

THE PRUDHOMME FAMILY COOKBOOK

*Old-time Louisiana Recipes
by the eleven Prudhomme
brothers and sisters and
Chef Paul Prudhomme*



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To fry the turkey: Remove basket and turkey from the cold oil. Heat the oil to 400°. *Very carefully and slowly* lower the basket containing the turkey into the hot oil. Immediately adjust flame or heat source down slightly and maintain a temperature lowered to as close to 350° as possible. You may have to adjust flame up again. Oil should be hot enough to bubble during frying but not so hot that it burns.

Make sure the turkey is either submerged completely while frying (weight it down if necessary), or turn it carefully, so oil doesn't slosh, about every 10 to 15 minutes. Let the turkey fry until the juices run clear when you insert a skewer into the breast meat. Or check doneness of meat by removing basket from hot oil and cutting the meat to the bone at the thigh-hip joint where meat is densest; the meat should look pink but not raw. Total frying time will be from 35 to 45 minutes. The fried turkey will look very dark brown when done. Don't be afraid that it has burned; this is the right color.

Carefully remove basket and turkey from the hot oil and place the turkey, breast side *down*, on a platter or pan lined with several thicknesses of paper bags and let drain about 5 minutes, then turn turkey over to drain and cool about 15 minutes more before slicing. Carve as you normally do and serve immediately.



PAUL AND K'S RECIPE

Turducken®

(K-Paul's Thanksgiving Dinner)

Makes 15 to 25 main-dish servings

Paul and K coined the term "turducken" by combining the names of the turkey, duck, and chicken used in the recipe. It's a lot of fun to let your guests think you're serving them a regular holiday turkey. When you begin to carve it, they will be surprised to see how you cut right through the "bones"!

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Since the turducken takes 12 to 13 hours to cook, and then it needs to cool at least 1 hour before it's carved, you need to plan your time wisely. First, be sure your oven temperature control is accurate. If not, or if you're not sure, get it adjusted; or use a dependable oven thermometer to monitor and control the temperature. Otherwise, your turducken may take considerably fewer or more than 12 to 13 hours to cook. A good thing to know is that since you are roasting the turducken at such a low temperature (190°, assuming your oven is accurate), you can leave it to cook a couple of extra hours with no harm done. Once it's removed from the oven, turducken will stay hot for several hours.

The quickest way to prepare turducken is to get friends and family to make the dressings. If you're on your own, make the three dressings the day before boning the fowl and assembling the turducken. Cover the cooled dressings tightly and refrigerate them until well chilled before you stuff them in the meat. Bone the birds (be sure to save the bones and necks for making stock) and assemble the turducken the day before cooking—and family or friends can have fun helping you with this, too. Keep the turducken refrigerated until ready to cook.

If you make everything yourself, you need plenty of stock. The recipe on page 115 yields about 2 gallons. Bone the birds first and refrigerate them, so you can use the bones in the stock.

To stuff the turducken, you will need about 7 cups of the andouille dressing; about 4 cups cornbread dressing; and about 3 cups oyster dressing. But it's also good to have additional dressing to serve in bowls at the table, so the dressing recipes are for amounts that give you plenty of extra.

If you're inexperienced at boning fowl, start with the turkey. It's big, so you can more easily see the bone structure. After doing the turkey, boning the duck and chicken will go much faster.

Each time you do a turducken, it will become easier; it doesn't take magical cooking ability, it just takes care. What is magical is the way people who eat it will feel about your cooking!

Make the gravy after the turducken has finished cooking. We always serve **Candied Yams** (page 282 or 283) with turducken.

Andouille Smoked Sausage Dressing (page 265)

Cornbread Dressing (page 267)

Oyster Dressing (page 263)

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- 1 (20- to 25-pound) turkey
- 1 (4- to 5-pound) domestic duckling
- 1 (3- to 3½-pound) chicken

Seasoning mix:

- 3 tablespoons salt
- 1 tablespoon plus 1½ teaspoons sweet paprika
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon ground red pepper (preferably cayenne)
- 1½ teaspoons white pepper
- 1½ teaspoons dried thyme leaves
- ¾ teaspoon black pepper

Sweet Potato Eggplant Gravy (page 342)

- A small hammer
- A 3-inch needle (a "carpet" needle with a curved tip works well)
- Strong thread to sew up the fowl
- 1 (15 × 11-inch) baking pan at least 2½ inches deep
- 1 pan, larger than the 15 × 11-inch pan, into which the smaller pan will fit with room to spare

Make the three dressings. Cool, cover well, and refrigerate. Then bone the fowl. It's helpful to keep the following in mind:

1. Your goal is to end up with one large piece of essentially boneless turkey meat; the boned turkey will contain only the tip end of each leg bone and the bones of the first two joints of each wing. You will end up with one piece of completely boneless duck meat and one piece of completely boneless chicken meat.

2. Be careful not to pierce the skin of the birds except for the initial slits. Cuts in the skin tend to enlarge during cooking, making the turducken less attractive as well as dryer.

3. Allow yourself plenty of time, especially if you're a beginner. And even if you are experienced, approach the boning procedure with a gentle, careful touch; the meat is not tough and you want to end up with as much of it off the bone and in one piece as possible.

4. Bone one side of each bird—either the left or right—before doing the other side.

5. Use a very sharp knife and use mainly the tip; stay close to the bone at all times with the knife.

6. It's worth the time and effort!

To bone the turkey: Place the turkey, breast side down, on a flat surface. Make an incision the entire length of the spine through the skin and flesh.

Starting from the neck end and using the tip of the knife, follow as close to the bone as you can cut, carefully teasing the skin and meat away from the frame. Toward the neck end, cut through the meat to expose the shoulder blade; feel for it first and cut through small amounts of meat at a time if you have trouble locating it. Cut the meat away from around the bone and sever the bone at the joint so you can remove the shoulder blade.

Disjoint the wing between the second and third joint. Free the heavy drumstick of the wing and remove it; be careful to leave the skin intact. Continue teasing the meat away from the backbone, heading toward the thighbone and being careful to keep the "oyster" (the pocket of meat on the back) attached to the skin instead of leaving it with the bone.

Cut through the ball-and-socket joint to release the thighbone from the carcass. You should now be able to open up the bird more to see better what bones are left to deal with. Continue teasing the meat away from the carcass until you reach the center front of the breastbone. Then *very* carefully separate the skin from the breastbone at the midline without piercing the skin; go slowly because the skin is very thin at this point.

Repeat the same boning procedure on the other side of the turkey, with the turkey still breast side down. When both sides are finished, carefully remove the carcass.

Then remove the thighbone and leg bone on each side as follows: Being careful not to break through the skin, use a small hammer to break the leg bone completely across, about 2 inches from the tip end. Then manipulate both ends of the bone with your hands to be sure the break is complete. Leave the tip of the bone in, but remove the leg bone and thighbone as one unit. To do this, cut the meat away from around the thighbone first, using the knife tip. Then, holding the thighbone up with one hand, use the other hand to carefully cut the meat away from around the leg-thigh joint. (Don't cut through this joint, and don't worry if it seems as if you're leaving a

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lot of meat around the joint—it can't be helped and, besides, it will add flavor when you make the stock with the bones!) Then use the blade of the knife to scrape the meat away from the leg bone; remove the leg-thighbone. With your hands or the knife, one by one remove as many pin bones from the leg meat as possible. Then, if necessary, pull the tip of the leg bone to turn the meat to the inside, so the skin is on the outside and the bird looks like a turkey again. Refrigerate.

To bone the duck: Place the duck, breast side down, on a flat surface and follow the same procedure you used to bone the turkey, except this time you will remove all the bones instead of leaving in part of the wing and leg bones.

To bone each wing, cut off the first two joints of the wing (and save for stock), leaving the wing's drumstick; cut the meat from around the drumstick and remove this bone, being careful not to cut through the skin.

When you reach the thigh, follow the thigh-leg bone with the knife blade to release the bone as one unit, again being careful not to cut through the skin.

Trim some of the excess skin and fat from the neck area. Cut the skin into small pieces and reserve it for making the gravy; discard the fat. Refrigerate the duck and skin pieces.

To bone the chicken: Use precisely the same procedure to bone the chicken that you used for the duck.

To assemble the turducken: Spread the turkey, skin side down, on a flat surface, exposing as much meat as possible. Sprinkle the meat generously and evenly with a total of about 3 *tablespoons* of the seasoning mix, patting the seasoning in with your hands. (Be sure to turn the leg, thigh, and wing meat to the outside so you can season it, too.) Then stuff some of the cold **andouille dressing** into the leg, thigh, and wing cavities until full but not tightly packed. (If too tightly packed, the leg and wing may burst open during cooking.) Spread an even layer of dressing over the remaining exposed meat, about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. You should use a total of about 7 *cups* dressing.

Place the duck, skin side down, on top of the andouille dressing, arranging the duck evenly over the dressing. Season the exposed duck meat generously and evenly with about 1 *tablespoon* more seasoning mix, pressing it in with your hands. Then spread the cold **corn-bread dressing** evenly over the exposed duck meat, making the

layer slightly less thick than the andouille dressing, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Use a total of about 4 cups dressing.

Arrange the chicken, skin side down, evenly on top of the cornbread dressing. Season the exposed chicken meat generously and evenly with about 1 *tablespoon* more seasoning mix, pressing it in with your hands. Spread the cold **oyster dressing** evenly over the exposed chicken meat, making the layer about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Use a total of about 3 cups dressing:

Enlist another person's help to carefully lift the open turducken into an ungreased 15 × 11-inch baking pan at least 2½ inches deep. (**NOTE:** This pan size is right because the turducken should fit snugly in the pan to stay in proper shape while cooking.) As you lift the turducken into the pan, fold the sides of the turkey together to close the bird. Have your helper hold the turkey closed while you sew up all openings on one side, making the stitches about 1 inch apart. When you finish sewing on the first side, turn the turducken over in the pan and sew closed any openings in the other side. Then tie the legs together just above the tip bones. Leave the turducken breast side up in the pan, tucking in the turkey wings.

Place the turducken pan in a slightly larger pan with sides at least 2½ inches high, so that the larger pan will catch the overflow of drippings during cooking. Season the exposed side of the turducken generously and evenly with about 2 *tablespoons* more seasoning mix, patting it in with your hands. Refrigerate until ready to bake. (Use any remaining seasoning mix in another recipe.)

Bake at 190° until done, 12 to 13 hours, or until a meat thermometer inserted through to the center reads 165°. (**NOTE:** There is no need to baste the turducken, but you will need to remove accumulated drippings from the turducken pan every few hours so that the lower portion of the turkey won't "deep fry" in the hot fat.) When done, remove the turducken from the oven and let it cool in its pan at least 1 hour.

Meanwhile, make the gravy with some of the pan drippings and the reserved duck skin.

With strong spatulas inserted underneath (remember there are no bones to support the bird's structure), carefully transfer the turducken to a serving platter and present it to your guests before carving. Then place the turducken on a flat surface to carve. (Or leave on the platter if it is large enough.) Be sure to make your slices

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crosswise so that each slice contains all three dressings and all three meats. It's easy to do this and still have servings of manageable size if you slice the turducken in half lengthwise, then cut servings crosswise to the desired thickness from one side of the turducken at a time.

Serve additional bowls of the dressing on the side.

Basic Turducken Stock

If you don't have a large enough stockpot, cut the recipe in half and make the stock in batches. You can use the vegetable trimmings (onions and celery, but not bell peppers) from the dressings and gravy you are preparing.

About 2½ gallons cold water (see **NOTE**)

Bones and necks from the turkey, duck, and chicken,
or use 5 pounds backs, necks and/or bones and/
or giblets (excluding livers) from turkeys and
chickens

3 medium onions, unpeeled and quartered

½ stalk celery, separated into ribs

½ large head garlic, unpeeled and coarsely chopped

NOTE: Always start with cold water, enough to cover all the other ingredients.

Place all ingredients in a large stockpot. Bring to a boil over high heat, then gently simmer at least 4 hours, preferably 8, replenishing the water as needed to keep about 2 gallons of liquid in the pot. Strain, cool, and refrigerate until ready to use. Makes about 2 gallons. **NOTE:** Remember, if you are short on time, that using a stock simmered 20 to 30 minutes is far better than using just water in any recipe.