

CHRISTMAS POULTRY

Stuffings And Sauces

SMALL families will probably have fowls or ducks to prepare for the festive Christmas dinner; while only a turkey will be large enough for big family gatherings and reunions. Nowadays, not many people seem to go in for the old-time Christmas goose, do they? A very tasty meal, nevertheless! Here are some recipes for stuffing the poultry.

Sage and Onion Stuffing (for Ducks or Geese)

One pound of stale bread rubbed into very fine soft breadcrumbs, ½ lb. onions,

par-boiled and chopped finely, about a dozen sage leaves, also chopped finely; 2 or 3 ozs. of butter or good dripping, pepper and salt to taste, a good pinch of ground ginger and a beaten egg.

Mix together all these ingredients, rubbing the butter or dripping lightly in. Some people prefer to melt the butter till soft, before mixing it with the other ingredients. Have all well mixed, then bind together with a beaten egg, or two if one is not enough. A sprig or two of thyme, as well as the sage, may be chopped and added if liked. A grating of nutmeg is an improvement.

A good pinch of ground ginger in stuffing is always an excellent idea, for it helps to prevent indigestion.

Stuffing for Turkey or Fowls

One pound of breadcrumbs, ¼ lb. dripping or butter, 4 tablespoons finely chopped parsley, grated rind of half a lemon, ½ teaspoon nutmeg, ½ teaspoon ground ginger, pepper and salt, a cupful of chopped ham or lean bacon, and a pinch of mace.

Mix together, rubbing the softened butter lightly into the crumbs, and bind with 2 beaten eggs, or one egg and sufficient milk. Stuff the crop of the turkey. Some people like to stuff the body with sausage meat.

Bread Sauce (for Turkey or Fowl)

It is best to make plenty of bread sauce. Nearly everyone likes it, and most people do not serve a generous enough helping! It helps out, too, if the fowls are small and the party a larger one than was expected.

Simmer a large onion in a pint of milk for an hour. Add a seasoning of salt and a pinch of cayenne, or a few peppercorns. The onion may be slashed across with a knife, to allow the flavour more easily to penetrate the milk.

Have ready about ½ lb. of soft white breadcrumbs in a clean saucepan; strain the hot milk over them, cover and leave them to absorb it for an hour or so, then add a good knob of butter, beat up well with a fork, and serve very hot. There should be enough breadcrumbs to absorb the milk.

Apple Sauce (for Ducks or Geese)

Here again, let me remind you to make plenty. People always like it. Peel, core and slice sufficient apples, and stew them to pulp with just sufficient water to moisten them, and a very little sugar. When soft, add a knob of butter, and beat them smooth with a fork.

Cooking the Turkey, Fowl or Duck

Do not be dismayed if the turkey is too large for your oven. Just cut off the legs with a sharp knife, and roast them separately, either beside the bird or in another tin. Cover over the cut portions with pieces of bacon fat. If the turkey seems old, first steam it in a big pot for a couple of hours, then transfer it to the baking dish, put plenty of good dripping around it and a little hot water. Cover the breast with rashers of bacon. Have the breast uppermost, and baste the bird frequently. Cook slowly, especially if the bird is not very young—about 3½ hours or more. Take the bacon off the breast the last half hour, to brown it. Serve with bread sauce, brown gravy, and bacon rolls.

To make these, just cut the rind off rashers, roll them up and skewer them, then cook in oven for a few minutes. Slow cooking is good for poultry. To make them tender and juicy instead of dry, wrap the birds round with 2 thicknesses of greaseproof or even brown

paper, after having dusted them well with flour and smeared them with dripping. Put a little water in the roasting pan. Have the oven hot when first they are put in, and reduce the heat after the first half hour. Only a really young chicken will be cooked in less than an hour; ordinary fowls can be cooked slowly with this paper covering for nearly two hours. Take the paper off the last twenty minutes, to brown the breast. If at all doubtful about the age of the birds steam them first for an hour or so, after stuffing as usual. It is best to stand the birds on a rack in the steaming pan, so that they are not actually in the water.

Green Gooseberry Marmalade

THREE pounds of gooseberries; 2 lemons; 6 lbs. of sugar; and 5 small breakfast cups of water. Shred the lemons as for marmalade. Cover them with 2 cups of the boiling water, and stand all night. Next day, boil this with the gooseberries, and the other 3 cups of water—cold this time. Simmer for an hour. Then add the warmed sugar, and stir till dissolved. Bring to the boil and boil fairly fast for only two or 3 minutes. This is very delicious, and green in colour. Best to test before taking up.

Then brush the bird over with butter or dripping, dust with flour, and bake in moderate oven for ¾ hour to one hour, according to size and condition of bird. Baste well to prevent dryness; put rashers of bacon across the breast, or cover with greaseproof paper.

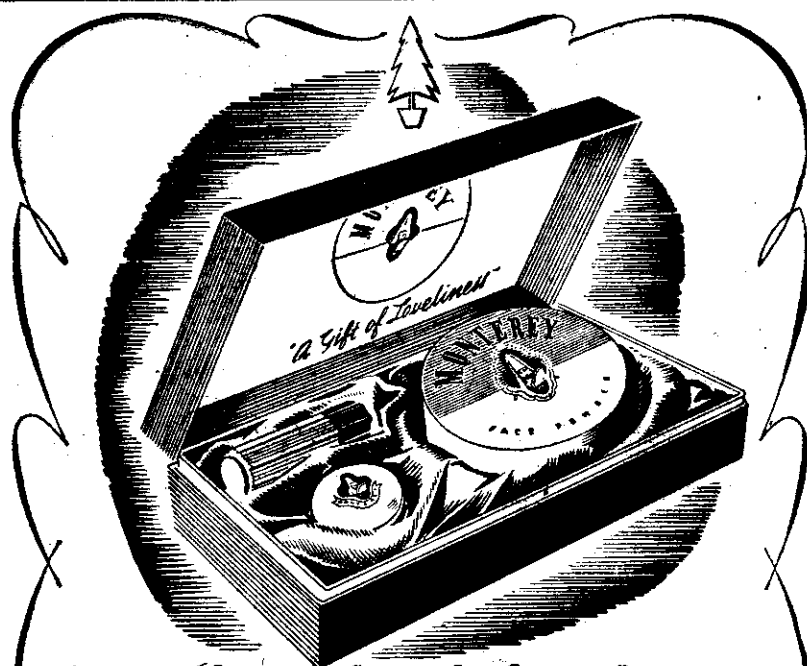
These are just general ideas, but each cook must use her own common sense and piece them together to suit her own conditions.

Methods of Cooking Ham

If your household is a small one, get only half a ham.

American Savoury Ham.—Wash the ham, put into a large pot of boiling water, with a small cup of vinegar, a teaspoon of cinnamon (or a stick of cinnamon); a few cloves; and 3 or 4 tablespoons of sugar. Simmer till tender—a 10 lb. ham will take 3½ to 4 hours. Leave standing in the water until nearly cold. Then take it out and pull off the rind, which will probably come away in one piece. Then mix together a cup of brown sugar, 2 teaspoons of mustard, ¼ teaspoon of ground cinnamon, and sprinkle all over the ham. Put into a baking pan with a small cup of water, and bake in a moderate oven till brown. Then sprinkle with crisp breadcrumbs.

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