



# From the Food Bank Kitchen

## Thanksgiving Leftover Ideas

Maybe you're one of those people who thinks that leftovers are the best part of Thanksgiving...or maybe you end up with a fridge full of food you get sick of after three days. If that's you, don't worry— we've got some creative ideas below to help you jazz up those Thanksgiving leftovers! Many parts of the traditional Thanksgiving meal are pretty healthy. Turkey, for example, has more protein per gram than both chicken and beef, and it's lower in fat and cholesterol. Per 3 ounce serving, turkey breast provides 120 calories, 26 grams of protein, no carbohydrate, 1 gram of fat and no saturated fat. A 3 ounce portion of dark meat such as thigh or drumstick has 140 calories, 24 grams of protein, and 4 grams of fat with 1 gram saturated — still extremely low. Turkey is high in the vitamins niacin, B6, and B12. It also contains the minerals iron, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, and selenium. So save yourself some time by using up that leftover turkey on a weeknight in a healthy meal.

Turkey can replace other meats in most recipes, so don't be afraid to make a *turkey pot pie*, or to throw some into your chicken or tomato soup. Leftover turkey can be added to canned or homemade vegetable or bean soups to increase protein and make them more filling. Of course, a turkey sandwich is a quick way to use up the leftover meat. If you're worried about soggy bread, use a thin coating of butter or mayonnaise on the bread or wrap before building the rest of your sandwich— the fat in the butter or mayo repels liquid, keeping your bread dry. Toasting the bread first is another helpful tip. Instead of slicing the turkey, try dicing it and tossing it with a small amount of mayonnaise. This will make it easier to eat and a little bit neater, too. Cutting your sandwich diagonally into triangles will help keep the filling in as well.

You can also save the turkey bones and innards to make soup stock: cover the carcass in water and boil it on the stove top for a few hours. Remove the carcass and use the liquid to make soup, or put it in the freezer for next time. You can also freeze the turkey meat if you aren't going to eat it in time. It's best to chop it up, spread it on a metal pan like a baking sheet to freeze, and then move it into an airtight container once it is frozen (a sealable plastic bag also works well). These steps help prevent it from getting icy. Once frozen, turkey will last for a very long time. Just make sure you don't put leftovers in the fridge or freezer when they're still hot. They'll raise the temperature of the fridge or freezer too much, and you'll risk making your other foods warmer and possibly unsafe to eat. Fridge temperatures should remain under 40°F at all times.

Side dishes can be easily frozen as well— leftover rolls, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, green beans, and more can be placed in storage containers or re-sealable bags for another day. Separate into smaller portions to freeze if necessary. Then thaw in the fridge the day before you want to eat them for an easy meal. Gravy and sauces can be frozen in ice cube trays for single use portions. **Read on for more turkey ideas, as well as ways to use up cranberry sauce and mashed potatoes.**

### Turkey Corn Chili

8 servings

Adapted from [Rachael Ray, Food Network](#)

1 Tbsp olive oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
1 large green or red pepper, chopped  
1 jalapeño pepper, chopped (remove seeds; **use extreme care** to wash hands right after— do not touch face or eyes)  
1 bay leaf  
1½ lb cooked, diced leftover turkey meat (light and dark)  
1½ - 2 Tbsp chili powder (to taste)  
1½ - 2 Tbsp ground cumin (to taste)

*Optional: 1 tsp red hot sauce like Frank's Red Hot or Sriracha*  
½ tsp salt  
1 (15 oz) can corn, drained, no added salt or 1¼ c frozen  
1 (28 oz) can crushed, chunky-style no salt added tomatoes  
2 c low sodium chicken stock  
1 (15 oz) can black or pinto beans, rinsed and drained  
**Nutrition Facts:** Calories 320, Fat 7 gm, Saturated Fat 2 gm, Sodium 400 mg, Carbohydrate 29 gm, Fiber 8 gm, Sugars 6 gm, Protein 34 gm

**Directions:** Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, peppers, and bay leaf and cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently; reduce the heat if veggies start to stick. Stir in diced turkey meat and season with chili powder, cumin, and (optional) cayenne sauce. Season with a little salt, to taste. Add corn, tomatoes, beans, and broth. Combine well and adjust seasonings. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 7-10 minutes. Serve garnished with chopped scallions if desired. For a complete meal, serve over brown rice, whole grain pasta, or potato and a green tossed salad.

SEE REVERSE FOR MORE LEFTOVER TURKEY RECIPE IDEAS

## Cranberry Sauce Ideas

Cranberry sauce may be one of the tougher Thanksgiving leftovers to use up. Cranberries themselves have many health benefits— they're full of many different vitamins and contain antioxidants that fight cancer and infections. While cranberry sauce still contains these benefits, it is very high in sugar, with 24 grams (6 teaspoons) of sugar and 110 calories in a ¼ cup serving. It should be eaten in moderation, especially if you have diabetes or weight concerns. There are a lot of options for baking with cranberry sauce, including muffins and sweet breads, but you can try these easy ideas as well:

**Cranberry and Cheddar Grilled Cheese Sandwich:** Spread over bread and top with cheddar cheese for a grilled cheese sandwich that has some extra flavor. Or use it with your leftover turkey to make a Thanksgiving sandwich!

**Toast Topper:** Spread cranberry sauce on toast instead of jam. Top with peanut butter or cream cheese, too!

**Yogurt Add-in:** Stir into plain yogurt and add walnuts for a tasty breakfast or snack.

**Oatmeal:** Cook plain oatmeal, and add a scoop of cranberry sauce to sweeten it and give it more flavor. A handful of nuts is a great addition as well.

**Smoothies:** Blend with yogurt, frozen fruits, and your other favorite smoothie ingredients.

## Turkey and Mashed Potato Casserole

5 servings

Adapted from [BBC.com](http://BBC.com)

- 1 lb leftover cooked turkey, diced (about 2 cups)
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- *Optional: 2 stalks of celery, peeled and chopped*
- 1-2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- ¾ cup low sodium chicken or turkey broth
- 1 (15 oz) can corn, or 1½ cups fresh or frozen corn
- 3 Tbsp light cream
- About 2 cups mashed potatoes
- ½ tsp salt
- *Optional: 1 tsp each ground thyme and/or rosemary*
- *Optional: 1 Tbsp tomato paste*

**Directions:** Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large pan, heat the oil and add the onion. When the onion is soft and translucent, add the chopped turkey. Then pour the broth over it and bring to a boil. Add corn and cream, and spices if using. Put the mixture in a pie plate, then scoop the mashed potatoes on top so that they are more or less evenly spread over the turkey mixture. Bake about 30 minutes, or until potatoes begin to brown.

## Leftover Turkey Soup

8 servings

- 8 c chicken/turkey broth (store-bought or homemade)
- 3 carrots, sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1-2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 c dry egg noodles
- 1½ c cooked turkey, chopped
- *Optional: 1-2 cloves minced garlic or 1 tsp garlic powder*
- *Optional: other leftover cooked veggies from dinner*
- *Optional: 1-2 bouillon cubes to add to broth if it is weak*
- *Optional: 2-3 stalks celery, peeled and chopped*
- 1 tsp salt, or to taste
- 1 tsp pepper, or to taste

**Directions:** Bring broth to a gentle boil. Sauté separately in a frying pan onion, celery, and garlic (if using) for a few minutes, then add to broth. Add carrots and simmer until the carrots are tender. Add the noodles and cook for about four more minutes until tender. Stir in turkey and any leftover vegetables you are adding and simmer another minute, until warm.

Season with salt and pepper to taste. *Optional: top with chopped parsley. Serve with a salad for a filling and balanced meal.*

## Apple Cranberry Turkey Salad

6 (1 cup) portions

Adapted from [insidebrucrewlife.com](http://insidebrucrewlife.com)

- 3 c cooked turkey, shredded
- 3 celery stalks, diced
- ½ c dried cranberries (Craisins® or equivalent)
- 1 c apple, diced (try a firm type like Granny Smith)
- 5-6 oz fat-free plain Greek yogurt
- 6 Tbsp light mayonnaise
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground pepper
- *Optional: pecans, almonds, walnuts, or parsley*

**Nutrition Facts:** Calories 270, Fat 14 gm, Saturated Fat 2 gm, Sodium 360 mg, Carbohydrate 17 gm, Fiber 3 gm, Sugars 12 gm, Protein 21 gm

**Directions:** Combine everything together in a large bowl. Stir until mixed thoroughly. Refrigerate for a few hours so the flavors have time to blend. Serve on your choice of bread, rolls, wrap, or on top of a fresh green tossed salad.