

Turkey Facts

Turkey is the menu item most served on Thanksgiving with an average of 45 million turkeys eaten on that Day alone, even though JUNE is National Turkey Lovers Month.

The average person in the United States will consume 15 pounds of turkey this year.

Turkey in History

Turkeys originated in North and Central America, and evidence indicates that they have been around for over 10 million years.

Turkey is the *only* breed of poultry native to our Western Hemisphere.

North Carolina produces 61 million turkeys annually. That's more turkeys than any other state. Minnesota and Arkansas are numbers two and three.

Turkey Honor

For their first meal on the Moon, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin ate roast turkey in foil packets.

Turkey Identification

A male turkey is called a "Tom" and a female a "Hen". A young turkey is called a "Poult"

The fleshy growth from the base of the beak, which is very long on male turkeys and hangs down over the beak, is called the snood. The loose skin below a turkey's chin is called a wattle. Turkeys often have warts on their wattles.

Turkeys are LOUD! Gobbling turkeys can be heard a mile away on a quiet day.

Turkey Domestication

Today's domesticated Turkeys are mostly bred to have white feathers. The reason for this? White feathers have no spots under the skin when they are plucked making the bird look more appetizing.

Turkey breeding has caused turkey breasts to grow so large that the turkeys often fall over. As a matter of fact, our domesticated turkeys have such large chests that the male, or "tom turkey" is not able to "fertilize" the eggs of the female "hen turkey" in the natural "old-fashioned manner. Today, turkey eggs are fertilized by artificial insemination for the hatchery. Turkey eggs (which are brownish-beige and speckled) hatch in 28 days A domesticated male turkey can reach the weight of 30 pounds within 18 weeks of hatching.

Age is a determining factor in taste. Old, large males are preferable to young male turkeys. The opposite is true of the females. The younger hen turkeys are tastier and less tough.

During the 70's a popular slang expression was to call a person doing a stupid thing, a "Turkey". Being called a turkey was not a compliment, in fact, it meant you were incompetent. This comparison was to the domesticated Turkey which

has been bred into a condition of profound stupidity.

Turkeys are so dim-witted that they can drown by looking up into the sky during a heavy rain and have heart attacks from sudden loud noises like a jet passing overhead.

Turkeys As Nutrition

A 15 pound turkey is usually about 70% white meat and 30% dark meat.

Turkey is lower in cholesterol than beef and many other meats. The dark meat contains more fat and cholesterol than white meat. So, that's why dark turkey meat tastes so good.

Frozen, well wrapped Turkeys can be kept in the freezer for up to one year.

Nearly all turkeys in the US are inspected by the USDA for wholesomeness and bear the agency's Grade A shield. This means the turkey is free from pinfeathers, broken bones, and from large bruises, cuts and skin tears. If the Grade A shield is not on the label, the turkey is still safe and wholesome, but may have less than optimum appearance. If you're showing off your turkey and carving it on the table, you'll want to be sure it's Grade A.

Turkey Takes The Blame!

Sleepy after your Thanksgiving Meal? Turkey contains an amino acid called "Tryptophan". Tryptophan sets off a chemical chain reaction that calms you down and makes you sleepy.

Many people report drowsiness after eating Thanksgiving Dinner. While turkey often receives the blame, recent studies suggest carbohydrate-rich side dishes may be the real culprit by increasing the number of tryptophans in the brain.

So before you sit down to your big Turkey dinner this year, say a word of thanks for the lowly bird, Our Thanksgiving Turkey.