

Turkey as superfood

Once confined to the traditional Christmas dinner, turkey is finding favour with nutritionists and those interested in the concept of superfoods. High intakes of saturated 'bad' fat in the UK and rising obesity levels have prompted greater efforts to encourage families to choose healthier meals and snacks. Including turkey on a regular basis is a good way to achieve this.



Turkey and calories

At less than 160 calories per 100g (4oz) of breast meat, turkey is one of the healthiest meal options available. Compared with lean beef, turkey contains 1/5 fewer calories. Keep calories under control by roasting or grilling your meat instead of frying it.

Turkey and fat

Surprisingly, given the succulent texture of turkey breast, it has a very low fat content (i.e. less than 3% fat by weight). At only 2g of fat per 100g portion, it has a similar fat content to a couple of slices of wholemeal bread. Low fat foods, such as turkey breast, white fish, fruits, vegetables, breakfast cereals, pasta and rice should make up the majority of our daily calorie intake. Add to this, reduced fat dairy products and you have a perfectly balanced diet.

Turkey and heart health

Experts agree that saturated fats are an important culprit in the development of heart disease. These fats are present in meat and dairy products, and are thought to increase the risk of clogged arteries over time if eaten in large amounts. Compared with other meats, turkey breast has one of the lowest saturated fat levels at less than 1g per 100g (4oz) portion. Even the more succulent turkey leg meat contains almost half the saturated fat of a portion of roast lamb.

Turkey and weight control

Not all calories are equal when it comes to body weight control. Research shows that people who eat high protein, low fat diets tend to be slimmer than people who eat other types of diet. Containing 34g of protein per 100g, which is nearly 3/4 of an adult's recommended daily intake, turkey offers as much protein as roast beef but without the levels of fat or calories. Equally delicious hot or cold, turkey can be the dieter's best friend.

Turkey and essential nutrients

High in B-vitamins and minerals, there is no doubt that turkey is a nutrient-rich food. Just one portion¹ of turkey will meet the niacin requirement of an average man or woman. Niacin is important for digestive health and energy delivery. Turkey supplies around 1/3 of our recommended vitamin B6 intake - important in regulating mood and nervous function - and 2/3 of our recommended vitamin B12, which aids the replenishment of our red blood cells. Turkey is also high in zinc, phosphorus and selenium. UK children often have low intakes of zinc, which is important for normal growth and development. Eating more selenium is thought to help protect cells against damage.

Is turkey a superfood?

Interest in the functional side of foods has prompted a re-evaluation of old favourites, such as turkey. While more research is needed, turkey is known to be rich in the protein building block, tryptophan. This substance is linked to sleep and relaxation, probably because the body converts it into the neurotransmitter, serotonin. A recent Japanese study found that young children given a tryptophan meal displayed better behaviour and enjoyed a higher quality of sleep².

Why? Turkey has a host of healthful attributes and it tastes great. Here are the National Turkey Federation's top reasons why eating turkey is a smart and healthy move for 2005.

- Countless diet books and registered dieticians recommend turkey as a regular part of a healthy diet.
- Turkey is a better source of protein than other popular meats. A skinless, cooked 3-ounce turkey breast has 8 percent more protein and less fat than chicken or beef.
- Turkey has a low cholesterol count. It prompted the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) to single turkey out as a

source of lean protein because it has less saturated fat, less total fat and less cholesterol than chicken, pork or beef.

- Adding turkey to your meal rotation helps avoid food fatigue - boredom of the palate brought on by repeated consumption of chicken, beef and pork. With turkey, health-conscious dieters get a protein that can help them achieve the meal variety that is often crucial to dieting success.
- Turkey is easy to weave into recipes. There are new kinds of turkey cuts available - tenderloins, cutlets, thighs and ground turkey - that make it easy to enjoy turkey.
- Turkey is incredibly versatile. It's not just for roasting and sandwiches. How about these options?
- Turkey is a great solution for family dinner dilemmas. Its low-fat counts allow adults to watch their waist lines while kids enjoy its great taste.
- Most important of all, turkey tastes great!

Roasted Turkey Legs

2-3 Lbs. Turkey legs (3 legs)

Fresh herbs, 1 Tbs. of each chopped fine: Sage, rosemary, thyme

2 Tbs. butter softened

Salt and Pepper for seasoning

1 tsp. Garlic powder

1/2 cup chicken stock or broth

Preheat oven to 350

Season legs well with salt and pepper. Combine fresh herbs and butter until well mixed. Cut a couple of small slits in turkey legs under the skin. Massage Turkey legs with butter mixture making sure to get under skin. Put into a small roasting pan or large oven proof skillet. Pour chicken stock into pan and cover tightly with foil. Roast one hour, and uncover. Cook another 1/2 hour or until skin is nicely browned.

Turkey Breasts with Pan Sauce

1 lb. boneless, skinless turkey breasts

1 Tbs. combined chopped fresh sage, thyme and rosemary

Salt pepper and garlic powder for seasoning

olive oil

tsp. flour

water

Season turkey with salt, pepper, and garlic powder and herbs. Heat oil in a large skillet over med. heat. Cook 5 minutes per side (for 1" thick less time for thinner cuts). Transfer to 350 degree oven and cook for 5-10 minutes longer until temp. reaches 175. While the turkey is finishing in the oven deglaze the pan with 1/4 cup white wine, and add 1/2 cup of

chicken stock. Combine water and flour in a small dish and mix together thoroughly. Add to pan whisking constantly. Let simmer for about 5 minutes. Serve over turkey.

