Too Good to Toss

Description

Thanksgiving, with its signature feasts, is a fitting time to thank the farmers, bakers and specialty food producers who make it possible for us to find mounds of fresh vegetables, pastured poultry and cut-to-order domestic cheeses. While families and friends usher in the high season for sharing food and drinks, your to-do list should include a plan for leftovers. Finishing off the stuffing and sweet potatoes not only saves time and money but controls food waste. Ever slathered leftover sweet potatoes on corn tortillas to grill?



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Give Thanksgiving cranberry sauce a second chance in a weekend compote.

Some food waste is unavoidable, but after the second or third day of overlooking leftovers in the refrigerator, options diminish. For those who eat turkey and welcome its protein value, eating the dark or white meat on Thanksgiving may be plenty, though some of us look forward to building a sandwich on toasty rye bread. To revive your leftovers, let them stand in for a breakfast change, like cranberry sauce compote, spiked with crunchy granola. Reserve potato peels for a vegetable stock and put the mashed potatoes to work in a classic dish.

With this yearâ??s leftover turkey, Iâ??m making a mashed potato dish that resembles shepherdâ??s pie and its close cousin, cottage pie. Traditionalists insist that only lamb can be used to make shepherdâ??s pie and beef is required for cottage pie. But whatever you want to call it, turkey works for me. In fact, this comfort dish can be made with fish or a mixture of lentils and crunchy carrots folded under the layer of potatoes.



Spice up leftover turkey and mashed potatoes for a savory pie.

Though this post-Thanksgiving mashup, which I call Gobbler Pie, may look like a shepherdâ??s pie, it takes on a character of its own with the help of blended spices and caramelized onions. If you can find a batch or grind your own, Lebanese seven-spice blend carries the pie across cultures.

To further prevent food waste and help alleviate hunger in the region, contact the Food Bank of the Hudson Valley (foodbankofhudsonvalley.org or 845-534-5344). It collects millions of pounds of food each year for distribution in Dutchess, Putnam and three other nearby counties.

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Cranberry sauce compote

Serves 4

2 soft bananas
8 ounces plain yogurt
2 cups granola
leftover cranberry sauce (water, fresh cranberries, grated orange or lemon peel, sugar)
Blend bananas and yogurt. Layer yogurt, granola, cranberry sauce and more granola to enjoy the remains of fresh cranberry sauce.

Gobbler Pie

Serves 6

olive oil
1 large onion, thinly sliced
Â½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons Lebanese seven-spice blend (a mixture of equal parts ground allspice, black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, fenugreek, ginger, nutmeg) or your own favorite spice blend
4 cups shredded turkey
mashed potatoes

Shake shredded turkey with spice blend and 1 tablespoon olive oil in plastic bag or covered bowl until evenly coated. Set spiced turkey aside. In large pan, cook onions with salt in olive oil over high heat. Stir continuously until onions turn brown in color. Add spiced turkey and warm through.

Spoon turkey and onion mixture into greased baking dish. Cover turkey layer with leftover mashed potatoes. Drizzle olive oil over potatoes. Bake 25 to 30 minutes at 375 degrees until the top begins to turn golden brown. Sprinkle top lightly with spice blend.

By Mary Ann Ebner, first published by *The Highlands Current*

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