

It's Time for Turkey!

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In the United States, Thanksgiving can be traced to the 1621 celebration at Plymouth settlement in Massachusetts. This was not a single meal, but rather three days of feasting on seasonal produce like squashes, nuts and berries and meats like deer, turkey, waterfowl and seafood. Dates of the first *real* Thanksgiving are speculated and controversial, but it was not declared a national holiday until President Abraham Lincoln's term in 1863. It was even more recently, in 1941, that President Franklin Roosevelt established the date for official observance to be the fourth Thursday in November.

If there is one thing that we have traditionally agreed upon regarding the holiday, however, it is that turkey is the star. Minnesota Grown member [Ferndale Market](#) has been raising turkeys since Grandpa Dale and Grandma Fern (hence the name Ferndale) settled on the farm in Cannon Falls in 1939. We spoke with third generation farmer, John Peterson, and he shared with us that although it has been a crazy year for turkey farmers, they feel the turkey supply is plentiful for the thanksgiving season!

Minnesota is the top turkey producing state in the nation, which means that producers here *know* their turkey. The turkey industry today is dominated mostly by Broad Breasted White Turkey and does not look like most images depicting a traditional, wild Thanksgiving turkey. That's not to say you cannot still purchase a heritage breed bird. The Minnesota Grown online Directory lists [24 producers of high quality birds](#) of many breeds that would look perfect on your table this Thanksgiving. Take a look at [MinnesotaGrown.com](#)! If you are purchasing your turkey from the grocery store, look for a Minnesota brand.

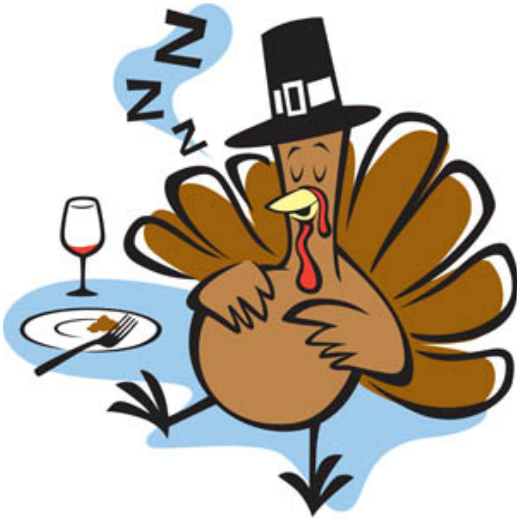
Talking Turkey

Turkey is a delicious, lean protein that is packed with nutrients. According to the National Turkey Federation, the meat is low in fat and high in protein. In fact, it has more protein than chicken or beef plus fewer calories or trans-fat. It is also an inexpensive source of important nutrients like zinc, iron, phosphorus, potassium and B vitamins.

Known as "Turkey Day", it is no surprise that the feature of Thanksgiving Day's feast is often a large roasted turkey. Concerned about roasting for the first time? It's easier than you think, and we are here to help.

Roasting is one of the most popular ways to prepare turkey and gives a simple, classic flavor to the meat. [Minnesota Turkey](#) is an excellent resource for those looking to prepare turkey and hosts a variety of great

tips, tricks and recipes. Interested in [grilling](#), [roasting](#), [marinating](#), or [brining](#) a turkey? These tutorials from [Jennie-O Turkey](#) are a great place to start.



Tricky Tryptophan

It seems like one thing guaranteed to come with your turkey dinner is a hearty dose of tryptophan. You eat a big meal – probably including a lot of turkey – and soon after you are ready for a good nap. According to scientists, however, there is not enough tryptophan in turkey to be responsible for your sleepy disposition. Sure, turkey has the amino acid, but so do other

meats and dairy products. In fact, turkey has low levels of it.

What is to blame then for your sluggishness? It is probably all the carbohydrates in the desserts and sides. Take it easy on the portion sizes and you'll have more energy post meal. Pass the Minnesota Grown turkey please!

More Than Thanksgiving

While turkey takes center stage at thanksgiving, and more than 1/3 of *all* turkeys in the United States are eaten during the Thanksgiving-Christmas season, turkey is a great option for a variety of meals. The Ferndale Market way? John suggested grilling turkeys whole or making a turkey breast in the crock-pot during those chilly winter months. Or try incorporating these cuts into your meals all year long:

- Tenderloins/fillets: All white breast meat, whole muscle from inside center of breast, boneless and skinless. This cut is tender and great for grilling. Can be used in any recipe calling for chicken breast.
- Ground Turkey: Can be white or dark meat. Makes great burgers. Try Minnesota Turkey's recipe for [Turkey Juicy Lucy's](#) or these [10 easy ways to use ground turkey](#) from Real Simple.
- Turkey Breast: All white meat, leanest of all cuts.
- Turkey Breast Cutlets: Thin slice of turkey breast. Great for sandwiches.
- Turkey Thigh: Dark meat easily deboned. Great in a recipe calling for beef chuck or round.
- Turkey Legs/Drumsticks: All dark meat.



Peterson Family
Ferndale Market
Cannon Falls, MN

“Turkeys are fun animals to be around! They’re immensely curious and full of activity. It’s also very rewarding to see our birds change from tiny poults into a happy, healthy flock in a few months time. It’s a lot of work, but rewarding to know that our daily work is valued by the customers that seek out our Ferndale Market turkey. And, like all farmers, I enjoy the variety and the chance to work outdoors.”

“There are many benefits to locally-sourced foods, and I often think we fail to talk about the economic impact of buying local foods. When a customer purchases one of our Ferndale turkeys, those dollars stay in our local economy as we pay for feed, employees, bedding, etc. Those dollars can turn over and sustain our region economically. Sourcing from independent, local farms is a great way to build a sustainable local economy and food system.”

It is important to understand basics of purchasing, thawing, and storing your meat is important. Once you do, almost any dish is possible to create with turkey! Check out information on preparing a variety of meal options using the versatile bird from the National Turkey Federation and Jennie-O Turkey Store.

- [Turkey 101](#): Get tips on purchasing and thawing your bird to roasting, grilling and storing from Jennie-O Turkey Store.
- [Roasting a Whole Turkey](#): View these tips and tricks from the National Turkey Federation.

It's important to practice safe food handling of your poultry throughout the preparation process. Read safe food handling tips via Minnesota Turkey [here](#).

Table for Eight

...or ten, or twelve! Depending on your turkey needs the size of bird you require can vary. Your local producer can help you choose but regardless of size, now is the time to purchase or reserve your turkey! According to Ferndale Market, farmers are already taking fresh turkey reservations. In fact, early birds (pun intended) reserved their turkeys in the late summer months. While producers work to ensure there are enough turkeys to meet their consumer demand, making a reservation is encouraged in order to ensure you get the size you would like. "There is a big difference between a 10 pound turkey and a 20 pound turkey, and we always want to help people find the turkey that's right for their holiday," shares John.

Pardon me?

Each year at least two lucky turkeys avoid the dinner table thanks to a presidential pardon. The tradition is longstanding but its origin is questionable. Since 1947, the National Turkey Federation has presented two live turkeys (and a turkey that is ready to eat) to the president. The birds are referred to as the presidential turkey and the vice presidential turkey, who is there to step in should the presidential turkey struggle to fulfill his duties. Just what are the duties of a presidential turkey? Simply not biting the president during their media appearance!

These two turkeys will enjoy the Christmas season at George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens before moving to their permanent home in Morven Park in Leesburg, Virginia. Those lucky ~~ducks~~ turkeys!

In addition to be able to purchase online, Ferndale Market has a store front in Cannon Falls where they carry local foods from 75 other farmers and food producers in addition to their turkey products. Looking for something fun to do in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving? Consider joining them November 21st and 22nd for their annual TurkeyFest Celebration! With live music, local food samples, and a chance to pick up a turkey of your own, it's a great kickoff to a festive Thanksgiving season!

To purchase or reserve your locally raised, farm fresh turkey from a producer near you, visit the [Minnesota Grown Directory](#)!

Happy Thanksgiving!

A hearty *Thank You!* to Minnesota Grown member [Ferndale Market](#) for sharing their expertise on turkey production!



Did you know?

Minnesota is the top turkey producing state in the nation! The state has about 450 turkey farmers who raise roughly 46 million birds annually!