2018 Thanksgiving Plan

**Menu**

* Dry-Brined Spatchcocked Roasted Turkey
* Giblet Gravy
* Puree of Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes with Parmesan
* Herbed Stuffing
* Cranberry Sauce
* Maple Butternut Squash
* HMS Titanic Creamed Carrots
* Mashed Sweet Potatoes with Brown Sugar and Pecans

**Bill of Materials**

* See 2018 Turkey Plan – Shopping List.xlsx

**Equipment List**

* Thermoworks Probe
* Flat Roasting Rack
* ½ sheet pan
* Poultry shears
* Splatter guard
* Food Mill
* Wide Aluminum Foil
* Cheese cloth
* Stock Pot

**Revision History**

* 11/15/2007, ksb, created
* 11/23/2007, ksb, updated with 2007 redlines
* 11/24/2009, ksb, modified for 2009
* 11/27/2009, ksb, incorporated 2009 redlines
* 11/5/2010, ksb, modified for 2010 baseline
* 11/23/2010, ksb, added green bean casserole recipe
* 11/26/2010, ksb, incorporated 2010 redlines
* 11/18/2011, ksb, pre-holiday update
* 11/25/2011, ksb, redline incorporation
* 11/27/2013, ksb, pre-holiday update
* 12/1/2013,ksb, redline incorporation
* 11/9/2014, ksb, pre-holiday update
* 11/28/2014, ksb, redline incorporation
* 11/22/2015, ksb, prep for 2015, dry-brining, spatchcocking, Brussels Sprouts
* 11/28/2015, ksb, redline incorporation
* 11/4/2016, ksb, prep for 2016, added creamed carrot recipe, vegetarian mushroom gravy for vegetarian loaf
* 11/27/2016, ksb, redline incorporation
* 11/5/2017, ksb, prep for 2017, added Titanic creamed carrot recipe
* 11/25/2017, ksb, redline incorporation
* 12/16/2017, ksb, xmas redline incorporation
* 11/7/2018, ksb, prep for 2018

**Emergency Thaw (Use only if required)**

* Place bird (in original wrapping) in bucket in tub.
* Fill with cold water
* Should be ready for brining in about 90 minutes

**Dry-Brining (:60)**

½ to ¾ cup Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt

* Rinse turkey in cool water and remove neck, gizzard, heart, and liver. Throw away the liver, but keep everything else for the gravy broth preparation.
* Pat the turkey dry, turn it breast side down on a cutting board, holding it firmly, cut along one side of the backbone, starting near where the thigh meats the tail. Clip the front of the chest bone to simplify flattening.
* Spread open slightly and repeat with the other side to fully remove the backbone. Chop up the backbone and add the giblets for gravy preparation.
* **Remove the wish bone** and tail.
* Turn the turkey over and press down hard on the ridge of the breast bone and press down hard to flatten. You will hear some cracking.
* Tuck the wing tips under the breast.
* Generously sprinkle salt on all surfaces from a height of 6 to 10 inches for even coverage. The bird should be well-coated, but not completely encrusted both inside and out.
* Transfer to a rack set in a rimmed baking sheet and refrigerate, uncovered, for 24 to 48 hours.
* Don’t rinse and move directly to roasting
* You can dry brine for up to 3 days, but cover with plastic wrap or cheesecloth in that case.

**Gravy Broth (1:30)**

2 T vegetable oil

Turkey giblets, tail, backbone, and neck (don’t use liver (soft, brownish flat organ)—even pets don’t like it)

1 medium onion, peeled and chopped

1 quart chicken broth

2 cups water

4 vines fresh thyme

8 stems fresh Italian parsley (flat leaf)

12 leaves fresh sage

1 vine fresh rosemary

* Heat oil in large saucepan over medium-high heat.
* Brown turkey giblets, tail, and neck for 10 to 15 minutes.
* Add onion and cook for 3 minutes.
* Cover and cook over low heat for 20 minutes (you want it to burn into the saucepan).
* Add chicken broth and water. Bring to boil deglazing the bottom of the pan.
* Add herbs and simmer for 30 minutes. Skim foam from surface as needed.
* Pour broth through fine-mesh strainer.
* Discard the turkey heart and gizzard.
* Refrigerate broth and diced giblets.

**Spatchcocked Turkey (Prep :15, Roasting 1:00 to 2:00, Resting :15, Carving)**

1 Turkey (dry-brined)

1 large onion, rough chopped

3 large carrots, peeled, rough chopped

6 stalks celery, rough chopped

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Kitchen Shears

* Place rack in lowest position and preheat oven to 450°F.
* Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and cover with chopped onions, carrots, and celery. This flavors and moisturizes the drippings
* Add a roasting rack to the pan and place the turkey on it. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
* Transfer the turkey to the oven and roast until the deepest part of the breast registers 155°F
* Cook time estimate 110 minutes for a 14.5 pound bird
* Let rest at room temperature for 30 minutes before carving.

Important Info:

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2Lie172c3Y>

Salting (Dry-brining) vs. Wet Brining: <https://www.seriouseats.com/2012/11/the-food-lab-the-truth-about-brining-turkey-thanksgiving.html>

(Note the article and the video were both done by the same dude

**Turkey Gravy (:45 while roasting, :45 after roasting)**

Gravy broth prepared previously

9 tablespoons unsalted butter

½ cup dry white flour

1 ½ cups white grape juice (or 2 C Dry White Wine, Pinot Grigio)

4 Tablespoons white wine vinegar (skip if using wine)

Ground black pepper

* In a Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Whisk in the flour. Cook, stirring constantly, until light nutty brown and fragrant, 10-15 minutes. DO NOT BURN.
* Bring previously prepared gravy broth to a simmer.
* Gradually add hot turkey broth to the roux. Vigorous and constant whisking at this point is the key to avoiding lumps. Use caution with this step. The roux has a high boiling point and when you add liquid it will immediately boil, potentially causing burns. I recommend wearing an oven mitt.
* Add grape juice and vinegar
* Simmer gravy, stirring occasionally and skimming foam from surface with a spoon until thickened, about 30 minutes. Set aside, covered, until turkey is done—I let it sit on very low heat for a few hours waiting for the drippings.
* While turkey is “resting”, pour the drippings and liquids through a fine-mesh strainer into a medium size saucepan.
* Press down on the roasting pan solids to extract all liquids and add to the gravy base
* Keep warm for serving.

**Carving the Bird**

* Use sharp knife
* Cut between thigh and breast to remove thigh and leg.
* Then separate drumstick from thigh
* Remove bones from thigh and slice resulting dark meat filet
* Remove wings and cut drumette away from outer wing sections
* Begin cutting breast meat off the center bone, remove entire filet, repeat with other side
* Cut one breast into chunks, the other into thin slices.

**Purée of Yukon Gold Potatoes with Parmesan (1.5x size)**

5 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes , peeled, quartered, and rinsed

3 teaspoons kosher salt

2-1/4 cups whole milk

3/4 cup heavy cream

3/4 cup unsalted butter

1 cup fresh grated Parmigiano Reggiano

Freshly ground black pepper

* Put the quartered potatoes in a large saucepan with enough cold water to cover. Partially cover the pot and bring to a boil.
* Uncover, add the salt, and reduce the heat to a gentle boil. Cook potatoes until tender, 10-12 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the milk and cream until hot, but do not boil.
* Drain the potatoes in a colander, let sit for 15 minutes to dry and finish cooking.
* Use a potato ricer, masher, or food mill to mash the potatoes.
* Blend the butter, and Parmigiano into the potatoes. Gradually add the milk mixture until the purée is as soft and moist as you like.
* Add salt and pepper to taste.
* Keep warm in Crock-pot or similar. I typically simply put the pot of potatoes in boiling water.

**Simple Stuffing (2:15)**

1 and a half loaves of country white bread

6T butter plus more for the dish

6 celery stalks, sliced using thin mandolin slicer

4 large shallots, minced using small mandolin dicer

3 garlic cloves, minced

Coarse salt and ground pepper

¾ cup grape juice plus 2 T white wine vinegar

¾ cup parsley, chopped

4 large eggs, lightly beaten

24 oz chicken broth

* Preheat oven to 400°. Arrange bread in a single layer, bake until crisp, but not browned, about 10 minutes. Use pizza pan and convection setting on oven, turn/rotate at 5 min.
* In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add celery, shallots, and garlic. Season with salt and pepper.
* Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Add grape juice and cook until evaporated, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer to large bowl.
* Add bread, parsley, and eggs. Season with 1.5t salt and 1/4 t pepper. Stir to combine. Mix in half of broth. Add more broth until stuffing is moist but not wet (no liquid in the bottom of the bowl)
* Place in a buttered baking dish and **cover with buttered aluminum foil**. Bake until warmed, 30 minutes. Uncover and bake until golden, about 15 minutes more.

### Cranberry Sauce (:45)

* 24 oz fresh cranberries
* 2 ½ cups packed light brown sugar
* 2 cup fresh orange juice from 6 large oranges
* 24 whole black peppercorns
* 16 whole allspice berries
* 20 whole cloves
* 8” cinnamon stick

1. Heat the cranberries, sugar, orange juice in a 4-qt saucepan over medium heat. Make sure to use a lined pan, as a metal one can react with all the acid in the mix.
2. Place the peppercorns, allspice, cloves, and cinnamon in a piece of heavy weight cheesecloth and tie ends with twine.
3. Add the spice bundle to the cranberry mixture and cook, stirring often, until cranberries soften and mixture thickens. Cook no longer than 15 minutes otherwise the pectin may break down and the mix won't gel.
4. Transfer mixture to a medium bowl and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
5. Discard the spice bundle and stir sauce before serving.

Note: Saw an Alton Brown's Good Eats a very similar recipe except after cooking he used a hand chopper to chunk the berries and then poured the mixture through a fine mesh strainer (don't press, just let it drain) into a mold to make "canned cranberry sauce." Something to try in the future!

**HMS Titanic Creamed Carrots (2x size)**

2 pounds carrots

4 Tablespoons butter

4 Tablespoons finely chopped onions

4 Tablespoons flour

1 Teaspoon salt

½ Teaspoon Pepper

2 Tablespoons honey

2-1/2 cups milk

* Peel and slice the carrots
* Cook, covered in a small amount of water over medium heat until tender. Drain.
* In a medium size skillet, melt butter over medium-high heat.
* Sauté onions in butter until tender.
* Stir in flour, salt, pepper, and sugar; cook for 1 minute
* Gradually add milk, stirring constantly until mixture thickens and starts to boil
* Pour over carrots and stir to coat.

### Green Bean Casserole with Caramelized Onions - Susan Yurish - Hanna's Specialty Foods

* For Onions (step 1)
  + 3 large onions, cut into thin half moons
  + 8 T unsalted butter
  + 1/2 cup vegetable oil
  + 1/2 t ground cayenne pepper
  + 2 t kosher salt
  + 1 t ground black pepper

1. Heat the butter and oil in a large sauté pan on medium heat.
2. Add the onions, cayenne, salt, and pepper and sauté for 5 minutes.
3. Reduce the heat to medium low and cook, stirring occasionally for another 45 minutes.
4. Onions should be golden brown and have a thick, caramel-like coating. Set aside.

* For Green Beans and Mushrooms (step 2)
  + 2 T unsalted butter
  + 1 T vegetable oil
  + 1-1/2 pounds fresh green beans (ends trimmed), steamed prior to adding to mushrooms

OR

* + 2 pounds fresh Brussels Sprouts
  + 1 pound fresh mushrooms, crimini/baby-bell
  + 2 t salt
  + 1 t black pepper
  + 2 t soy sauce

1. Sauté green beans and mushrooms in butter and oil.
2. Season with salt and pepper and cook until tender.
3. Complete step 3 here.
4. Combine green beans, mushrooms, soy sauce and hot cream sauce together.
5. Taste for seasoning.
6. Place in a 2-quart baking dish.
7. Top with caramelized onions.
8. Cover with foil and bake at 350°F for 20 to 25 minutes, or until heated through and bubbling. When cooking many other things in the same oven, increase bake time to 45 minutes.

* For Cream Sauce (step 3)
  + 4 T unsalted butter
  + 1 t minced garlic
  + 1 medium onion, 1/2" dice
  + 3 C heavy cream
  + 2 t kosher salt
  + 1 t fresh ground pepper

1. Melt the butter in a sauté pan over medium heat; do not brown!
2. Add the onions and garlic and sauté until translucent, about 15 minutes.
3. Add cream, salt, and pepper.
4. Bring to a boil and reduce heat.
5. Simmer until thickened, 10 to 15 minutes; it will cover the back of your spoon.

### Mashed Sweet Potatoes with Brown Sugar and Pecans (1:30)

* 1 cup packed light brown sugar
* ½ cup chopped pecans
* ¼ cup chilled butter
* 4 pounds red-skinned sweet potatoes (yams) peeled, cut into ½” pieces
* 4 large eggs
* 3 Tbsp pure maple syrup
* 2 Tbsp vanilla extract
* 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

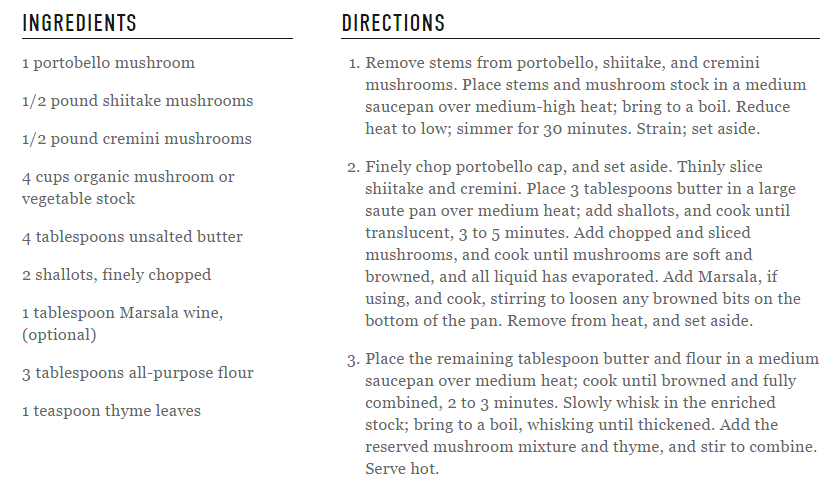
1. Mix sugar, pecans, and butter in a small bowl. Cover and chill until ready to use.
2. Butter a 13”x9”x2” glass baking dish. Cook sweet potatoes in a large pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 12 minutes. Drain. Let stand in colander 15 minutes.
3. Purée sweet potatoes in food mill.
4. Beat eggs, syrup, vanilla, lemon juice, and salt in a large bowl. Mix in puréed sweet potatoes. Transfer sweet potato mixture to prepared dish. Do not overfill dish, and ensure there is room for melted butter to pool in dish otherwise the butter will just leak into the oven and burn. Sprinkle pecan mixture evenly over potatoes.
5. Bake until set and top bubbles, about 60-75 minutes at 350° F. When cooking many other things in the same oven, increase bake time to 90 minutes.
6. Let stand 15 minutes before serving.
7. 2014 Notes: made too much with original recipe (5 pounds yams)…could maybe decrease to 3 pounds.

### Maple Butternut Squash (1:00)

* 2-large butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1” cubes
* ½ cup butter
* ¼ cup heavy cream
* 1/3 cup maple syrup
* 3 T apple cider
* ¼ t cinnamon
* 1 to 2 T alcohol free brandy flavoring
* Salt, Pepper, and Nutmeg to taste

1. Boil the peeled butternut squash until tender, about 15 minutes.
2. Drain in a colander and let stand 15 minutes.
3. Pass through food mill and then use and masher to puree.
4. Add remaining ingredients and continue to mash until blended.
5. Turn into an oven proof baking dish.
6. Above may be prepared a day head
7. Bake at 350 for 30-45 minutes. When cooking many other things in the same oven, increase bake time to 75 minutes. 2013 baked 60 min, not quite hot enough

### Vegetarian Mushroom Gravy (Martha Stewart website)



Very good, but too thick. Added an additional 8 oz of vegetable stock and still very thick. Perhaps reduce flour to 2 T. Substituted 1 T alcohol free marsala flavoring. Took about 1:00 to make.

### Dreamy Creamed Carrots, Onions, and Mushrooms (Michael Mina) (4:30)

* 3 T Canola oil
* 6 large shallots, sliced (1 ½ cups)
* 1 ½ cups grape juice (dry) plus alcohol free chardonnay flavoring
* 1 ½ quarts heavy cream
* 1 T Salt
* 1 T Pepper
* 2 lbs carrots, peeled, halved lengthwise and sliced crosswise ½ inch thick on the diagonal
* 6 T unsalted butter
* 2 T Finely grated fresh ginger
* 2 lbs white pearl onions (frozen and peeled suggested)
* 2 T horseradish
* 4 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
* 3 lbs mixed mushrooms (shiitake, cremini, and oyster), stems trimmed and caps thick sliced
* 1 T chopped thyme

1. In a large saucepan, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the shallots and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 8 minutes. Add the grape juice and cook until reduced to 1/4 cup, about 25 minutes. Add the cream and bring to a boil. Simmer over moderately low heat until thickened and reduced to 4 1/2 cups, about 1 1/2 hours. Strain the cream sauce through a fine sieve into a medium bowl, then season with salt and pepper.
2. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil. Add the carrots and cook over high heat until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Drain and pat dry. Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in the same saucepan. Add the ginger and cook over moderate heat until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the carrots and cook, tossing, until coated. Add 1 1/2 cups of the cream sauce and simmer over moderately low heat until the carrots are tender and the sauce is slightly reduced, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a bowl, cover and keep warm. Clean the saucepan.
3. Fill the same saucepan with water and bring to a boil. Add the onions and cook over high heat until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Drain and rinse in cold water. Trim the root ends and pull off the skins. Return the peeled onions to the saucepan. Add 1 1/2 cups of the cream sauce and the horseradish. Simmer over moderate heat until the sauce is slightly reduced and the onions are tender, about 2 minutes longer. Transfer to a bowl, cover and keep warm.
4. Melt the remaining 4 tablespoons of butter in a very large, deep skillet. Add the garlic and cook over moderately high heat until lightly browned. Add the mushrooms and thyme and cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid is evaporated and the mushrooms are golden, about 15 minutes. Stir in the remaining 1 1/2 cups of cream sauce, season with salt and pepper and cook until the sauce is slightly reduced and the mushrooms are very tender. Transfer to a bowl. Serve all of the vegetables.
5. Can be made ahead and refrigerated overnight. 4 hours prep.
6. <http://www.foodandwine.com/recipes/dreamy-creamed-carrots-onions-and-mushrooms>
7. Suggest increasing carrots (3#) and decreasing or eliminating mushrooms.

Lessons Learned

* 2007
  + 22.47 pound Diestl all-natural hen
  + Turkey in oven at 8:43 @ 35.4F – 500F set (475F measured)
  + Added liquids, herbs, triangle at 9:17 @40.1 – Lowered to 370F
  + 9:43 @ 57.0F (370 set, 370 measured lowered to 360)
  + Lowered to 350
  + 10:43 @ 98.6F – 350 set, 355 measured
  + 11:43 @ 125.8
  + 12:43 @ 145.2
  + 13:43 @ 160.7
  + Out at 13:47
  + Immediately wrapped in foil and towel
  + Upon opening a few hours later, lots of juice had exited the turkey
  + Cooked perfectly, tasted great
  + Served 20 people…none left other than on carcass
  + Made soup out of remains
  + Observations
    - 1 pound per person yields no leftovers
    - Cooking without basting works great
    - Breast did brown slightly under triangle
    - Gravy too thin, but still tasted very good.
* 2009
  + 21.25 pound Diestl all-natural hen
  + Turkey in brine at 12:15 on Wednesday
  + Turkey out of brine at 09:00 on Thursday
  + Turkey in oven at 09:45 @ 46.2F (500 set, 500 measured)
  + Added liquid, herbs, and turkey triangle at 10:15 @51.3F. Lowered oven to 350F
  + 11:15 @ 92.1
  + 11:45 @ 105.1
  + 12:45 @ 131.9
  + 13:45 @ 154.2. Removed turkey triangle to finish browning. Some skin pulled off
  + Turkey out of oven at 161.2 around 14:15 (forgot to note exact time)
  + Left in roasting pan and covered with foil and towels.
  + Turkey was beautiful, with a shiny golden color. Cooked perfectly, tasted great
  + Temperature continued to increase up to about 171.
  + Turkey still very warm when carving at 16:45, 2.5 hours after removing from oven.
  + Served 3 kids, 8 adults, and 2 seniors. Had tons of leftover turkey
  + Could have used more gravy…thin a bit more with turkey drippings (1/2 gallon thrown out—should have used)
  + Could have used more mashed potatoes
  + Stuffing, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, and cranberry sauce all good proportions. All were very tasty.
  + Could have made about half as much spinach. Also should have reduced it longer…too watery.
  + Stuffing was a bit moist. Consider cooking for longer. Very tasty though.
* 2010
  + 18.38 pound Deistl all-natural hen
  + Turkey in brine at 10:50 on Wednesday
  + Turkey out of brine at 8:15 on Thursday
  + Turkey in oven at 9:00 @ 44.8F
  + Added liquid, herbs, and turkey triangle at 9:30. Temperature error.
  + Temperature problems until completion at about 12:15, covered with foil and towel.
  + Turkey was great, still hot when carved at 2:30
  + Don't burn the gravy roux. Could use more gravy. Sweet potatoes grainy. Green beans were excellent
  + Cooked stuffing for 30 min at 350, then added sweet potatoes and green beans and switched to 350/Convection. Cooked beans in about 35 min, then switched back to 350 bake for 25 min. Then lowered temp to 200 to keep warm for serving and reloaded beans.
* 2011
  + Ordered Diestel All Natural Turkey from Whole Foods. 20 to 22 Pounds @$2.49/lb. Will request around 21 pounds at pickup.
  + Invited: Keith, Michele, Emily, Kennedy, Mom, Dad, Tracey, Ken, Cindy, Warren, G.G. = 9+2
  + Plotting previous three turkeys yields a cooktime (in minutes) of 26.56\*weight(lbs) - 293.41, so estimated cook time is 264 minutes or 4:24.
  + Bird temperature at 46 degrees after brining.
  + In oven at 09:00
  + 09:30 53F
  + 10:05 60F
  + 10:32 100F
  + 11:04 120F
  + 11:38 139F
  + 12:07 153F
  + Repositioned sensor
  + 12:35 158F
  + 12:45 161 to 162 out of oven
  + Wrapped in tin foil and towels until carving at 3pm. Was very hot, but lots of juice had drained out. Turkey meat was delicious, and I didn't detect any dryness, but I can't help but wonder about all the juice in the plate during resting time.
  + All sides came out well. I added :15 minutes to the baking time of each dish and all were removed at about 3:20...everything was great.
  + Green beans were the best/most interesting again.
  + Need better coordination with getting ice water/drinks/chairs at table in final prep for dinner.
  + Need better coordination during dinner and dessert with watching glasses.
* 2013
  + Ordered Diestel Organic Turkey from Whole Foods. 20 to 22 Pounds @ $3.69/lb. Will request 21 pounds at pickup on Tuesday at 9 to 9:30am
  + Invited: Keith, Michele, Emily, Kennedy, Mom, Dad, Tracey, Ken, Cindy, Warren, G.G (maybe) = 8+3?
  + Thermometer broken when use attempted. Need to test equipment in the future prior to Thursday morning.
  + Bird in oven at 9am on the dot. Unsure of temperature as Michele was at Safeway and then Wal-Mart to get a new temperature probe.
  + Bird cooked faster than planned none-the-less, out at 12:45, about :30 min earlier than expected. Bird was not at all frozen or frosty…does that have anything to do with it? Did brine in fridge, so should have been pretty cold at start.
  + Turkey looked dry when taken out of oven, but was still moist and yummy. As usual there was a lot of juice on the plate after standing for 2.5 hours. Still very hot when carving.
  + Need to slightly increase cook time for stuffing and squash.
  + Cooked with no alcohol and everything was as good or better than ever.
  + Probably makes too much cranberry sauce…most use just a bit. Perhaps cut recipe in half?
* 2014
  + Ordered a Diestel Heirloom Organic Turkey from Boulder Whole Foods. 20 to 22 pounds @ $5.49/lb. Pickkup at 9am on Tuesday, 11/25.
  + Evite sent to Emily, Kennedy, Mom, Dad, Tracey, Ken, Cindy, and Warren, 8 adults, 2 kids. Added Angie and Sophie, 9 adults, 3 kids.
  + Troubles cooking turkey, but it came out okay
    - 23.42 pound Diestl American Heirloom
    - Temperature probe poorly placed at start and did not work well. Thrown away.
    - In oven at 7:22, probe said 52°F, something was wrong then
    - Out of oven around 10:30 for 10 to 15 minutes to assess temperature—used backup probe that I found to realize temperature was only at 150°F (original probe was showing 167°F)
    - Roasted for another hour, in for about 240 minutes, temp probes indicated done.
    - Turkey was good, white meat was maybe a touch dry. Dark meat excellent. Plenty of turkey for all, didn’t even touch legs or wings.
  + Forgot to add giblets to roasting pan. Gravy tasted okay, but was too fruity (probably from grape juice)—would have preferred more turkey flavor.
  + 7 pounds of potatoes was WAY too much…decrease to 5 pounds.
  + Stuffing was way too wet. Tried to cook using convection to dry out, but crusted over the top and probably sealed in the liquid…never dried up. Decrease liquid?
  + Used only 15 oz of cranberries…was enough, but would need more if doing the molded gel version.
* 2015
  + Attending: Mom, Dad, Tracey, Ken, Derek, Lisa, Angie, Sophie, Michele, Keith, Kennedy, Emily. 12 people, 4 vegetarians, so need turkey for 8.
  + Ordered Longmont Dairy items for delivery one week prior.
  + 13.87 pound turkey, Diestl Pasture Raised (Step 5+)
  + Spatchcocking went very well, the process was easy and the bird cooked quickly 60-75 minutes
  + Portions were perfect for the group of 12, with adequate leftovers.
  + Field Roast was good, but try Gardein next time—also purchase better mushroom gravy
  + Shopped on Monday, cooked on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday—much easier and more pleasant.
* 2016
  + Attending: Mom, Dad, Tracey, Ken, ~~Cindy, Warren~~, Keith, Kennedy for Turkey and Michele and Emily for Field Roast
  + Ordered 14-16 lb Diestel Natural, Non-GMO Verified Turkey from the Superior Whole Foods for 9am pickup on 11/21.
  + Ordered Longmont Dairy items for delivery on 11/18.
  + 13.18 pound turkey, Diestl Natural. Dry brined from Monday afternoon to Thursday morning using salt and baking soda mix. Salt disappeared (as it should), but the baking soda was left on the skin and gave a bit of a funny flavor. Don’t use baking soda next time. Leave more of the neck skin flap in place next time—meat dried out without skin in that area.
  + Turkey in the oven at 11:15 at 36°F, out 105 minutes later at 150°F. On counter temperature in breast continued up to 166°F. Could perhaps pull out at 145° as suggested in YouTube video.
  + Turkey fed all with leftovers for everyone to take home. Additionally had enough for 1.5-2 additional meals here. Ran low on potatoes and sweet potatoes (which were overdone).
  + Gardein Holiday Roast was good with mushroom gravy.
  + Creamed Carrots/Onions/Mushrooms were very good…could have used more carrots. Use frozen/peeled pearl onions? Mushrooms made too much
* 2017
  + Attending: Us, Carol, Debbie, Madison, Cindy, and Warren: 6 adults, 3 kids
  + Ordered 14-16 lb Diestel Pasture-Raised/Step 5+ Non-GMO Turkey from Longmont Whole Foods for pickup on Monday, 11/20 at 9am.
  + Ordered a pumpkin pie, cherry pie, and two pecan pies from Whole Foods for pickup 11/20 at 9am.
  + Received a 14.47 pound bird at Whole Foods. I requested larger, but they said they had no others, and that I needed to make a note when ordering…perhaps you have to call in an order?
  + The turkey cooked in 100 minutes (pulled out of the oven when the breast was at 150°F. It continued up to 160°F exactly. I think the dark meat could have been cooked a bit longer as there was evidence of some pink juice during carving. Perhaps put the temp sensor in the thickest part of the thigh next time and cook until 160°F?
  + I tried cooking the squash and stuffing prior to the turkey this year. I cooked the items then put them in the warmer and then back into the oven once the turkey was removed. We ended up with a 1 hour delay due to late arriving guests and the stuffing looked very overdone. It was very tasty, just not pretty.
  + The turkey was large enough for the dinner and ample leftovers. I think an estimate of 2 pounds per adult and about 1 pound per child is correct (15 for this crowd).
  + Gravy again was too fruity. Grape juice doesn’t work, and the chardonnay flavor adds a bitter component. Need to work on this recipe. Perhaps apple cider instead of grape juice?
  + Tried something new with the potatoes and it was a total fail. I sliced the potatoes with a mandolin and then soaked in water overnight to remove the starch. I then cooked the potatoes in milk, which ended up burning at the bottom of the pot which gave a burnt milk taste to them. Also, they didn’t rice/mash right, very lumpy. Revert to the written directions next year for sure.
  + The stuffing, even though it appeared burned, was very good. Using the smallest dice slice on the mandolin made the shallots essentially disappear into the mix and the flavor was fantastic. u used the thin slice for the celery as well and the same thing happened…flavor was there without any big crunch bits of celery or shallot. Excellent reviews.
  + I had to make the cranberry sauce twice as the spice bag opened (both times). Do not use the cheese cloth to make a bag again, get a tighter weave for sure.
  + Titanic creamed carrots were fantastic and easy to make. The cream sauce was made two days before and then heated before adding to the cooked carrots. This was Emily’s favorite item!
  + Emily and Kennedy were disappointed I dropped the sweet potatoes. Add them back in next year.
* 2017 Christmas
  + Attending: Us, Mom & Dad, Tracey & Ken: 6 adults, 2 kids
  + Ordered a 14-16 lb Diestel turkey, but Whole Foods didn’t have them in stock. Substituted a 14.51 pound Nature’s Rancher turkey, picked up Tuesday night during volleyball practice
  + Mom was in charge of dessert
  + Skipped appetizers due to late dinner time (Friday @ 8:30pm)
  + The turkey cooked a bit quicker than expected, but not much…plan 105 minutes for a 14.5 pound bird. Just the slightest pink tinge to some drippings…perhaps go 110 minutes next time…meat was very juicy and generally perfect though.
  + Swapped to using white grape juice (3/4 cup) plus 2 T white wine vinegar to simulate white wine…seemed about perfect in the stuffing and gravy.
* 2018 Thanksgiving
  + Invited Us, Mom & Dad, Tracey & Ken, Cindy & Warren, but Michele was in BOS. 9+2
  + Purchased 16.72 lb Diestel Pasture Raised Turkey
  + Mom will bring pies for 12
  + Longmont Dairy items ordered for delivery Friday before
  + Turkey cooked perfectly in 90 minutes. Legs and wings get wasted. Nobody eats them.
  + Potatoes were “sampled” by a roving feline. Next year keep the potatoes in the garage until ready for use.
  + Turkey was excellent. Used white wine in the gravy and it was the best in recent years.
  + Very few people ate carrots…don’t make next year. Sweet Potatoes and Mashed Potatoes are always best sellers.