

Thanksgiving Traditions



For as long as I can remember, I've prepared Thanksgiving dinner. I'm trying not to panic that Thanksgiving is less than 2 weeks away. This weekend I am determined to put a menu together and think about the table setting.



The good news is that my son will be flying home to stay for a week. He LOVES to cook so having his extra, capable hands in the kitchen will be a blessing.

My friend, Bob texted me yesterday and asked when I was going to post my Thanksgiving recipes. Today I'd like to share our typical Thanksgiving menu.

The first question every year is, "How will we roast the turkey?" There is the ongoing search for the perfect recipe that will roast a turkey that is well seasoned, juicy and properly cooked~~with no dry bites.

We used to wrap it in bacon prior to roasting to keep it moist and flavorful.



Two years ago we changed up the recipe and decided to do a dry brine. Simply combine one part baking powder with three to four parts kosher salt (about a teaspoon of baking powder per tablespoon of kosher salt will work), add some black pepper to taste, then sprinkle it evenly over the surface of the skin. Then—and this is key—let it rest, uncovered, in the refrigerator for 12 to 24 hours. The bird was cooked on a cookie sheet vs. a roasting pan. This simple recipe made the turkey skin soooooo crisp and the meat soooooo juicy. Plus you never have to baste it. For more info, click [here](#).



This year my son is suggesting an [Expertly Spiced and Glazed Roast Turkey](#) recipe by Bon Appetit. I'm not sure as I really love the dry rub one we've done the last two years~~it's a winning recipe.

Side Dishes

My favorite stuffing is Martha Stewart's [Herbed Corn Bread Stuffing](#) with raisins soaked in cognac and chestnuts, apples and sausage.



Uncle Bruce and Aunt Janiece nicknamed the traditional sweet potato side dish, "Drunken Sweet Potatoes" after determining the recipe needed more and more bourbon. One for me, one for the potatoes....you get the picture. The recipe is from The Family Circle Cookbook that my mother gave to me for Christmas in 1977. Since I cannot find an online link to it, the recipe is at the bottom of the post.



Trader Joe's recipe for [Roasted Brussel Sprouts](#) is a favorite all the children love. Roasting the Brussel sprouts in the maple syrup and dried cranberries, is a recipe anyone can love.



The mashed potatoes are another prized dish~~filled with butter, sour cream, cream cheese and chives. I don't really use a recipe for this but keep adding the ingredients until they are decadent.



What has now become our traditional salad was made by our friend, Connie a few years back. Not only is it delicious, but it gets better with age, unlike most salads. The recipe for Clever Kale Slaw is [here](#).



Not that we need more carbs, but I do make buttermilk biscuits from scratch using Martha Stewart's recipe [here](#). As far as Cranberry Sauce goes, I just make the recipe on the back of the Ocean Spray fresh cranberry bag.



Desserts. The family collectively picks out a cake to try from my favorite cake book, [Layered by Tessa Huff](#). Here are some pictures from previous years' cakes.



Chocolate Pomegranate Cake



Red Currant Chocolate Cake



Golden Champagne Celebration Cake

And of course, what is Thanksgiving without pie! Homemade apple and Dad's famous pumpkin pies are always a big hit!



Do you make the same recipes every year? Or do you mix it up and try new things? Am I the only one that is running behind schedule?!?!

Happy Saturday!



Bourbon Sweet Potatoes

4 pounds sweet potatoes or yams, 1/2 cup butter (1 stick) softened, 1/2 cup bourbon, 1/3 cup orange juice, 1/4 cup firmly packed light-brown sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon apple pie spice, 1/2 cup chopped pecans.

Scrub potatoes. Cook, covered in boiling salted water to cover in a large saucepan, about 35 minutes, or just until tender. Drain, cool slightly, peel.

Place potatoes in a large bowl, mash. Add the butter, bourbon, orange juice, brown sugar, salt and apple pie spice; beat till fluffy smooth.

Spoon into a buttered, 6 cup baking dish, sprinkle nuts around the edge.

Bake in at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until lightly browned. Makes 6 servings.