



DORY'S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART
FLESHMAN

The sight of leaves falling invokes another autumn day

It must have been the falling leaves that made me think of living in Island City. It was for only one brief period of time but the childish feeling of excitement filled me again placed away from where I had seen them.

Perhaps leaves from certain trees are always the same and evoke the same type of feelings for reasons of their own but one responds to them when attached to childhood memories and on this fall day I felt their drawing power.

Our fall this year of 2018 seemed especially beautiful for such a very brief time with all their various colors, hues and shades, marked in rows downtown or set in contrast against the green of hillside evergreens. Even small bushes burst out in brilliance turning from green to gold and ending in the brightest of reds before drawing up in brown and crackling to the ground in despair following the rain that had made their life so brief.

We watch it happen from our windows, while driving down the street in our vehicles or walking along the sidewalks at this time of year given the distinct knowledge that the season changes and wonder when will there be snow.

As an adult we may see falling leaves from a different view depending on our age and responsibility towards this annual happening.

It was just such a day when we moved to Island City from La Grande, a distance of all of two miles, and I was 10 years old, my sister 13 and my brother only seven.

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BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

Crowing about birds

I have always loved crows. They sound like they're laughing. I'm sure it is at the expense of others, as they are the smart alecks of the bird world. They can afford to be so because they are intelligent and have a great sense of humor and a sense of moral justice. If you help a crow, it is most likely to bring you a gift to show you gratitude.

Not all people like crows because of their noise and the fact that they eat almost anything, including most of the things grown in a garden. When you have a garden, all the nice things are gathered into a concentrated space. Gardens attract all sorts of bugs, which crows also eat.

People have started making things to try to scare crows away from the garden. Usually the crows are smarter than the people about the things the people make, but scarecrows tend to be cute nonetheless. Crows have been known to use cars to crack nuts for them, then wait for the pedestrian crossing signal to go retrieve their food.

Crows eat bugs by the hundreds of thousands. They eat carrion, which prevents disease and eliminates decaying carcasses. They do not spread disease or give anyone West Nile Virus — instead, they get it and die, closing the loop on the disease and preventing humans from getting it (also being an indicator that West Nile is in the area).

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Simplifying The Holiday Meal



Pictured here is the turkey on one sheet pan, with a wire rack for drainage.

Kirk McCoy/Los AngelesTimes-TNS

A SHEET PAN THANKSGIVING

By Noelle Carter
Los AngelesTimes

Cooking Thanksgiving dinner is stressful, even if you're a professional. So this year I set out to chart an easier path to a traditional dinner, something with fewer variables but the same reward.

Over the last couple weeks, I experimented with the idea of doing a sheet pan Thanksgiving. The approach, where everything is cooked on sheet pans in the oven, has caught on because it's easy to do and easy to understand, and from a culinary point of view, because high-heat roasting is in general something that makes food we like.

After a couple of trial runs, I've come to a couple of conclusions: It works for Thanksgiving. And although I had misgivings that it might be too basic an approach for a holiday meal, I can unreservedly say: I love it.

Using three sheet pans and one saucepan (can't forget the gravy), I can put out a meal serving eight to 12 guests in just under four hours, start to finish. It's a simple meal, but it covers the traditional bases: Instagram-worthy herb-roasted turkey, roasted Brussels sprouts with pears and ham, garlic and rosemary Hasselback potatoes, and enough gravy to baptize everything with extra love.

I use baking sheets made for commercial kitchens, the rimmed ones measuring 18 by 13 inches, which are technically called half-sheet pans because there is a size twice as large too. You can find half-sheet pans in most restaurant and cooking supply stores, as well as online. The size is versatile: big enough for the bird, wide enough to give your vegetables a chance to roast and not just steam, and the rimmed edges are great for catching any rolling potatoes or sprouts and collecting turkey drippings.

The trick to making the turkey work on a sheet pan is to spatchcock it — to use heavy-duty kitchen shears to remove its backbone. Although it won't look like a bird from a Norman Rockwell painting, it has many advantages over that classic, if desiccated, version: It will cook in half the time as a whole turkey; the legs and breast meat — because they are all now about the same thickness, cooking on the same level — will cook at the same time, so you don't have to dry out the white meat to fully cook the dark; brining is not necessary,



Pictured here is the gravy, with the turkey and vegetables.

Kirk McCoy/Los AngelesTimes-TNS

as it would be for a whole bird, because of the improved cooking time; and in this configuration, you have a much better chance of getting skin that is not just browned but also crisp and delicious.

Sheet pan dinners are built for charring root vegetables; here they shine: The Brussels sprouts and potatoes roast at the same temperature, so you can cook them together. And as everything roasts away, you can make the gravy.

You'll even have time to work on more important diplomatic matters, like where you're going to seat crazy Uncle Phil and how to keep Grandma away from the bar.

HERB-ROASTED SPATCHCOCKED TURKEY

About 2 hours, plus 1 hour tempering time. Serves 8 to 12.

1 (10- to 12-pound) turkey
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
2 teaspoons kosher salt
¾ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/3 cup finely chopped parsley

1 tablespoon minced thyme
1 tablespoon minced marjoram or oregano
1 tablespoon minced rosemary
2 teaspoons minced garlic
Zest of 1 lemon, finely grated

1. About 1 hour before roasting, remove the turkey from the refrigerator to temper. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 425 degrees. Line an 18-by-13-inch rimmed baking sheet with heavy foil, and place a wire rack over the foil in the pan.

2. Prepare the turkey (you can also ask your butcher to do this): Using sturdy kitchen shears, remove the backbone from the turkey, carefully cutting all the way from tail-end to neck on either side. Place the turkey skin-side up on a cutting board, opened like a book. Press down on the center of the breast to crack the sternum and flatten the bird (this will take muscle). Save the back, tail piece and neck to make gravy.

3. Separate the skin from the breast meat: Lift the skin flap at the bottom of the breasts, slowly working your way up the bird, gently pulling the skin (be careful not to tear) away from the meat.

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