

Food and domestication of the Turkey

Turkey Recipe

Brine a whole dressed turkey (first domesticated in Central Mexico 2,000 yrs b.p. (before present) in *salt brine for 4-5 hours. Let rest uncovered in refrigerator until ready to roast. Preheat oven 325° Bake until tender.

Domestication Story

The turkey, an iconic bird representing the American Thanksgiving holiday, was wild and later domesticated in the Americas. The wild bird having 6 different sub-species is documented in the archaeological record of North American woodlands in the early Pleistocene in association of the Mississippian Culture and later in pre-Columbian cultures of Meso-America. Early Spanish writings describe turkeys kept in pens in Mexico by the Aztecs to be used for meat, eggs, feathers for ornamentation, and long hollow leg bones for making musical instruments. It is believed that domestication began 2,000 years before present in Mexico.

The national bird of the United States is the Bald Eagle but Benjamin Franklin later lamented the choice and said the turkey would have been a better choice as our noble bird. Inversely, the turkey is often used in the pejorative. For instance, a "turkey" in African American Ebonics is used to describe someone who is unreliable. A Greek slur refers to the uncircumcised male part, which resembled the flap or neck of a turkey. Today many refer to a bad choice as a "turkey".

In cooking circles today the domesticated turkey has become a traditional American food with many unique recipes and preparation from whole deep fried Turkey to delicate turkey crepes and Mole' Turkey.

<http://archaeology.about.com/od/tterms/qt/turkey.htm>
www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term...turkey
www.rsdb.org/race/greeks
www.todayifoundout.com/index.php/.../why

Origins of Salt

<http://science.howstuffworks.com/innovation/edible-innovations/salt5.htm>

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195337709.001.0001/acref-9780195337709>

Prior to industrialization, it was extremely expensive and labor-intensive to harvest the mass quantities of salt necessary for food preservation and seasoning. This made salt an extremely valuable commodity. Entire economies were based on salt production and trade. Some salt is mined from deeply buried sea beds while some is from evaporation of salt water. In arid Africa salt was traded in huge slabs throughout the continent and has been tied to the diffusion of Islam to Angola. During the Iron Age people evaporated salt by boiling seawater or brine from salt springs in small pots over open fires. Roman salt making entailed boiling the seawater in large lead-lined pans. Salt was used for currency in ancient Rome and the roots of the words "soldier" and "salary" can be traced to Latin words related to giving or receiving salt. During the Middle Ages of Europe, salt was transported along roads built especially for that purpose. One of the most famous of these roads is the Old Salt Route in Northern Germany, which ran from the salt mines to shipping ports.

Mediterranean Date Dessert

Whole, pitted dates----- Mesopotamia, Fertile Crescent 7000+ years ago

Feta (goat's milk) Cheese----- Name: Greek, 17th century made in Greece, possibly as early as 6th century B.C.E.

Pomegranate Sauce----- Iran, Egypt, Turkey, India cultivation record from before recorded history.

Slice the dates lengthwise, but leave them connected so you can open them like a pocket. Cut the feta cheese into cubes, one cube for each date. Place the cubed cheese inside the dates. Drizzle the pomegranate sauce, which you can optionally heat in a pot on the stove beforehand, over the combined dates and cheese. Serve and enjoy!

Dates: evidence for date palm domestication is found in engravings on cylinder seals and texts illustrating the date palm in Sumerian Mesopotamia beginning ca 2500 BC. The domestic date palm was produced from a wild version of the same name, some of which have been found today in North Africa and the Middle and Near East. Evidence found in Mesopotamia associated with domesticated palms includes the planting of date groves, date palms planted by gender, and free-flowing irrigation and other water management structures.

Feta Cheese: The earliest record of feta cheese dates back to the Byzantine Empire. It has been associated closely with Crete, located in present day Greece. The word "feta" has an interesting genealogy. It comes from the Italian word fetta (meaning slice). Fetta, in turn, is of Latin origin from offa (meaning bite or morsel). It first appeared in Greek language in the 17th century, possibly referring to the process of serving the cheese by cutting it in thin slices. Many, however, attribute a Classical Greek origin to feta cheese. According to myth, the Cyclops Polyfimos was the first to have prepared it. In the museum of Delphi, 6th century BC artifacts also make references to the process of feta cheese-making.

Pomegranate: is native to Iran and northeast Turkey. Pomegranates also thrive in the drier climates of California and Arizona, and have been cultivated throughout the Middle East, Southern Asia, and the Mediterranean region for several millennia. Carbonized exocarp of the fruit has been identified in Early Bronze Age levels of Jericho in the West Bank, as well as Late Bronze Age levels of Hala Sultan Tekke on Cyprus. A large, dry pomegranate was found in the tomb of Djehuty, the butler of Queen Hatshepsut in Egypt; Mesopotamian cuneiform records mention pomegranates from the mid-third millennium BC onwards.