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Here's a recipe from Mary Torell, Public Information Officer, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Poultry and Egg Division for using turkey leftovers.

Easy as Pie—Turkey Pot Pie

(Serves 6)

- 1 (15 ounce) package refrigerated pie crusts (2 crusts)
- 2 (10¾ ounce) cans cream of potato soup
- 1 (16 ounce) bag frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
- 2 cups chopped cooked turkey
- ½ cup low-fat milk
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

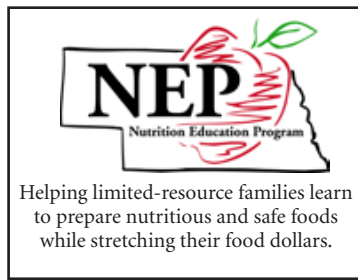
Wash hands. Place one pie crust in bottom of a 9-in deep-dish pie plate. In a large mixing bowl stir together soup, vegetables, turkey, milk, thyme and pepper. Spoon turkey mixture into crust. Top with second crust. Pinch sides together and cut slits in the top of the pie. Bake in a preheated 375° F. oven for 40 minutes. Cool before serving.

Approximate Nutrient Content Per 1 Serving: 493 calories; 19 gm protein; 23 gm fat (10 gm saturated fat); 726 gm carbohydrate; 726 mg sodium.

Recipe Source: Iowa Turkey Federation



\$tretch Your Food Dollar During the Holiday Season



Kelly Fisher

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As the heat of summer fades and temperatures get cooler, we know fall is upon us and winter is only around the corner. This change in temperature also gives us warning another season is quickly approaching—the holiday season. While this is a wonderful season filled with excitement for many, it also may bring feelings of dread for others. Let's face it, the holiday season is stressful and expensive.

This is the time of year good eating habits can fall by the wayside, and stress mixed with a poor diet is a sure recipe for getting rundown, and possibly even sick. With an already overflowing "to do" list, a trip to the doctor is the last thing you need this time of year.

Follow these tips to keep your nutrition on track during this chaotic time of year:

- **Don't try to diet during these few months.**

Instead, focus on taking steps to maintain your current weight. This will allow you to participate in food festivities without feeling overwhelmed.

- **Watch your portion sizes.** Take small samples of items you want to try, and then if you are still hungry, go back for more.

- Only indulge in the things you really want and forget the rest. You don't have to have some of everything!

- **Listen to your body.** Stop eating when you are just starting to feel full.

- **Move away from the food table.** You'll be less likely to overeat when food is not right next to you in range for absentminded grabs.

- **Keep talking.** Talking and chewing at the same time isn't polite, so socializing will also help you eat less.

- **Bring a favorite low-calorie, healthy dish to parties.** Fruit or veggie trays are a great option; do the prep work yourself and look for in-season produce to

reduce costs.

- **Don't go to a holiday party or gathering with an empty stomach or try to "save up" calories by skipping meals.**

These practices will leave you ravenous and you'll be more likely to overeat and make poor choices. Try to maintain your normal eating patterns and have a small, healthy snack before you leave.

- **Stay hydrated!** Just because it's cold outside doesn't mean our bodies don't need water or other no-or-low-calorie drinks. Plus, our body can sometimes mistake thirst for hunger leading to unnecessary calorie consumption.

- **Exercise and get your sleep!** These are two other important practices often forgotten when times get busy, but both will help you maintain your health and weight (and sanity) during these months.

Sources: "Healthy Holiday Eating: Ten Tips 'Tis the Eating Season" by John Casey, found at www.webmd.com/content/Article/53/613511.htm?printing=true; "Healthy Holidays" NEP Factsheet; SmartFood, December 2007, Volume 11, Issue 12, "Healthy Holiday Eating" www.numatters.com

The Keys to a Perfect Thanksgiving Meal

Mary Torell

Nebraska Department of Agriculture Poultry and Egg Division

Most everyone loves the traditional Thanksgiving meal — turkey with all the trimmings, including cranberries, mashed potatoes and pumpkin pie. A little organization, planning and a few simple recipes and tips, are the keys to a perfect Thanksgiving. And when it comes to preparing the turkey there's sometimes fear of the unknown — in this case, fear of what to do with a 15 pound turkey — causes unnecessary pre-Thanksgiving panic. People don't realize how easy it is to roast a turkey. The size of the bird intimidates them. With a few timely tips and meat thermometer know-how, everyone will be able to roast the perfect bird.

Keep in mind because turkey is naturally mild, it blends beautifully with an assortment of herbs, spices and other seasonings. Turkey is also very high in protein, but low in fat and calories. With many Americans feeling financially stretched with the prices of gas, food and just about everything else on the rise, turkey can help stretch your food budget. At an average of \$1.49 per pound for a whole bird, turkey is still a great choice when it comes to affordable and nutritious foods.

The Department of Agriculture's Poultry & Egg Division is again providing readers with some excellent

turkey cooking suggestions on their Web site. They are also offering the user-friendly, consumer-oriented brochure to ensure a safe and delicious turkey dinner. To request *Take the Guesswork Out of Roasting a Turkey*, contact Mary Torell, Public Information Officer, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Poultry and Egg Division at mtorell2@unl.edu or call 472-0752. Each contact will receive a \$2 off coupon for a regular NORBEST turkey, a Nebraska grown product. For additional turkey cooking tips, a timeline on the big day's meal preparation and recipes for leftover turkey, go to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture's Web site at www.nebraskapoultry.org and click on *Turkey Cooking Tips* or *Thanksgiving Countdown Tips*.

Preparing turkey is easy, especially when you follow these guidelines:

Fresh vs. Frozen

There is no quality difference between a frozen or fresh turkey. It's a matter of preference and cost. Choose the type of turkey that best meets your individual needs. Because fresh turkeys have never been chilled below 24° F, they do not require thawing. For this reason fresh turkeys have a shorter shelf life and require special handling, and may be more expensive than frozen turkeys. Follow label directions.

Frozen turkeys are flash frozen immediately after packaging to 0° F or below and held at that temperature until

purchased. Once defrosted, the meat is virtually as fresh as the day it was processed. They can be purchased in advance whenever it is most convenient or when they are on sale.

What Size Turkey Should I Buy?

You should allow one pound of turkey for each adult guest at your dinner. For example, if you are serving 12 people, purchase a 12-pound turkey. This allows everyone to enjoy a generous serving of turkey and guarantees enough extra turkey for additional meals.

Thawing the Turkey

1. Frozen turkey, like all other foods, should be thawed in the refrigerator, **NEVER** at room temperature. When foods are thawed at room temperature, surface bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels at temperatures 40° F and above.

2. To thaw, leave turkey in its original packaging, place in a shallow pan and place in refrigerator 3 to 4 days, or about 5 hours per pound of turkey, to completely thaw.

3. To speed up thawing, keep turkey in its tightly sealed bag and place in pan or sink and cover with cold water. Change water frequently, about ½ hour per pound of turkey.

4. Refrigerate or cook turkey when it is thawed. Do not refreeze uncooked, defrosted turkey. Commercially frozen *stuffed* turkeys should not be thawed before roasting. Follow package instructions.

Cooking Times are Shorter

Current turkey breeds yield a higher proportion of white meat, which cooks faster than dark meat, thus shortening the time needed to cook the perfect turkey. Cooking times are much shorter than when our mothers and grandmothers prepared the turkey. The shortened cooking times for whole turkeys still ensure a safe and delicious product.

Preparing the Turkey for Roasting

- Remove giblets and neck from turkey. Rinse turkey with cold running water, drain and pat dry with paper towels to remove excess water.
- Rub skin of turkey with canola oil or margarine and add some paprika. This will aid in browning of the turkey skin.
- Place turkey, breast side up, in a large shallow roasting pan (about 2½ inches deep).
- Roast the turkey in a preheated 325° F oven. Follow roasting times as listed below.

Stuffing Tips

The USDA does NOT recommend stuffing the bird, but if your family insists on it, keep these tips in mind:

- Stuffing should be prepared and stuffed into the turkey immediately before it is placed in the oven for cooking. If preparing the stuffing ahead-of-time, wet and dry ingredients should be refrigerated separately and combined right before stuffing the turkey.
- Stuff the turkey loosely, as the stuffing expands as it cooks, about ¾ cup stuffing per pound of turkey.
- Heat destroys bacteria faster in a wet environment. Cook the stuffed turkey in a minimum 325° F oven, and use a meat thermometer to measure final doneness. Stuffing should reach 165° F.

Determining Doneness

The turkey is done when the internal temperature registered on a meat thermometer, reaches 180° F when inserted see *THANKSGIVING* on page 11

TURKEY ROASTING TIMES*

(Approximate timetable for roasting a turkey at 325° F.)

WEIGHT	UNSTUFFED	STUFFED
8 to 12 pounds	2¾ to 3 hours	3 to 3½ hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 to 3¾ hours	3½ to 4 hours
14 to 18 pounds	3¾ to 4¼ hours	4 to 4¼ hours
18 to 20 pounds	4¼ to 4½ hours	4¼ to 4¾ hours
20 to 24 pounds	4½ to 5 hours	4¾ to 5¼ hours

*Note: If using a cooking bag, follow the instructions provided with the bag, and reduce the amount of total roasting time. **Never** use a brown paper grocery bag. Make sure you use a meat thermometer to determine doneness.