From the Kitchen of Bob Bires

MY MOTHER-IN-LAW'S ASPARAGUS CASSEROLE

2 long cans asparagus, drained (save 1/2 cup canning liquid)
2 cups white sauce (recipe follows)
1 cup sharp cheddar, grated
4 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
saltines or club crackers, crushed

Directions: For the white sauce, melt 2 tbsp butter in a quart pan over medium heat. When bubbling, whisk in 2 tbsp flour. Stir until not dry. Add 1 1/2 cups milk and 1/2 cup asparagus liquid. Cook until thickened, stirring often. Season with salt and pepper. In a small casserole dish, layer half the asparagus, then half the white sauce, half the eggs, and half the cheese. Repeat layers. Do not stir. Top with crushed crackers and bake at 350 degrees until bubbly and browned, 30 to 40 minutes.

DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING GUMBO

1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup flour
1 large onion, chopped
1 green pepper, chopped
2 large ribs celery, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 quarts chicken stock (or make your own from turkey carcass)
4 cups leftover turkey, cut up, preferably dark meat
1 lb andouille or Conecuh sausage, sliced into coins and browned
1 cup or more frozen, sliced okra
1 bay leaf
1 tsp Creole or Cajun seasoning of your choice
1 tsp dried thyme
salt and pepper and hot sauce to taste
chopped scallions and parsley for garnish

Directions: Make sure to chop your vegetables before you begin. In a large, heavy pot, heat the oil over medium heat, then add the flour and stir constantly with a large wooden spoon until the roux is at least a milk-chocolate color. This may take 20 minutes. Be careful not to splatter roux. Immediately add the onion, pepper, celery, and garlic and sauté until softened. Add stock, seasonings, turkey, sausage, and okra. Bring to a boil. Simmer for at least an hour. Correct seasonings, maybe add some cayenne. Before serving, add scallions and parsley.

Can add all kinds of Thanksgiving leftovers that will make it even better: gravy, peas, green beans, mashed potatoes, etc. Serve over dressing instead of rice, if you have some. You won't be sorry. Make any time of year with chicken instead of turkey, if you like.