

- Thanksgiving Turkey

Kaylin Kwan, Macy 4-H Club, LA County 4-H Youth Healthy Living Chair

Thanksgiving is a day where families come together and spend time with each other over food. Most commonly served at a Thanksgiving dinner is turkey. Being this holiday's staple, many individuals have come up with creative ways to change up the traditional turkey dish. Two recipes that are becoming more and more popular are tofu turkey, or tofurkey, and deep-fried turkey.

Tofu Turkey

Servings: 10

Ingredients:

- 5 (16 ounce) packages extra firm tofu
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups diced celery
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dried sage
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons dried rosemary
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tamari
- 3 cups prepared herb stuffing
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons miso soup
- 5 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 teaspoon honey mustard
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon orange zest
- 3 sprigs fresh rosemary

Directions:

1. Line a medium sized, round colander with cheesecloth or a clean dish towel. Place the crumbled tofu in the colander. Place another cheesecloth over the top of the tofu. Place the colander over the top of a bowl to catch the liquid. Place a heavy weight on top of tofu. Refrigerate the colander, tofu and weight for 2 to 3 hours.
2. Make the stuffing: In a large frying pan sauté onion, celery and mushrooms in 2 tablespoons of the sesame oil until tender. Add garlic, sage, thyme, salt and pepper, rosemary and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the tamari. Stir well; cook for 5 minutes. Add prepared herb stuffing and mix well. Remove from heat.
3. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease a cookie sheet.
4. Combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sesame oil, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tamari, miso, orange juice, mustard, and orange zest in a small bowl; mix well.

5. Remove the weight from the tofu. Hollow out the tofu so that there is one inch of tofu still lining the colander. Place the scooped-out tofu in a separate bowl. Brush the tofu lining with a small amount of the miso seasoning. Scoop the stuffing into the center of the tofu shell. Place the leftover tofu on top of the stuffing and press down firmly. Turn the stuffed tofu onto the prepared cookie sheet. Putting the leftover tofu side of the "turkey" (the flat side) down. Gently press on the sides of the "turkey" to form a more oval shape. Brush the tofu turkey with 1/2 of the oil-tamari mixture. Place the sprigs of rosemary on top of the tofu. Cover the "turkey" with foil.
6. Bake for one hour. After one hour, remove "turkey" from the oven and remove the foil. Baste the "turkey" with the remaining tamari-oil sauce (reserving 4 tablespoons of sauce). Return "turkey" to oven and bake another hour or until the tofu turkey is golden brown. Place the tofu turkey on a serving platter, brush with the remaining tamari-oil mixture and serve hot.

Deep Fried Turkey

Servings: 6 to 8

Ingredients:

- 6 quarts hot water
- 1-pound kosher salt
- 1-pound dark brown sugar
- 5 pounds ice
- 1 (13 to 14 pound) turkey, giblets removed
- Approximately 4 to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ gallons peanut oil*

Directions

1. Place the hot water kosher salt and brown sugar into a 5-gallon upright drink cooler and stir until the salt and sugar dissolve completely. Add ice and stir until mixture is cool. Gently lower the turkey into the container. If necessary, weigh down the bird to ensure that it is fully immersed in the brine. Cover and set in a cool dry place for 8 to 16 hours.
2. Remove turkey from the brine, rinse and pat dry. Allow to sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes prior to cooking.
3. Place the oil into a 28 to 30-quart pot and set over high heat on an outside propane burner with a sturdy structure. Bring the temperature of the oil to 250 degrees F. Once the temperature has reached 250, slowly lower the bird into the oil and bring the temperature to 350 degrees F. Once it has reached 350, lower the heat in order to maintain 350 degrees F.

4. After 35 minutes, check the temperature of the turkey using a probe thermometer.

Once the breast reaches 151 degrees F, gently remove from oil and allow to rest for a minimum of 30 minutes prior to carving. The bird will reach an internal temperature of 161 degrees F due to carry over cooking. Carve as desired.

*In order to determine the correct amount of oil, place the turkey into the pot that you will be drying it in, add water just until it barely covers the top of the turkey and is at least 4 to 5 inches below the top of the pot. This will be the amount of oil you use for frying the turkey.