

Sayonara, Mr. Turkey!

By now all of the planning is done, you're scratching your head and asking yourself how did I get into this situation and the family dog is eyeing that huge turkey and wondering, "Is that for me?" Once again we begin the preparation of our annual Thanksgiving feast that takes two days minimum to put together and results in 30 minutes maximum of frenzied chomping followed by the mad dash for every available couch in the house.

God love us all. Can you imagine how a stray Pilgrim in a time machine would react to all of this? The average spread for a family of six today would probably feed Myles Standish and his 20 best friends back at the first Thanksgiving. When you're used to maybe a 10-pound wild turkey just think how you would react to a 28 pounder today.

The great news is that if you play your creative cards right you can get several meals out of the leftovers and let Fido stick to his dry dog food. We want to concentrate on turkey today and some ideas to keep the family interested even after they've all sworn that they'll never eat turkey again, or at least not until next year. Here we go!

By the way, if you are looking for leftover recipes for turkey or anything else for that matter, any dish that has the word "surprise" in the name is probably best left alone and untried.

Turkey Tetrazzini

(Serves 4)



- 1 lb. fettuccini pasta, uncooked
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 cups sliced button mushrooms
- 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of Philadelphia Cream Cheese (regular or light)

1 cup chicken broth
3 cups chopped cooked turkey
1 cup frozen peas, thawed
1 teaspoon dried thyme

Cook pasta as directed on package and drain just before needed.

At the same time, melt your butter in a large skillet, add sliced mushrooms and cook them until tender. Remove mushrooms and hold on the side. In the same skillet pour in broth and add cream cheese. Heat cream cheese at med low until it melts into the broth stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low and simmer until the sauce thickens; about 7 minutes. Add turkey, peas and reserved mushrooms; cook until heated through.

Serve over your cooked pasta.

This is a terrific time of year for good, hearty soups and this next recipe is one that my children love. It doesn't hurt that this is a really easy one to make.

Creamy Turkey and Corn Chowder

(makes about 6 cups)

4 strips of thick cut bacon
½ cup chopped sweet onion
1 cup chopped red bell pepper, divided
2 tablespoons butter
1 cup chicken broth
1 can Cream of Chicken condensed soup, plus ½ can water
¾ cup whole milk
3 tablespoons cornstarch and water, combined into watery paste
1 can (14.75) cream style corn
2 cups shredded leftover cooked turkey
6 tablespoons shredded sharp cheddar cheese

Using a heavy bottomed stockpot on medium heat, fry bacon until browned and crispy. Remove bacon, crumble and hold to side. Reserve 2 tablespoons of bacon grease and add butter. Next add in chopped sweet onion and ½ of your chopped pepper.

Sautee over medium to medium high heat until onions and pepper are tender, stirring frequently. Add broth, Cream of Chicken soup, water, and milk. Adjust heat to medium low and cook until just simmering. Gradually add in cornstarch paste until soup base thickens slightly using only as much as you need.

Add cream style corn and turkey and continue to cook until heated through. Just before serving sprinkle reserved crumbled bacon and uncooked red bell pepper evenly throughout the soup and top each bowl as served with 1 tablespoon of shredded cheddar cheese. Serve slices of a good, crusty style bread on the side and wait for the applause.

One of the most popular recipes we created for our restaurant years ago was Winedog's Zesty Chicken Salad and I've adapted it over the years to a really enjoyable turkey salad for sandwiches or to be served over fresh romaine lettuce. (If you can find a really good cantaloupe, a scoop in a hollowed out half will also make a really fine lunch.)

Doggy Turkey Salad

6 cups chopped leftover cooked turkey
1 cup chicken stock
dash of cumin
dash of thyme
dash of rosemary
1 cup chopped green onion
1 cup chopped red bell pepper
1 cup chopped celery
3 tablespoons honey mustard (Boar's Head is best!)
regular or light mayonnaise
ground sea salt
ground pepper

Place your cooked turkey in a microwave safe bowl. Add chicken stock, cumin, thyme and rosemary and stir until everything is evenly distributed. Seal bowl tightly with plastic cling wrap and cut a 1-inch slit in center. Place into your microwave oven for 4 minutes on 30% power and allow to gently heat. When done turkey should be just warm and moist. Remove cling wrap, stir again to distribute stock for more moisture and seal tightly. Set aside until needed.

In a large mixing bowl, combine green onion, red bell pepper, celery and turkey. Turkey should be removed from its bowl with a slotted spoon to avoid introducing any extra stock from the bottom of the bowl. Mix all together thoroughly and add honey mustard. Stir once more to evenly distribute. Gradually add mayonnaise, 3 or 4 tablespoons at a time and continue to stir until you have the desired level of dressing in the salad to satisfy your personal taste. Salt & pepper to taste and place in refrigerator for at least 4 hours to allow all of the flavors to bind properly. This salad will hold up well in your refrigerator for a week. It seldom makes it that long!

A final note for Thanksgiving is just a reminder. This holiday offers a unique opportunity to establish traditions that can live beyond each of us. You've got a captive audience at that table and the way life is now days, there are way too few situations that give you that undivided attention.

I hope we all remember to give thanks. Take a moment to share why you are thankful for each of the people sharing your meal. Think about it ahead of time, write it down if you need to and step out of your comfort zone for a few minutes to say what should be said.

We are not guaranteed that opportunity again. I pray you'll have a joyous and blessed Thanksgiving!

Always remember you can talk to us at (888) 288-0668 with any questions or comments or visit us at www.winedog.com.