



Celia Richey regularly feeds a crowd of at least 20 for Thanksgiving. In honor of the Festival of Lights occurring on the nation's annual day of thanks, she experimented with recipes to add a Jewish flavor to the extra special holiday.

Kibitzing in the Kitchen

Thanksgiving
with a Jewish flair
proves fun challenge
for gourmet cook

BY BARBARA BAYER

PHOTOS BY
CATHY DONOVAN

CELIA RICHEY ENJOYS COOKING AND LOVES A CHALLENGE. So, she thought it could be fun to take on the challenge of adding a Jewish flair to Thanksgiving recipes. Luckily it was easy to find many choices online, in particular several recipes from an article on BuzzFeed.com that was getting, you guessed it, a lot of buzz on social media.

“When I looked at those recipes I thought, well, this is not something I would normally make but it looks interesting and I think I can make it taste really good,” Richey said.

The experiment’s end result: They were delicious.

Richey has been cooking since she was 6 years old, and became what her family characterizes as a gourmet cook following her graduation from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law in 2007.

“When I cook, I’m expressing my creativity and I am expressing love,” she said.

“I really like being adventurous in my cooking,” she continued. “I think that’s what makes me a gourmet cook, because I’m a little more adventurous.”

Richey is a self-trained cook and jokes that she and the Food Network “are very close.” A single mother of two now-grown boys — Josh, a 24-year-old third-year law student at Emory University, and Danny, a 20-year-old junior at the University of North Carolina — Richey said she often experimented with the meals she fed her sons.

“My kids have been the object of my creativity. I think that with me trying new things and serving them new things, they have a very open palate. They’ll eat just about anything. They love sushi. They love all sorts of seafood. They love a lot of stuff that a lot of kids wouldn’t have eaten because their moms never served it,” Richey said.

Now an empty nester, she still cooks for herself and her friends.

“Whatever’s left over, I give to my sister, which she loves,” said Richey, who owns and operates Seniors Helping Seniors, a company that provides in-home services to help keep people independent and in their homes as long as possible.

“We’re all for aging in place.”

Carol Dale, her sister, helps Richey run Seniors Helping Seniors and is a big fan of the delicacies that come out of her gourmet kitchen.

“It’s wonderful. It’s my pleasure and delight to take her leftovers off her hands. I always look forward to her gourmet cooking, especially at the holidays,” Dale said.

Richey seeks recipes to try that stretch her imagination.

“I see a recipe, I look at it and think, ‘Wow, that looks really good. I think it will taste really good.’ It makes me get out of my

comfort zone and do new things and try new things. I love that,” she said.

Thanksgiving is one of her favorite holidays and most years, including this one, Richey will host about 20 people. It’s always a casual gathering where she sets up a bountiful buffet in her kitchen. The menu is never the same.

“For the last couple of years I’ve done a brined turkey, which I love. But all the sides change because I have to take into account my guests’ various likes and dislikes so I have to really think about what I do so I make sure everybody gets what they want and that it tastes good.”

The Manischewitz Brined Turkey, one of the two recipes she discovered on BuzzFeed and uses three bottles of Manischewitz Concord Grape wine, turned out moist and delicious. The recipe calls for the turkey to be cooked immediately after it’s taken out of the brine. But Richey tweaked it a little, letting the turkey dry out in the refrigerator for a day after she took it out of the brine instead of cooking it immediately.

“This let the skin become really nice and brown,” she explained.

Richey thought the apple-challah stuffing was also an unusual option. It called for two loaves of challah.

“It will cater to all the various tastes of my Thanksgiving guests. It will especially appeal to vegetarians because it doesn’t have meat in it.”

As with this stuffing recipe, Richey said you have to be careful to make sure it’s not too dry.

“I added an extra can of chicken broth to keep it moist,” she said.

While it is Chanukah, potato latkes won’t be on Richey’s table. They are “way too time consuming” to fit into the day’s schedule.

“They have to be fresh. They have to be served right out of the oil and that’s way too much work for that many people at that time,” she said.

When Richey makes potato latkes she prefers to use matzah meal instead of flour. She honestly doesn’t know why.

“It’s a latke and it’s a Jewish thing so you put matzah meal in it,” she said.

She doesn’t have any one special favorite food she likes to prepare. She simply cooks whatever strikes her fancy or her kids’ request.

“If my kids come home and say they want lamb for dinner, I’ll make a rack of lamb. Whatever they want, I’ll make. I love to make everything. To me, cooking is love.”

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This Manischewitz-Brined Roast Turkey has a slightly purple tint because it soaked for a day in concord grape wine. The Challah-Apple Stuffing was cooked separately from the turkey and added later for presentation.

MANISCHEWITZ-BRINED ROAST TURKEY

Serves 14-16

INGREDIENTS

Brine:

- 6 quarts (24 cups) water, divided
- 1 ½ cups kosher salt
- 3 tablespoons caraway seeds
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds
- 1 tablespoon mustard seeds
- 10 cloves garlic, crushed
- 5 sprigs rosemary
- 10 sprigs thyme
- 4 lemons, halved
- 4 oranges, halved
- 3 750-mL bottles Manischewitz Concord Grape wine

Turkey:

- 1 18 to 20-lb turkey
- 1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks), at room temp

Special Equipment

- 5-gallon container (a large cooler or food-safe bucket)
- Roasting rack and pan large enough for turkey
- Meat thermometer

PREPARATION

Brine:

Bring 4 cups water to a boil with salt, caraway, fennel and mustard seeds to a gentle boil. Stir to ensure salt has dissolved, then let cool to room temperature. Pour into a 5-gallon container. Add the remaining 20 cups water and all remaining brine ingredients (but not the turkey yet).

Turkey:

Remove turkey from its packaging and discard any excess liquid that leaks out. Your turkey probably has a bag inside of it containing its giblets and neck; discard giblets but put the neck in an airtight container and refrigerate to use for turkey stock. Then, submerge turkey in brine, making sure

that it is completely covered (it doesn't matter if it's breast-side up or breast side down). Refrigerate for 24-36 hours. If brine doesn't completely cover your turkey, flip the turkey over halfway through to ensure even brining.

Preheat oven to 500°F, with a single rack on the lowest rung.

Take turkey out of brine and dry thoroughly — inside and out — with paper towels. Then start with new paper towels and dry it again, inside and out. Let turkey sit out until it is room temperature, about an hour, then rub your room-temperature butter all over the turkey.

Place turkey on a roasting rack, breast side down. Cook in the 500°F oven for 30 minutes, or until skin on top starts to brown. After 30 minutes, flip your bird, turn the oven down to 350°F and cook turkey breast side up for 3 - 3 ½ hours, until it reaches an internal temperature of 165°F. You can check this by taking the turkey out of the oven after 2 hours and 45 minutes and inserting a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh. If the skin of your turkey starts to burn, tent a piece of aluminum foil over the part that is burning.

Once the thigh meat temperature reaches 165°F, remove from the oven and let rest on a cutting board for at least 20 minutes before carving.

TURKEY GRAVY

Serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS

Drippings from roasted turkey
¼ cup Manischewitz Concord Grape wine
3 cups shortcut turkey stock (complete recipe on BuzzFeed.com) or canned chicken broth
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon kosher salt
1 sprig thyme
1 sprig rosemary
Special Equipment
Fine mesh strainer

PREPARATION

Take turkey out of the roasting pan and set it aside on a carving block. Pour as much of the turkey drippings as you can out of the pan and into a heatproof container or bowl (plenty will remain stuck to the bottom), and reserve these drippings. Place the roasting pan across two burners over medium heat. When the pan is hot, add wine and scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon or metal spatula for about 15 seconds to loosen any brown bits stuck to the bottom. Strain these drippings into a heatproof container, and add enough of the reserved drippings so that you have a total of 2/3 cup. Discard the rest. Put drippings in a small saucepan over low heat, and add flour. Whisk the mixture constantly over low heat for about 2 minutes, until mixture is sticky and paste-like. Slowly pour in turkey stock, whisking continuously. Add herbs and cook on low, whisking occasionally, for about 3 minutes. Take gravy off the heat and remove the herbs (take out the whole sprigs; thyme leaves may fall off the sprig and into your gravy, which is OK). Serve immediately. Gravy will continue to thicken as it cools.

Recipes by Christine Byrne courtesy of BuzzFeed



CHALLAH-APPLE STUFFING

Serves 10-12

INGREDIENTS

2 1-lb loaves challah
1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks)
2 cups diced celery
2 cups diced onion
2 cups peeled and diced Granny Smith apples
8 sprigs thyme, leaves picked and finely chopped
3 sprigs rosemary, leaves picked and finely chopped
6 sprigs marjoram, leaves picked and finely chopped
3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
Kosher salt
Freshly ground pepper, to taste

Note: To dice means to chop into roughly ¼-inch cubes.

Special Equipment

Aluminum Foil
9x13-inch baking dish

PREPARATION

Cut challah into 1-inch cubes and let cubes sit out in a bowl or on a baking tray, uncovered, for at least six hours to make them stale. Alternatively, you can dry bread in a 250°F oven by laying cubes in a single layer on baking sheets and baking for about 30 minutes, or until bread is dry but not toasted (it should not start to brown at all).

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a large sauté pan, melt butter over medium-low heat, then add onions and celery. Add three teaspoons of salt and ground pepper to taste, and cook until onions are soft, about 8 minutes. Add apples and herbs and cook until apples are soft, about 5 minutes more.

In a large bowl, combine challah cubes, cooked vegetables in butter, and chicken broth. Mix until the bread is saturated with liquid, and everything is evenly mixed. Press stuffing into a 9x13-inch baking dish and cover with foil. Bake at 350°F for 40 minutes, then remove the foil, raise your oven to 450°F, and cook stuffing uncovered for another 10-15 minutes, or until the top starts to brown slightly.

Cool 10 minutes, then serve.

Recipes by Christine Byrne courtesy of BuzzFeed. Additional "Thanksgivukkah" recipes such as Cranberry Applesauce to serve with latkes and Sweet Potato Bourbon Noodle Kugel are available at <http://www.buzzfeed.com/christinebyrne/thanksgivukkah>.