



Cooking your first turkey? Don't lose your giblets

Ned Hickson

The countdown has begun. Soon, thousands of newly-weds will be in the kitchen preparing their very first Thanksgiving turkey. As a service to our readers, we felt a responsibility to help educate people about foodborne illness by offering a special holiday feature that we like to call:

Don't lose your giblets this Thanksgiving.

Being a writer, I've naturally spent a good portion of my career working in the food service industry. And like most writers, it was there that I was able to practice my craft and eventually acquire

something that ALL good writers must have: A Food Handler's card.

Because of this, I can stand before you as someone highly qualified to talk turkey.

So let us begin. Like many of us, your bird has probably been somewhere in the bottom of the freezer since last January's turkey clearance sale — in most cases, right next to that unlabeled container of something which, in its frozen state, has become completely unrecognizable.

This means that you will have to thaw your turkey before cooking it. To estimate how long the thawing process should take, the rule of thumb is 24 hours for every five pounds, which means that if you forgot to pull your bird

out ahead of time, you'll be thawing your turkey with a blow torch like everyone else.

Once it's thawed, reach into the abdominal cavity and remove the giblets which, apparently, all turkeys conveniently wrap in wax paper and then swallow moments before death.

Next, you need to *Immediately* place the giblets into the refrigerator. This will

ensure they don't end up on the kitchen floor and, as a result, get thrown away after being mistaken for cat vomit.

If you choose to cook the stuffing inside the turkey, make sure that you don't *overstuff* the body cavity. This can impede the cooking process and provide a breeding ground for foodborne illness.

In addition, the expansion of cooked bread crumbs in a

confined space can lead to what culinary experts call "Exploding Turkey" syndrome. Though it's not lethal, it will mean a substantial delay in festivities while everyone waits for you to scrape the stuffing from the ceiling.

IMPORTANT TIP FOR FIRST-TIMERS: Once the bird has been stuffed, remember to put

the legs into a tucked position using twine or a metal clip.

This is important because, if you don't, the legs WILL spring open and do the splits at some point during dinner.

Okay, not really.

But if that does happen, you may want to put the turkey back into the oven for a while — assuming you haven't lost your giblets.

Applications available for annual Teen Giving Tree

Christmas seems a ways off, but Twin Lakes Store is preparing for its fourth annual Teen Giving Tree.

The applications and wish lists are now available for neighborhood teens to fill out. This year's Teen Tree is for 12-18 year olds living in the north lakes area, from Heceta Beach Road to the county line.

Stop by Twin Lakes Store, on Highway 101 North of Florence, to pick up an application or wish list.

Teens are encouraged to seriously consider their list of needs and wants, including

any educational supplies.

Facebook has the official information and a wish list can be printed from there. The distribution party is at the Sutton Fire Station on Dec. 22.

Teens must be present to claim each of the gifts or send someone in their place. The party starts at 6 p.m. and lasts until 7:30 p.m.

Rides to the event are available.

For more information, to help with fundraising or to inquire for a teen, call the Twin Lakes Store at 541-997-3021.

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