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Thanksgiving Day Meals for Smaller Crowds: Tips and Recipes

Ohio Poultry Association Provides Tips for Preparing Traditional Turkey Tastes on Smaller Scale

COLUMBUS, Ohio (November 12, 2015) – Thanksgiving is officially two weeks away and families are gearing up to carve their turkeys, break wishbones and cheer on their favorite NFL teams. Regardless of where Ohioans meet to eat their Thanksgiving meal or how many guests are in the party, they typically gather round a perfectly-roasted turkey. This year, the Ohio Poultry Association (OPA) is offering advice for those who are cooking a Thanksgiving meal for a smaller crowd.

“Thanksgiving dinner commonly conjures up thoughts of many friends and family gathered around a table overflowing with food centered around a 20-pound turkey,” said Jim Chakeres, OPA executive vice president. “No matter how many people are in your group this year, there are several ideas to satisfy everyone at the table for a simpler Thanksgiving meal.”

Americans traditionally love eating turkey on Thanksgiving. According to the National Turkey Federation, 88 percent of Americans eat turkey on Thanksgiving, regardless of the size of the group. The OPA has several tips for those who are cooking a Thanksgiving dinner for a smaller crowd of two to four people, including:

- Buy a smaller whole turkey. A solid tip to remember for those buying a whole turkey is to plan on feeding one to one and a half pounds per person. Typically, the smallest turkeys a consumer will find will be 10 to 12-pounds.
- Purchase turkey breasts or thighs and cook them individually. Turkey breasts and thighs tend to be the most moist and juiciest part of the turkey. Turkey parts can be roasted in oven, just like a whole bird, or even in a slow cooker.
- Try making dishes in individual portion sizes. Desserts, like mini pumpkin pies (see recipe below), can be made prior to Thanksgiving and in ramekins or muffin tins for each guest.
- Make dinner more manageable by cutting down on amount of side dishes and customizing the menu. Stick to the group’s beloved Thanksgiving side-dish favorites liked mashed potatoes, stuffing and green bean casserole instead of having a plethora of overwhelming options.
- Plan ahead for leftovers and think about breakfast and lunch ideas that will incorporate leftover Thanksgiving foods, including a Turkey Sweet Potato Hash with Egg recipe (see recipe below) as well as a Turkey Leftover Sandwich (see recipe below).

Chakeres also noted if Ohioans are purchasing frozen turkey, it needs to be thawed 24 hours for every four to five pounds it weighs. Visit the [USDA website](#) for thawing guidelines and food safety information.

Furthermore, turkey is completely cooked when the meat thermometer reads 165 degrees Fahrenheit in the breast and 180 degrees Fahrenheit in the thigh. To reach the appropriate cooked temperature, turkey needs to be in the oven 15 minutes per pound. Once cooked, turkeys should rest for a minimum of 20 minutes, ensuring juices are settled, before cutting it for serving.

Ohio produces more than 209 million pounds of turkey annually and more than 8.7 billion eggs per year. For more information about Ohio's egg, turkey and chicken farmers, nutrition benefits or for delicious recipes, visit www.OhioEggs.com and www.Pinterest.com/OhioPoultryAssn.

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RECIPES:

Turkey Sweet Potato Hash with Egg (Serves 4)

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 medium onion, ½-inch dice
1 clove garlic, minced
1 pound roast turkey, ½-inch dice
¾ pound baked sweet potatoes, ½-inch dice
¾ pound baked potatoes, ½-inch dice
3 tablespoons ketchup
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves (or ½ teaspoon dried)
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons water
Salt and pepper to taste
4 Eggs

Directions:

Heat 2 tablespoons oil over medium-high heat in a 12-inch non-stick skillet. Add onion, cook 2-3 minutes, stirring often. Add garlic, and cook an additional 2-3 minutes, again stirring often. Add turkey and potatoes and remaining olive oil, continue to cook until golden brown and heated through.

Mix ketchup, mustard, thyme, parsley and water in a small bowl. Stir ketchup mixture into turkey/potatoes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Reduce heat to medium, continue to stir for an additional 4-5 minutes.

Prepare eggs to your liking (poaching or over-medium recommended). Divide hash equally onto 4 plates and serve with an egg on top.

Turkey Leftover Sandwich (Serves 4 – 8)

Ingredients:

2 tbs. cranberry sauce
2 tbs. apple butter
Eight slices of good quality, whole-grain bread
1 tbs. mayonnaise – good quality
1 cup stuffing – turkey or chicken
½ c. turkey gravy

1 lb. turkey – thickly sliced
12 slices bacon
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tbs butter, softened
Lettuce leaves
1 Tomato

Directions:

Mix apple butter and cranberry sauce together, set aside. Spread each slice of bread with a thin layer of mayonnaise. Top one slice of bread with stuffing, a thin layer of gravy, ¼ of the turkey and three slices of bacon. Add another thin layer of gravy. Spread one fourth of apple butter/cranberry mixture on the other slice of bread. Add salt and pepper to taste. Assemble the sandwich. Repeat for the remaining three sandwiches.

Butter each side of the sandwiches on the outside, then toast on a preheated sandwich grill or heavy skillet, pressing firmly on each side until golden brown. Garnish with lettuce and tomato.

Mini Pumpkin Pies

Ingredients:

6 mini unbaked piecrusts
3 eggs, slightly beaten
1 can (15 oz.) pumpkin
¾ cup packed light brown sugar
1 ½ tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. ground cloves
1 cup half-and-half

Directions:

Heat oven to 400°F.

Whisk eggs, pumpkin, brown sugar, cinnamon, salt, ginger and cloves in medium bowl.

Beat in half-and-half.

Pour approximately 2/3 cup into each mini piecrust.

Carefully place pies on rack in 400°F oven.

Bake for 15 minutes.

Reduce oven to 350°F; continue baking for 20 to 22 minutes or until knife inserted midway between center and edge of pie comes out clean.

Cool completely on wire rack.

Refrigerate, loosely covered, until firm, several hours or overnight.

Garnish with toasted pecans and whipped cream.