

# On The Homefront

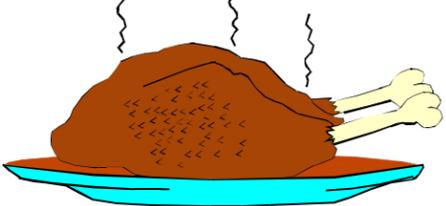
Each week a different business-person, artisan or professional who lives or works in Lansing will share some aspect about his or her occupation that may be useful to Lansing residents. Interested in sharing your skills? Call us at 533-7963.

## Turkey FUNDamentals: Take the Guesswork out of Roasting a Turkey

By Donna L. Scott

Okay, so it's your turn to host the annual Thanksgiving feast for the entire family. You've known for three years that your time was coming, but the advance warning hasn't increased your comfort level. Aunt Meredith has been cooking turkeys for thirty years, and Cousin Ina is a gourmet cook. Can you tackle a turkey without being traumatized?

Believe it or not, taking care of "Tom" isn't that tough. Just follow our "Turkey FUNDamentals" and your bird will turn out fine without a lot of toil and trouble. The experts at USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline say that each November, both novice and experienced cooks have the same basic questions on preparing a turkey. Here are the answers.



### Q - How Big a Turkey Should I Buy?

You'll need about one pound per person, or a pound and a half per person if you have hearty eaters or want ample leftovers. If you're having an "open house" and you're not quite sure how much meat you'll need, you could cook and carve an extra bird a few days ahead.

### Q - When Should I Buy the Turkey?

Bob Baker and June Darfler worked on comparison taste panels in the Poultry Department at Cornell and found that the quality and taste of frozen and fresh turkey are quite similar. However, the keeping time is not. A frozen turkey can be purchased months in advance, but a fresh bird should be bought only 1 to 2 days ahead.

### Q - What Kind of Turkey Should I Buy?

There are basically two types of raw birds to choose from—a prebasted bird (typical ingredients include vegetable oil, broth, spices) or an unbasted bird to which nothing has been added. Personal preference usually dictates this choice. You can also buy frozen, pre-stuffed birds. For safety reasons we DON'T recommend buying pre-stuffed, fresh birds, though.

USDA Grade A is the highest quality grade for poultry and the one commonly

found in stores. Grade A poultry has good shape/structure, fat covering, and is free of pinfeathers and defects such as cuts or bruises.

### Q - Is a Tom Better Than A Hen?

Age, not gender, is the determining factor for tenderness. All turkeys in the market are young, usually 4-6 months old. A hen generally weighs less than 16 pounds and a tom is usually over 16 pounds.

### Q - How Long Will It Take To Thaw A Turkey?

It's best to thaw your turkey in the refrigerator. The rule of thumb is a minimum of 24 hours of defrost time for every 5 pounds of turkey. Thus it can take 4-5 days to defrost a 20-pound turkey. A completely thawed bird will last for an additional 1 to 2 days in the refrigerator once defrosted.

If you need to speed up thawing time, it is safe to defrost the bird in a large utility sink of cold water. Submerge the wrapped bird in cold water. Check or change the water every 30 minutes to make sure the water remains cold. Allow 30 minutes per pound to thaw this way.

### To Stuff or Not to Stuff?

For uniform results and for more safety, it is recommended to cook stuffing outside the bird. However, if you stuff the bird, stuff it loosely and be sure the center reaches 165°F during cooking.

### Q - How Long Should I Roast the Turkey?

Roughly 15-18 minutes per pound for an unstuffed bird, and 18-24 minutes per pound for a stuffed bird. Have your oven preheated to 325° F.

The USDA **highly recommends** the use of a meat thermometer to determine doneness.

A whole turkey is done when the temperature reaches 180°F in the inner thigh. A breast is done when it reaches 170°F at its thickest part. The juices should run clear when you poke a meat fork into the bird. Stuffing temperature should reach at least 165°F.

Still, cooking times do vary! Every year people wonder why their turkey is done too early or too late. There are many reasons - oven temperature may not be accurate, the turkey is still partially frozen in the center or the roasting pan is too small and heat flow is inhibited. (Continued on page 6)

# Historian's Pen

by Louise Bement

The Village of Portland, Tompkins County, NY, the youngest of Tompkins County's many prosperous hamlets, has sprung into existence very much like some of our Western towns did during the booming days of 1882-'83. Its growth has been marvelous, and the chances are greatly in favor of its becoming one of the most prosperous towns on Cayuga Lake.

Only a few months ago the land upon which the village stands was an unproductive piece of land. There are now thirty houses completed and many more in process of erection. All this has been brought about by the keen foresight of its owner, Mr. Sherman Collins, one of Tompkins County's prosperous farmers.

In the immediate neighborhood of Portland, the Portland Cement Company and the Bradley Salt Works, have purchased land whereon to erect their cement and works, which according to plans and specifications, will be two of the largest industries in Tompkins County. To house and board the large number of employees which these two plants will employ was the object for which Mr. Collins started this town. He employed an expert surveyor, laid out his land into blocks, streets, alleys, etc., and commenced at once the erection of dwelling houses which could be rented at moderate prices to all who wished to take advantage thereof. Every house is occupied, and it is predicted by the most conservative people who have visited Portland that in less than another year,

at the rate it is growing, it will have a population of more than one thousand inhabitants. We hope so.

Other industries are contemplating locating on land adjacent to the village, and it is stated by one who knows that these industries will employ between three and four hundred men.

This idea of Mr. Collins' has been developing for some time, and as soon as he learned that a cement and salt company was about to be formed for the manufacture of cement and salt in this immediate section he grasped the opportunity, and by offering extraordinary inducements, finally succeeded in landing the two plants upon land immediately adjacent to his farm.

The Village of Portland is situated on a plateau overlooking the lake. There is just enough slope to the graded streets to give a natural drainage. The streets are wide, and the water mains have also been laid, so that every house will be supplied with water. A hotel and storehouse have already been opened and a post office established. The village has connections with Ithaca by telephone and telegraph, and a station has also been erected at Portland Point and railroad connection, via the Lehigh Valley, has been established with the outside world, either via Ithaca or Auburn. Plans for a schoolhouse are being prepared and will be erected early in the spring, the cost of which will be borne by Mr. Collins, in order to further the interests of his village enterprise.

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