

your fails, fixed



Coconut-Rum Pumpkin Pie, page T36

Still-frozen turkeys. Broken ovens. Gray, mushy veggies. Everyone's had some sort of mishap on Thanksgiving. This year, the *EatingWell* Test Kitchen has your back! We've got tips for troubleshooting some common problems, along with foolproof recipes for the big feast.

by **devon o'brien** Recipes by the EatingWell Test Kitchen

THE FAIL

I made pumpkin pie and ended up with a layer of scrambled eggs inside. —@sylviafallas

THE FIX The trick to getting smooth pumpkin pie lies in two steps: the mixing and the baking. It's important to thoroughly whisk the egg whites and yolks together before combining them with the rest of the ingredients so they get fully incorporated. And when it comes to baking, low and slow is the way to go. To ensure the crust gets nice and crisp, we blind-bake it at a high temp, then reduce the heat to cook the filled pie so the custard doesn't curdle (the technical term for that scrambled-egg look). Overbaking your pie can cause the same result—so take it out of the oven when the center is just set and still a little wobbly (it will firm up as it cools).

THE FAIL

My pie crust always comes out more crumbly than flaky. —Kacy Van Clief

THE FIX A big difference between a flaky pie crust and a crumbly one is the size of the butter pieces flecked throughout the dough. Most recipes will tell you to cut in the butter until it's the size of coarse meal, but for an ultra-flaky crust, we aim for almond-size pieces instead. The goal is to see streaks of butter in your dough; they will melt in the oven, creating pockets of steam between the layers of dough. But your butter and your final dough must be cold for this to work, so make sure you are working with butter that's straight from the fridge. And don't forget to refrigerate your dough for at least 1 hour before rolling and pop it in the freezer in the pie pan for 15 minutes before baking.

pies

Photography by Victor Protasio

STYLING: MARGARET DICKEY (FOOD), CLAIRE SPOLLAN (PROPS)

turkey

THE FAIL

I once tried to cook a turkey that wasn't completely thawed. It couldn't get cooked all the way through (without completely burning the outside) and we had to throw the whole thing out. —@alamobecky

THE FIX Thawing a turkey in the refrigerator takes at least 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds of meat. But if you find your bird is still partially frozen on Thanksgiving morning, try this quick-thaw method that only takes 30 minutes per pound: Submerge your wrapped turkey in a sink filled with cold water. Switch out the water every hour to ensure you maintain a safe temperature.

THE FAIL

My first time hosting Thanksgiving, I couldn't figure out why the bird wasn't cooking and realized my oven had broken! —@stcgfkn

THE FIX Don't fret—your grill is the perfect backup. Preheat it to medium using an indirect method (turn on only half of the gas burners or move the burnt-down charcoal to one side). Then grab heavy-duty kitchen shears to spatchcock the turkey: Cut down one side of the backbone, through the ribs. Make an identical cut on the opposite side and remove the backbone. Place the turkey, breast-side up, on a cutting board and flatten with the heels of your hands (press hard!). Splay the thighs outward and tuck the wings under. Place the turkey breast-side up on the unlit side of the grill. Cover and cook, rotating the bird 180 degrees once halfway and adjusting the heat as necessary, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part registers 165°F, about 2 hours for a 12-pound turkey.

THE FAIL

I almost annually end up leaving the giblet bag in the cavity... we usually find it during carving. —@loraritcheywoods

THE FIX In this recipe (page T34), we use the neck and giblets to make a stock that you'll use later. Prepping the stock while the turkey brines ensures you won't leave those giblets in your bird while roasting it.

THE FAIL

Our first Thanksgiving with both my family and my husband's is known as "The Gravy War." My mother insisted on using flour to thicken it and my mother-in-law insisted on cornstarch. It got ugly. —@fourdotrs

THE FIX Flour and cornstarch work equally well to thicken gravy; the key to avoiding lumps no matter which way you go is to combine the ingredients slowly and whisk constantly. For cornstarch, make a slurry with a bit of cool broth to work out any lumps before you add it to the hot broth and pan drippings. For flour, make a roux by whisking the flour right into the pan drippings. Then slowly add your broth. Still find yourself with lumps? Pass your gravy through a fine-mesh sieve.

gravy



Roast Turkey with White Wine Gravy, page T34



green beans

THE FAIL

I cooked fresh vegetables one year and they got so mushy, someone asked if they were canned! —@007chelletini

THE FIX The cooking method we use on these green beans—blanching and then immediately chilling them in an ice bath—ensures they'll stay tender-crisp and bright green. Plus, you can store the blanched beans in the refrigerator for up to 2 days then quickly reheat and toss with the gremolata (which can also be made ahead—score!) before serving.

Green Beans with Gremolata & Pine Nuts

ACTIVE: 15 min TOTAL: 25 min

TO MAKE AHEAD: Refrigerate blanched beans (Step 1) airtight for up to 2 days. Refrigerate gremolata (Step 2) for up to 1 day.

A simple combo of fresh parsley, garlic and lemon zest adds bright flavor to green beans for an easy, do-ahead side. Make even quicker work of the gremolata in Step 2 by pulsing the ingredients in a food processor instead of chopping by hand.

- 1½ pounds trimmed green beans
- 2 cups fresh parsley leaves (about 1 bunch)
- 1 clove garlic, sliced
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup pine nuts, toasted

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Set a bowl of ice water by the stove. Cook green beans until tender-crisp, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain, then transfer to the ice water. When chilled, drain again and pat dry.

2. Place parsley, garlic, lemon zest, ½ teaspoon salt and pepper on a cutting board and chop together until fine and well combined. Transfer the gremolata to a large bowl.

3. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the beans and the remaining ½ teaspoon salt and cook, turning with tongs, until heated through, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat and toss with the gremolata. Transfer to a large serving dish and top with pine nuts.

SERVES 8: ⅔ cup each

Cal 121 Fat 10g (sat 1g) Chol 0mg Carbs 8g
Total sugars 3g (added 0g) Protein 3g Fiber 3g
Sodium 254mg Potassium 316mg.



rolls

THE FAIL

I always burned the rolls so I finally had to take them off the menu. —@kimwarde

THE FIX This recipe (page T36) has a triple threat of solutions. It uses your slow cooker, making the rolls virtually impossible to burn, plus it doesn't take up valuable oven space. On top of that, the slow-cooker method means you can skip the step of proofing—just mix the dough, portion it and put it straight in.

THE FAIL

My homemade rolls flatten as they bake and look like hockey pucks. —@tlbyington

THE FIX Yeast's rising power lies in the fact that it is alive. You'll know that's the case if it foams after 5 minutes in Step 1 when you mix it with the warm milk (105-115°F—any hotter and you risk killing the yeast). We also add honey at that step—yeast loves sugar, so this helps feed it and make it active. Starting with dead yeast will yield flat rolls, so if that packet has been in your fridge for a while (especially if it is past its expiration date), test it before mixing up your dough.

Roast Turkey with White Wine Gravy

ACTIVE: 1¼ hrs **TOTAL:** 1 day plus 3½ hrs (including 24 hrs brining time)

TO MAKE AHEAD: Dry-brine turkey (Step 1) up to 2 days ahead. Refrigerate giblet stock (Step 2) for up to 2 days.

The secret to this flavorful gravy is the whole bottle of wine that simmers in the roasting pan while the turkey cooks. It adds acidity and brightness to the pan drippings, plus it helps to keep the meat moist while cooking. Any dry white will do, such as pinot grigio or sauvignon blanc. (Photo: page T31.)

TURKEY & DRY BRINE

- 1 12- to 14-pound turkey, thawed if frozen (see *Tip*, page T30)
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh parsley, plus ½ cup leaves, divided
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh rosemary, plus two 2-inch sprigs, divided
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh thyme, plus 6 sprigs, divided
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped sage, plus 6 leaves, divided
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon ground pepper

GIBLET STOCK, ROASTING PAN & GRAVY

- 4 large onions, coarsely chopped, divided
- 6 large carrots, coarsely chopped, divided
- 6 large stalks celery, coarsely chopped, divided
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled, divided
- 4 black peppercorns
- 8 cups water
- 1 lemon, halved
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 750-mL bottle dry white wine
- ½ cup all-purpose flour, divided, or ½ cup cornstarch
- ¼ cup finely chopped mixed fresh herbs, such as parsley, sage, rosemary and/or thyme

1. To brine turkey: Remove neck and giblets from turkey and set aside in the refrigerator for the giblet stock. Drain any liquid from the turkey cavity. Place the turkey on a rack set in a roasting pan. Dry the cavity and skin well with paper towels. Gently loosen skin, running fingers between it and the meat. Mix 1 tablespoon each chopped parsley, rosemary, thyme sage and salt and ground pepper in a small bowl. Rub half the mixture under the skin and

the other half on the skin. Refrigerate the turkey, uncovered and breast-side up, for at least 24 hours and for up to 48 hours.

2. Meanwhile, prepare stock: Place the reserved neck and giblets in a large saucepan, along with 1 onion, 2 carrots, 2 celery stalks, 2 garlic cloves and peppercorns. Add water and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to maintain a low simmer and cook, uncovered, for 2 hours, skimming fat and foam as needed. Strain through a fine sieve into a measuring cup (discard solids). You should have 2-2½ cups stock. Set aside in the refrigerator.

3. When ready to roast the turkey, position rack in the lower third of oven; preheat to 475°F. Let the turkey stand at room temperature while the oven heats. Place lemon, the remaining 4 garlic cloves, parsley leaves, rosemary sprigs, thyme sprigs and sage leaves in the cavity. Fill the rest of the cavity with some of the remaining onions, carrots and celery. Place any remaining vegetables in the roasting pan. Rub oil over the turkey. Pour wine into the pan.

4. Place the pan in the oven and reduce the temperature to 350°. Roast the turkey until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the breast and the innermost part of the thigh registers 165°F, 2 to 2½ hours.

5. Transfer the turkey (still on the rack to keep the skin toward the bottom from getting too soggy) to a cutting board. Let rest for at least 20 minutes.

6. While the turkey rests, make gravy: Using a slotted spoon, remove the vegetables from the pan and discard. Pour the drippings into a fat separator or a large measuring cup. Set the pan over 2 burners on medium heat.

■ **If using flour as a thickener,** add 2 tablespoons of the separated fat to the pan and sprinkle with ¼ cup flour; whisk to combine. Slowly add the remaining ¼ cup flour. While whisking, slowly add 2 cups stock and 2 cups defatted drippings and bring to a simmer. (You should have about ½ cup leftover drippings—reserve to adjust the consistency of the gravy before serving.) Cook, whisking constantly, until thickened, 3 to 5 minutes.

■ **If using cornstarch as a thickener,** whisk it with ½ cup stock in a small bowl. Add the remaining 1½ cups stock and 2 cups defatted drippings to the pan and bring to a simmer. While whisking, slowly add the cornstarch mixture and whisk until thickened.

7. Pour the gravy into a serving bowl or gravy boat and stir in finely chopped herbs. Carve the

turkey (see page T7) and serve with the gravy.

SERVES 12: 3 oz. turkey & ¼ cup gravy each
Cal 366 **Fat** 12g (sat 3g) **Chol** 147mg **Carbs** 8g
Total sugars 1g (added 0g) **Protein** 42g **Fiber** 1g
Sodium 636mg **Potassium** 459mg.

Sausage & Cranberry Whole-Wheat Stuffing

ACTIVE: 30 min **TOTAL:** 1½ hrs

Blitzing the onion and celery in a food processor—versus chopping—disperses both flavor and moisture throughout the dish. Fresh cranberries add juicy pops of tangy flavor, while the dried fruit adds chewy bits of sweetness.

- 12 ounces whole-wheat country bread, torn into bite-size pieces (8 cups)
- 1 large onion, quartered
- 2 stalks celery
- 8 ounces pork sausage, casing removed if necessary
- 1 small apple, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, grated
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- ¾ cup cranberries, thawed if frozen, chopped
- ½ cup chopped walnuts, toasted
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh sage
- ¾ teaspoon ground pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3-5 cups unsalted chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1. Preheat oven to 275°F. Spread bread on a large rimmed baking sheet. Bake until dry to the touch, about 30 minutes. Let cool; transfer to a large bowl.

2. Meanwhile, pulse onion and celery in a food processor until finely chopped. Cook sausage in a large skillet over medium heat, crumbling with a wooden spoon, until browned, about 5 minutes. Leaving the fat in the skillet, transfer the sausage to a plate. Add the onion and celery to the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and lightly browned, about 6 minutes. Add the sausage, apple and garlic and cook for 1 minute. Let cool for 5 minutes.

3. Increase oven temperature to 350°. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray and coat one side of a piece of foil with cooking spray.

4. Add the sausage mixture, eggs, fresh cranberries, walnuts, parsley, dried cranberries,

stuffing

THE FAIL

I can't ever get my stuffing just right!

—Theresa Phares Reeder

THE FIX Perfecting stuffing is really about preference—do you like it moist or crisp? This recipe works both ways. One version uses more broth and is cooked covered to create succulent stuffing, mimicking that cooked-inside-the-turkey version (we bake ours separately for food safety). If you prefer yours on the crispy side, simply reduce the broth and cook uncovered at the end to get the results you want.

Sausage & Cranberry Whole-Wheat Stuffing

sage, pepper and salt to the bread; mix well. Slowly add broth, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup at a time, allowing it to absorb before adding more. For a crispier stuffing, add about 3 cups total; if you like it moister, add more broth. Transfer the stuffing to the prepared baking dish, pressing down on it. Drizzle with oil. Cover with the foil, sprayed-side down.

5. Bake until the internal temperature registers 165°F, about 50 minutes for moist stuffing. For crispier results, cover and bake for 30 minutes, then uncover and bake until the top is lightly browned and crisp, 20 to 30 minutes more.

SERVES 12: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup each

Cal 227 **Fat** 13g (sat 2g) **Chol** 60mg **Carbs** 19g
Total sugars 6g (added 1g) **Protein** 10g **Fiber** 3g
Sodium 380mg **Potassium** 230mg.

Slow-Cooker Honey Whole-Wheat Rolls

ACTIVE: 25 min **TOTAL:** 2½ hrs

EQUIPMENT: 6-qt. or larger slow cooker, parchment paper

The slow cooker yields super-tender, pillowy rolls. If you prefer them crustier, arrange the finished rolls on a baking sheet, brush the tops with melted butter and sprinkle with flaky sea salt, if desired. Broil, watching carefully, until lightly browned, 2 to 3 minutes. (Photo: page T33.)

- 1 cup whole milk, warmed
- 4 tablespoons honey, divided
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce envelope active dry yeast (2¼ teaspoons)
- 5 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 large egg
- 2 cups whole-wheat flour
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

1. Combine milk, 1 tablespoon honey and yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer (or a large bowl, if mixing by hand). Set aside for 5 minutes.

2. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons honey, oil, egg, whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour and salt to the yeast mixture. Mix on low speed with the dough hook or with a wooden spoon until a smooth, elastic ball forms and pulls away from the sides, about 5 minutes. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface; divide into 12 pieces, about 2½ ounces each. Roll each piece into a smooth ball.

3. Line a 6-quart or larger slow cooker with a large piece of parchment paper (it's OK to pleat it slightly to get it over the bottom and partway up the sides); coat the paper with cooking spray. Add the rolls in a single layer. Cover and cook on High until the rolls are starting to brown around the edges and spring back lightly when touched, 2 to 2½ hours. Transfer the rolls to a wire rack and let cool slightly before serving warm.

SERVES 12: 1 roll each

Cal 226 **Fat** 8g (sat 1g) **Chol** 18mg **Carbs** 34g
Total sugars 7g (added 6g) **Protein** 7g **Fiber** 3g
Sodium 114mg **Potassium** 154mg.

Coconut-Rum Pumpkin Pie

ACTIVE: 35 min **TOTAL:** 1 hr 35 min

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare crust through Step 2, and refrigerate for up to 2 days or freeze for up to 3 months. Refrigerate baked pie for up to 1 day.

EQUIPMENT: 9-inch pie pan (not deep-dish), parchment paper, pie weights (or dried beans)
This take on the classic T-day pie has the familiar warming spices, like cinnamon and nutmeg, plus rum and coconut for a tropical twist. (Photo: page T28.)

CRUST

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons canola oil, chilled
- 3-4 tablespoons ice water

FILLING

- 4 large eggs
- 1 15-ounce can unseasoned pumpkin puree
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pure maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons spiced rum or coconut rum

- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup well-shaken light coconut milk
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup coconut cream, whisked
- 1 teaspoon coconut extract (optional)
- Toasted coconut for garnish

1. To prepare crust: Whisk all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt in the bowl of a stand mixer or large mixing bowl. Add butter and toss to coat with flour. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour.

2. Mix on low speed, using the paddle attachment, until the butter forms almond-size pieces, 2 to 3 minutes. (Alternatively, use your fingers to work the butter and flour together until the butter forms almond-size pieces.) Add oil and mix or stir until incorporated, about 30 seconds. Add 3 tablespoons water and mix or stir just until the dough comes together. If it seems dry, add the remaining 1 tablespoon water. Form the dough into a disk, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
3. If the dough has been refrigerated for more than 1 hour, let it stand at room temperature for 20 minutes. Roll out on a lightly floured surface into a 12½-inch round. Transfer to a 9-inch pie pan and crimp edges. Chill the crust in the freezer for 15 minutes.

4. Position rack in lower third of oven; preheat to 450°F.

5. Line the crust with parchment paper and fill with pie weights (or dried beans). Bake until the edges are golden brown, about 15 minutes. Remove the paper and pie weights and bake until the crust is firm, 5 to 7 minutes more. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F.

6. Meanwhile, prepare filling: Whisk eggs in a large bowl until lightly beaten. Add pumpkin, brown sugar, maple syrup, rum, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt and whisk until combined. Add coconut milk, coconut cream and coconut extract, if using, and whisk until combined.

7. Pour the filling into the crust. Bake until the filling is set and a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, about 1 hour 10 minutes. Let the pie cool on a wire rack for 10 to 15 minutes. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. Garnish with coconut, if desired.

SERVES 12: 1 slice each

Cal 299 **Fat** 13g (sat 7g) **Chol** 72mg **Carbs** 42g
Total sugars 27g (added 18g) **Protein** 4g **Fiber** 2g
Sodium 257mg **Potassium** 156mg. ■


MAYO

Make 'Em Again

Whip up a second batch of these rolls the day after Thanksgiving for leftover turkey sliders. Just split the rolls in half, slather on mayo, then add the meat and all your favorite toppings.

SPONSORED BY KRAFT MAYO