

A DOZEN OF THE NATION'S TOP COOKS REVEAL THE SECRETS BEHIND

MARK GREENAWAY

Restaurant Mark Greenaway, North Castle Street, Edinburgh

DO.. try a killer trick for the perfect gravy
Once you are done roasting your turkey, remove it from the tray and throw in a glass of white wine, scrape off all the yummy caramelised bits from the roasting tray and add some shop-bought fresh chicken stock.

Bring it all to the boil in the tray. Now for the best Christmas tip ever: sacrifice



one of your already roasted potatoes into the tray and mash it, this will thicken your gravy with no need for flour or cornflour or those dreaded gravy granules.

DON'T.. leave it all to the last minute
Never look at the list of jobs as one big daunting task. Peel all of the vegetables and make the stuffing the night before, try to do anything in advance

that will get you ahead. Write a prep list and tick off the jobs. Just think of it as a big Sunday roast.

JOHNNY AITKEN



Head chef at the Lodge on Loch Lomond

DO.. make a list
Make a detailed list of ingredients – the dishes you will be cooking and timings, so you know when you have time to relax and enjoy a Christmas cocktail. In a professional kitchen, a chef has a mise en place list. This is a comprehensive list of everything the chef has to do for each dish that they are responsible for. This ensures the chef is ready and hopefully a smooth service ensues.

DON'T.. deep fry the turkey
I wouldn't try cooking something new without having practiced the dish before Christmas day. Cooking can be unpredictable and it could take just one dish to go wrong to throw you into a spiral and Christmas dinner becomes a disaster. Be well versed in everything you are cooking, relax and enjoy the whole process. Don't try and deep fry the turkey.

RYAN JAMES

Owner of Two Fat Ladies and chairman of the Glasgow Restaurant Association

DO.. keep it hot
You have got to utilise your oven properly. Forget the English



tradition of carving the turkey at the table. Cook it the day before and on Christmas morning, carve it up and put it in a tray with gravy, this keeps it moist and ensures it is cooked before you serve it up.

DON'T.. give yourself salmonella
Never cook your bird on the day, it should always be done beforehand. People have the tendency to not cook it enough, meaning they serve up salmonella. I rarely cook a whole turkey and more often than not opt for a crown.



GARY MACLEAN

Winner of MasterChef: The Professionals 2016 and Scotland's first National Chef

DO.. Cook your turkey upside down
Lots of turkey goes to waste in Scotland because overcooking dries out the meat and makes it unenjoyable to eat.



For the perfect turkey, cook it upside down for three quarters of the cooking time. This keeps the breast meat nice and moist and stops the juices from running out of the cavity.

I like to cook turkey at 180 degrees and use a temperature probe to make sure the meat doesn't dry out.

DON'T.. buy a massive turkey

The daddy of the Christmas lunch is the turkey but few Scots realise that more than 100,000 turkeys end up in the bin in December. One of the things that causes loads of food waste is we go out and buy massive turkeys - thinking we're not going to have enough to feed everyone. Look for a turkey that's the size of a big roast chicken, not something monstrous.

FIONA BURRELL

Principle of the Edinburgh New Town Cookery School

DO.. rest the turkey
A turkey can rest for up to an hour but the potatoes and vegetables are better cooked and served without being kept warm in an oven. Factor into your plan that the turkey can sit and rest in a warm place, freeing up the oven for all the other things you need to cook.

DON'T.. be a martyr

Don't try to do everything by yourself. I get my family to help with the veg prep the day before – they also set the table and one of my daughters usually finishes off the gravy while I get the rest of the feast out of the oven.



12 chefs a chopping, 11 guests arrive, birds roasting, eight sprouts a boiling, chipolatas, *fiiive ooonioon riings*, roasts, two jugs of gravy and a feast