

This Thanksgiving try Cornish game hens as miniature turkeys

With COVID-19 cases expected to rise as people spend more time indoors due to winter weather, most of us will not be traveling to visit family or friends over Thanksgiving. If you are planning a much smaller Thanksgiving, try Cornish game hens as miniature turkeys. Usually one bird will serve two people, but if you want some leftovers, you might want to cook one bird per person.

Mini Turkeys/Cornish Game Hens

1 Cornish game hen per 2 people
2 tablespoons butter
Fresh herbs, chopped (sage, rosemary, thyme)

You can find Cornish game hens frozen at most supermarkets. Thaw them in your refrigerator for about 24-36 hours before cooking. You can also microwave on defrost, but birds may cook in some areas. You can also defrost in cold water by putting the packaged hen in a large bowl of cold water in the sink (Make sure bowl doesn't block drain.). Trickle cold water into the bowl so water continually is by the small steady stream of water. The hen will thaw in about an hour and a half.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Put hens in roasting pan or glass baking dish. Chop herbs and mix into butter. Brush butter over the skin and roast until golden brown, and thermometer reaches 180 degrees. This should take about 50-65 minutes.

Don't stuff these little birds; stuffing will be much better if you bake it in a casserole alongside the birds. Add a flavorful homemade gravy and apple dumplings for dessert, and you will have a thankful holiday. You can find easy and healthy recipes for stuffing, gravy and apple dumplings at www.nwkidney.org/mini-thanksgiving.

Savory Cornbread Stuffing

1 recipe of your favorite cornbread to make 4 pieces (2 per person).
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup celery chopped
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1 teaspoon dried sage or 1/4 cup fresh sage
1 teaspoon dried thyme or 2 tablespoons fresh thyme
1 cup frozen corn
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
2 eggs, beaten

Make your favorite cornbread recipe a few days ahead of time. Be sure to leave out the salt and use low-sodium baking powder if you have it. After baking, let cool, then cut in squares and let sit out to dry for 1-2 days.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease large baking dish. Melt butter in skillet, saute celery and onion for about 3 minutes. In large bowl, combine the cooked onions and celery with diced cornbread, corn, dried or fresh herbs and pepper. Beat eggs and fold into stuffing. Add broth, pour into baking dish. Bake 30 minutes or until golden brown.

Nutritional information:

Calories: 290, Carbohydrate: 31 grams, Protein: 5 grams, Sodium: 107 milligrams

Salt Free and Easy Gravy

- 1 carrot cut in 1-inch lengths
- 1 celery stock, cut in 1-inch lengths
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 ½ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried

Put carrots and celery in small saucepan. Saute a few minutes with 1 teaspoon butter. Add chicken stock and simmer 10 minutes. Remove vegetables. In a large frying pan, add remaining 2 tablespoons of butter, flour and thyme. Stir until lightly browned, and flour begins to hold together in a ball. Slowly add broth to flour, stirring constantly, until thickened. A whisk may help avoid lumps.

Nutritional information (serving size: 1/4 cup)

Calories: 58, Carbohydrate: 4 grams, Protein: 1 gram, Sodium: 53 milligrams

Apple dumplings

- 1 package Pillsbury refrigerated pie crust
- 4 tart apples (such as Granny Smith or Braeburn)
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon or pie spice
- ¼ teaspoon powdered ginger
- 1/3 cup finely chopped nuts

Let dough sit at room temperature about an hour. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Meanwhile, peel and core apples, but do not slice them. Mix brown sugar, spices and nuts in a small bowl. Set

one apple on pie crust and cut a large circle of dough. Fill the center of the apple with the brown sugar mixture. Sprinkle a little on the apple.

Using your hands, cup the dough up and around the apple. Repeat with other apples. You can cut a few scraps of dough into leaf shapes and put on top of the apple. Bake in a shallow baking dish for about 45 minutes. Test by sliding a toothpick into the apple, which should be soft. Serve warm or cold.