

SPOTLIGHT On Turkey Day

by Clint Hamblin

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving Day as a national holiday. Lincoln's traditional turkey day still includes that overly stuffed big browned bird centerpiece surrounded by cooked vegetables and cranberry, but over the years, our melting-pot population has contributed several unique cooking and celebration styles making Thanksgiving dinner more interesting and exciting than ever.

On the Go. If you're deciding where to purchase this year's bird, lots of restaurants and markets offer turkeys and "turkey dinners to go." If turkey doesn't do it for you, take a look at Savenor's on Charles Street, where you can choose from an assortment of some rather unusual varieties of birds including a six-pack of quail (semi-boned, of course), squab, pheasant, partridge (the pear tree is optional) and Long Island duck.

Southern Comforts. If you can't make up your mind, try a Turducken. This UFO is a combination of a turkey, stuffed with a duck, stuffed with a chicken and then stuffed with traditional cornbread stuffing. A southern holiday tradition, the Turducken gives new meaning to the phrase "birds of a feather flock together."

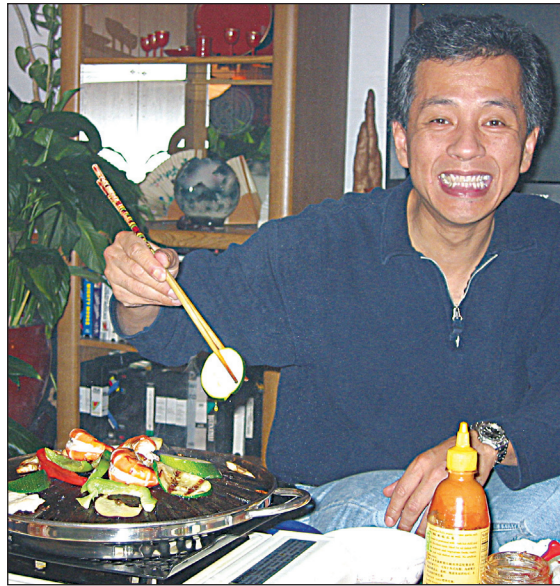
And speaking of the south, how about a deep-fried turkey? Gen Chitell, women's accessories department manager at Barneys New York at Copley, has fond

memories of cooking an entire turkey in a deep fryer. "There's just no taste that compares," Chitell said.

It sounds greasy but the deep frying actually seals the outside giving you very crispy skin with remarkably juicy meat inside. But please remember to cook your bird outside and in the open. Accident-prone chefs have been known to burn down their houses.

To Your Health. For those health-conscious eaters looking to avoid the entire turkey day experience, Whole Foods offers a turkey vegan dinner that comes with a vegan holiday roast made from various grains stuffed with wild rice and dried cranberries. The dinner comes with lentil soup, green beans and a vegan pecan tart made with soy instead of standard milk or cream. What, no tofu?

Bon Voyage. Boston resident Allison Yochim's family loves to celebrate



Hayatosan enjoys turkey Yakiniku-style

Grill Mates. Yakiniku, or "grilled meat," is a Japanese style of preparing and eating dinner. Each guest cooks several types of prepared raw ingredients on a metal grill in the middle of a table. "You cook what you want, the way you want and then dip each piece into a variety of delicious sauces," says sushi party planner Hayato Otsuki. A variety of vegetables and meat can be cooked this way, including chicken, lamb, beef, scallops, shrimp and even turkey.

Conversation is rich as everyone waits for their vegetable or turkey morsel to be cooked exactly the way they like it. It's healthy and definitely a unique way to enjoy turkey on Thanksgiving.

America by leaving it and going on a vacation every Thanksgiving. "We go to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico and we eat turkey subs from Subway on Thanksgiving." The rest of the time the Yochim family spends drinking margaritas on the beach and surfing. Sounds like a great way to celebrate the holiday.

Giving Thanks. Turkey day is often a great day to demonstrate appreciation for those of us with no plans for the holiday. United South End Settlements' (USES) Harriet Tubman House has been generously giving a free Thanksgiving dinner to area seniors for the past 30 years. More than 100 hungry neighborhood seniors come together to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal cooked by the USES staff. Price Waterhouse Cooper sent several of their finest professionals to help serve an already full house at USES on November 15.

Giving thanks to those who support our community, Top of the Hub continues to provide its annual Thanksgiving Dinner for Engine 33 & Ladder 15 at the Back Bay Boston Fire Station. Fire trucks will pull up to the loading dock beneath the

Prudential Center, load all those turkey dinners onto the trucks and then head off to the fire station at 941 Boylston Street where our fire guys will enjoy an expertly prepared Thanksgiving feast.

Getting Fresh. The debate continues whether a frozen, fresh or freshly killed turkey is the best. Hearing that a fresh-killed turkey would produce a far better taste, a young wife bought a live bird from a turkey farm only to find after returning home to her kitchen that she didn't have the heart (or guts) to wring the bird's neck or chop off its head. What would Julia Child do? How about some chloroform to put the turkey to sleep? With the doomed bird now in dreamland, the tedious task of plucking the turkey's feathers one by one began. Just when the last feather was plucked, guess what happened? The turkey woke up.

Shocking the neighborhood with screams for help, the rescue team of neighbors was stunned to find the hysterical woman being chased around her kitchen by a very angry and very naked turkey.

No matter what your tradition may be, have a Happy Thanksgiving.



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