



I put half a cup of **coffee beans** in the cavity of the turkey. It creates great depth of flavor.

**Tom Douglas**  
Dahlia Lounge, Seattle



Use your oven space wisely: Make dishes like mashed potatoes ahead and heat them in a **double boiler** to save room in the oven for things that need to crisp, like stuffing.



**IRON CHEF**  
Jose Garces



I always have fun, **upbeat music** playing as people enter the house. Then during dinner we switch gears to piano or jazz to allow for more conversation.

**Susan Feniger**  
Border Grill, Los Angeles



Leave your turkey **unwrapped** in the refrigerator overnight. You'll get crispier skin when you cook it.

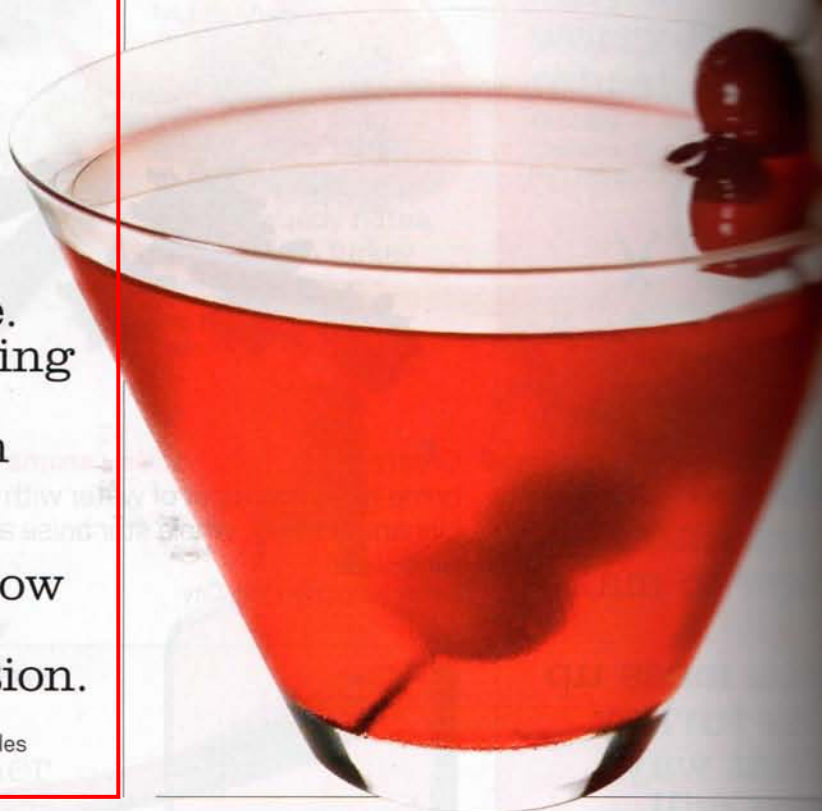
**Laurent Tourondel**  
Arlington Club, New York City

Don't be too cool for a **meat thermometer**.



Serve your **favorite spirit** shaken with cranberry juice, lime juice and a splash of orange liqueur. Cover the cranberry part of the tradition.

**Elizabeth Falkner**  
Corvo Bianco, New York City



Before you roast the bird, insert several **metal skewers** into each turkey thigh. They direct heat to the thighs more efficiently, and the faster the thighs cook, the less time the breast has to dry out.

**Alex Stupak**, Empellón Cocina, New York City

A **crown roast of lamb** is one of my favorite Thanksgiving feasts. The lamb is rich and decadent for a fall celebration.

**Kelly Liken**, Restaurant Kelly Liken, Vail, CO



I like to have a few bottles of **white wine and champagne** open along with several flavored liqueurs so people can create their own drinks.

**John Besh**  
August, New Orleans

Incorporate some games into the day! Whether it's a backyard **touch football** game or a beanbag toss, have a few things going on so people aren't crowding the kitchen.

**Richard Blais**  
The Spence, Atlanta



For me, Thanksgiving is the beginning of the season to be jolly, so I always make **eggnog** spiked with cognac or rum.

**Mary Sue Milliken**  
Border Grill, Los Angeles

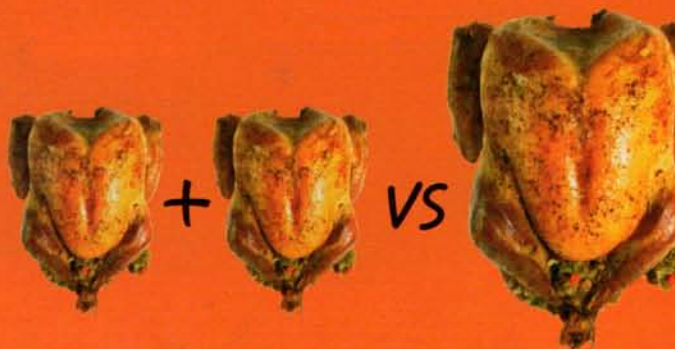


One of my favorite dishes to make is **mashed potatoes with La Serena cheese** (a Spanish sheep's milk cheese). The cheese makes the potatoes so creamy.

**José Andrés**  
Minibar, Washington, D.C.

Although I love the idea of a picturesque whole turkey sitting in the middle of the dining table, I have yet to master cooking it that way. Instead, I like to **break down the turkey**: I braise the legs slowly and separately roast the breasts. This way, I know everything will be perfectly cooked.

**Scott Conant**  
Scarpetta, New York City



I always **prefer two smaller birds** to one big one. I find a large bird so much more difficult to deal with—from fitting it into my oven to carving it.



**IRON CHEF**  
Alex Guarnaschelli

