

Wellness

Wednesday



November 22nd, 2023

LifeAdvisor.com

Ulliance
Enhancing People. Improving Business.



Find your path to total well-being!

The Biggest Thanksgiving Turkey Mistakes, According To Food Safety Experts

As the holiday season approaches, many of us find ourselves preparing for the Thanksgiving feast. While the focus is often on having enough side dishes, drinks, and desserts for everyone, it's crucial not to overlook the importance of food safety. When handling raw turkey, there are common mistakes that can put your loved ones at risk of foodborne illness. To ensure a safe and delicious Thanksgiving meal, we spoke with food safety experts who shared their insights on the biggest mistakes people make when preparing and cooking turkey, as well as their recommendations for what to do instead.



1. Neglecting Hand Hygiene

One of the most basic yet overlooked steps in food preparation is proper hand hygiene. It's important to wash your hands thoroughly with hot water and soap before handling any food, especially when dealing with raw turkey. Keith Schneider, a food safety professor, warns that people often forget this step and unknowingly transfer bacteria from their hands to the food they're preparing. To prevent this, make it a habit to wash your hands for at least 20 to 30 seconds each time you handle raw turkey.

2. Improper Thawing Methods

Thawing your turkey safely is essential for even cooking and to eliminate the growth of harmful pathogens. Many people make the mistake of thawing their turkey on the counter, unaware that bacteria can multiply rapidly at room temperature. It's crucial to thaw your turkey in the refrigerator instead. According to Darin Detwiler, a professor of food policy, you should allow for a minimum of 24 hours or longer, depending on the size of the bird. As a general rule, you'll need 24 hours of thawing time for every four to five pounds of turkey. Be sure to plan ahead and give your turkey enough time to defrost properly.

3. Cooking a Frozen Turkey

If you're tempted to cook a frozen turkey in the oven, think again. Doing so can lead to uneven cooking, with some parts of the bird being overcooked while others remain undercooked. To ensure a safe and evenly cooked turkey, it's crucial to thaw it completely before placing it in the oven.

4. Allowing Turkey Juices to Drip in the Fridge

While thawing your turkey in the refrigerator, it's important to prevent cross-contamination by catching any liquid that may drip. Place the turkey on a tray or inside another container to collect the juices and avoid spreading potential pathogens in your fridge. This simple step can help keep your kitchen and other food items safe from contamination.

5. Washing Your Turkey

Contrary to popular belief, washing your turkey before cooking is not only unnecessary but can also increase the risk of bacterial contamination in your kitchen. Food safety experts strongly advise against washing poultry, as it can spread bacteria throughout your sink, countertops, dishes, and utensils. Instead of washing your turkey, focus on proper cooking methods to ensure that it reaches a safe internal temperature and eliminates any harmful bacteria.

6. Not Rotating the Turkey in the Oven

To ensure even cooking, it's important to rotate the turkey while it's in the oven. Ovens can have hot and cool zones, which can lead to uneven cooking if the bird is not rotated. By periodically turning the turkey, you can ensure that it cooks thoroughly and all parts reach a safe temperature.

7. Neglecting to Use a Meat Thermometer

A meat thermometer is an essential tool in the kitchen, especially when it comes to cooking turkey. It's the only reliable way to determine if the turkey has reached a safe internal temperature. According to Ray Campbell, a health and safety manager, the internal temperature of the turkey should reach 165 degrees Fahrenheit to ensure that any harmful pathogens have been eliminated. Always insert the meat thermometer into the thickest parts of the turkey, such as the breast or where the body joins the thigh or wing joint, for accurate readings.

8. Stuffing the Turkey

Stuffing the turkey has been a long-standing tradition for many families. However, food safety experts recommend cooking the stuffing separately instead of inside the bird. The reason behind this is that the stuffing may not reach a safe internal temperature when cooked inside the turkey. To eliminate any potential pathogens, the stuffing should reach 165 degrees Fahrenheit at its center.

9. Not Allowing Enough Resting Time

After taking the turkey out of the oven, it's important to allow it to rest before carving. Resting allows the juices to redistribute throughout the meat, resulting in a juicier and more flavorful turkey. Not giving the turkey enough resting time can lead to dry meat. As a general guideline, let the turkey rest for about 20 to 30 minutes before carving.

10. Storing Leftovers Improperly

When it comes to storing leftovers, it's crucial to follow proper food safety guidelines to prevent food-borne illnesses. After the meal, promptly refrigerate any leftovers in shallow containers to allow for quick cooling. Leftovers should be consumed within three to four days or frozen for longer storage. Be sure to reheat leftovers to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit before serving.

11. Not Cleaning and Sanitizing Properly

Proper cleaning and sanitizing of kitchen surfaces, utensils, and cutting boards are essential to prevent cross-contamination. When handling raw turkey, it's important to clean and sanitize all surfaces and utensils that come into contact with the bird. Use an antibacterial kitchen cleaner to ensure that you eliminate any potential bacteria and create a safe cooking environment.

12. Overlooking Food Safety Resources

Finally, one of the biggest mistakes people make is overlooking the wealth of food safety resources available. Take advantage of reputable sources such as government websites, food safety organizations, and educational institutions to stay informed about best practices for handling and cooking turkey. These resources can provide valuable information on food safety guidelines and help you ensure a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving feast.



SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE WITH MARSHMALLOWS



INGREDIENTS

Equipment

- Pie Dish

Ingredients

- 2 lbs sweet potatoes, about 5 medium, peeled
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1 tsp agave, or honey, brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- pinch nutmeg
- pinch allspice
- 8 oz can unsweetened crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 tbsp chopped pecans
- 1 cup mini marshmallows

WHY CHOOSE A HEALTHIER SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE?

Before we dive into the recipe, let's take a moment to understand why choosing a healthier sweet potato casserole is a great idea. Sweet potatoes themselves are packed with nutrients and offer numerous health benefits. They are an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, manganese, potassium, and B vitamins. Additionally, sweet potatoes are rich in antioxidants, particularly beta-carotene. By opting for a healthier version of sweet potato casserole, you can enjoy these nutritional benefits without compromising on taste.

VARIATIONS

Butter: While this recipe doesn't call for butter, you can stir in 1 tablespoon of unsalted butter for added richness and flavor.

Pecan crumble: If you're not a fan of marshmallows, you can create a pecan crumble topping by combining more chopped pecans and a sprinkle of brown sugar.

Vanilla: For an extra burst of flavor, add some vanilla extract to the sweet potato mixture. You can also try a Vanilla Sweet Potato Casserole with Streusel Topping for a unique twist.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 1/10th, Calories: 132.5 kcal, Carbohydrates: 29.5 g, Protein: 1.5 g, Fat: 2 g, Sodium: 15.5 mg, Fiber: 2.5 g, Sugar: 10.5 g



INSTRUCTIONS



HOW TO MAKE IT

Follow these steps to create the perfect healthier sweet potato casserole:

1. Begin by preheating your oven to 400°F.
2. Peel the sweet potatoes and chop them into large chunks.
3. Place the sweet potato chunks in a pot with water and boil until they are fork-tender.
4. Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot.
5. Mash the sweet potatoes using a potato masher or hand mixer.
6. Add in the golden raisins, agave (or other natural sweetener), ground cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice and pineapple. Mix well.
7. Spray a round baking dish (such as a pie dish, casserole dish, or ramekins) with oil to prevent sticking.
8. Transfer the sweet potato mixture into the prepared baking dish.
9. Top the sweet potato mixture with chopped pecans and mini marshmallows.
10. Place the baking dish in the preheated oven and bake for 15 minutes, or until the marshmallows are golden and slightly melted.
11. Remove from the oven and let it cool for a few minutes before serving.

FEATURED EXERCISE

<https://www.popsugar.com/fitness/kelsey-wells-15-minute-lower-body-dumbbell-strength-workout-48236284#photo-48236288>Featured Exercise ► **Single-Leg Romanian Deadlift**

HOW TO DO IT:

To perform the Single-Leg Romanian Deadlift correctly, follow these steps:

1. Get into position: Grip a kettlebell in your left hand (to start) and shift all of your weight onto your right foot. Lift your head, straighten your spine, thrust out your chest, and tuck in your tailbone to shift your pelvis forward, parallel to the floor.
2. Lock in your balance: Inhale, drawing air into your belly, and use it to tighten your core muscles. Clench your free right hand into a fist and reach it out to the side for balance.
3. Start bending forward: Hinge at the hips, shifting your buttocks slightly backward as you bend forward. Keep your eyes locked on the floor to maintain proper neck alignment. Lift your left leg behind you and tighten your right glute muscles for stability.
4. Reach the bottom: Keep your hips pointed straight toward the floor without twisting or rotating. Maintain your chest thrust out and shoulders back. Bend until you feel a stretch in your hamstrings.
5. Come back up: Engage your glutes and hamstrings to push back up, thrusting your hips forward to achieve a "lockout" position. Regain your balance, then repeat the process after a short pause.
6. Repeat: Complete a full set on one side, then switch feet and transfer the weight to your other hand to repeat on the opposite side. Perform an equal number of reps on each side while maintaining proper form.

[Click here to view online!](#)

It is essential to practice this exercise regularly to master the correct form and ensure safety throughout the movement.

THE BENEFITS: The Single-Leg Romanian Deadlift engages secondary stabilizing muscles, adding a balance component that targets the posterior chain muscles and enhances stability. It targets primary movers like the hamstrings and glutes, as well as the abs, obliques, lower back, and lower leg muscles.

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



Meet Ulliance Senior
Wellness Account Manager