

Where was Ronald McDonald when the Pilgrims needed him?

Kathy Hedberg/Lewiston Tribune

I am thankful Benjamin Franklin did not prevail in his attempt to name the turkey, instead of the bald eagle, the national bird.

If turkeys were the national bird we would not be eating them at Thanksgiving. Instead we would be poring over our recipe books trying to figure out the best way to prepare bald eagle for dinner.

Turkeys are bad enough. I guess we do it because of the pilgrim aspect, but why couldn't they have chosen something a little more palatable, like chicken nuggets to celebrate surviving in the New World? What's more American than that?

There aren't many cooks who can fix a turkey dinner without the bird turning out so dry it triggers a gag reflex. That's why they invented gravy. Turkeys are just hard birds to cook.

Think what it would be like to eat a bald eagle. At least turkeys are raised on grains and seeds and so the taste of their meat reflects that vegetarian diet.

Eagles live on mice, snakes and house cats. You know what they say - you are what you eat. How would you like to try to come up with a side dish that complements dead rodent?

Speaking of turkeys, I'm thankful for those brown-and-serve plastic bags you can cook turkeys in. They have revolutionized Thanksgiving dinner, in my opinion, because now those of us cooks who have a tendency to forget to thaw the turkey out until the morning of Thanksgiving can simply pop that 25-pound ice cube into a bag, secure the tie, stick it in the oven and in seven or eight hours we've got turkey. In the meantime, we order out for pizza and watch football.

Finally, I am thankful for the holidays when I have all my family around - children and grandchildren, my sisters and in-laws, even my ex-in-laws; friends I haven't seen for ages and friends newly made. It's a wonderful blessing to be able to share in one great Thanksgiving feast, even if the brown-and-serve bag had a leak and the turkey is still frozen in the middle, which will probably result in somebody getting sick for eating undercooked meat. Hey, but what would the holidays be without a little salmonella poisoning?

I also am thankful for the years when nobody shows up. That's when you can grab a couple of friends and head off to a restaurant for your Thanksgiving Day meal.

It's nice when the restaurant assumes the liability risk. And there's nothing like surf and turf with french fries, a microbrew and good friends to turn an ordinary holiday into a reason to rejoice.

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