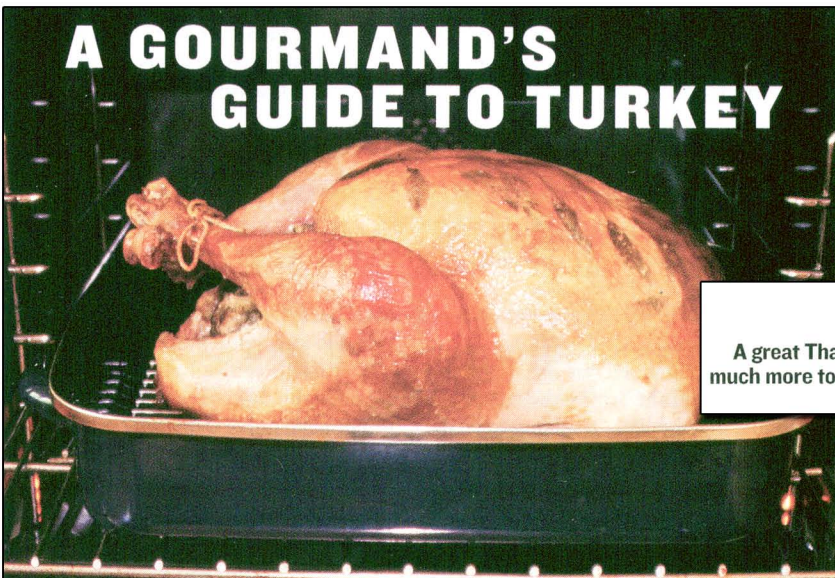


Men's Journal

A GOURMAND'S GUIDE TO TURKEY



Thanksgiving should be THE MOST DELICIOUS MEAL OF THE YEAR. Here's how to make it happen.
by JAY CHESHES

EVERY THANKSGIVING SOME 45 MILLION turkeys turn the U.S. into a nation of tryptophan zombies. The sedative properties of the meat notwithstanding, for a meal whose elements are practically carved in stone, there's an overwhelming array of options for a Thanksgiving feast. Despite

what you recall from childhood, turkey doesn't have to be dry and tasteless; many of today's top chefs are even featuring it on their everyday menus. This year we've sorted through the dross and talked to the pros to help you find, prepare, and devour the best bird possible.

FIND THE PERFECT TURKEY

A great Thanksgiving feast depends on the right choice of bird, and there's much more to picking a turkey these days than counting the guests to parse out the weight (think one pound per person).



Once-forgotten breeds like the Bourbon Red and American Bronze have become the go-to birds for food snobs everywhere. Less meaty than their commercial cousins, these all-natural turkeys — raised free-range on small farms — have a richer, more assertive flavor. "There's white meat, but it's not as abundant, and the flavor is certainly more intense," says CLARK FRASIER OF ARROWS RESTAURANT IN OGUNQUIT, MAINE.
COST: \$7-\$10 per pound

STEP 3 THE ULTIMATE LEFTOVER PLAN

Leftovers are the single best reason to host Thanksgiving. If you play your cards right and make way too much food, the day-after meal can be far more rewarding than the holiday feast. At Tim Love's home in Fort Worth, Texas, the Lonesome Dove chef turns his scraps into a fiery Tex-Mex spread. "I like to mix it up a little bit," he says. "I make enchiladas, quesadillas, chilaquiles with fried eggs and pulled turkey meat." Louisiana's Patrick Mould whips up a turkey-based gumbo every year. Some prefer a rich turkey soup, while for many others — the impulse to lounge trumping the draw of the kitchen — the optimum day-after lunch is actually the least labor-intensive: the sort of big, heaping sandwich Homer Simpson might make. Put whatever you like inside: some mashed or sweet potatoes to bind the sandwich; cranberries for a sweet and salty zing. Or don't. The point is, the day-after sandwich is your big op-

portunity to revisit the best of yesterday's meal.

New York chef Bobby Flay grew up with a holiday meal that included white-bread stuffing and canned cranberry sauce. His sandwich colossus: homemade turkey, cranberry sauce, and stuffing piled between slices of mayonnaise-slathered toast. "It's a little weird putting bread on bread," Flay says, "but it's really satisfying."

Clark Frasier, chef at Arrows in Ogunquit, Maine, pares his sandwich down to meat only (with mayo, pickles, mustard, and lettuce). "I don't need cranberries on my sandwich," he says.

Or if you're willing to put in a bit more effort, take some advice from Graham Elliot Bowles, chef at Avenues in Chicago's Peninsula Hotel. He makes bread pudding from stuffing. When firmed up and sliced, it serves as the bread. Add turkey, chestnuts, turkey jus mayo, pickled yams, and cranberry relish. —J.C.



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHANIE FOLEY