

The
Mac
King
Show

Thanksgiving cookbook



The Mac King Show Thanksgiving Cookbook

Limited Edition # 3 of 75



Join Las Vegas' favorite comedy magician, Mac King, as he shows you how to pull off the finest Thanksgiving you've ever had.



Yes, these plates all belong to me.

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*I have my grandmother's silver
(and my grandfather's suit).*

Introduction

First of all, Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday, so this is not a joke. This is a real cookbook. These are real workable honest-to-goodness recipes. They have all been tried by me and my wife in our very own kitchen. They are the best of their kind I have found in all my years of exploring and experimenting.

You may be asking yourself what the heck qualifications does a stinking magician have to have to write a dang cookbook? Well, if I wasn't a successful magician with my own show here at Harrah's Las Vegas¹ I'd be a chef with my own restaurant somewhere. As a matter of fact, my only other job besides magician was as the head chef at 610 Magnolia, which, at the time, was the finest restaurant in my hometown of Louisville, Kentucky.

These recipes will provide the perfect foundation for a complete meal. You'll have turkey and stuffing, cranberry sauce, and pie. All you'll need are some mashed potatoes (don't be a nut—make real ones, not the stupid kind from a stupid box²), and some sort of green vegetable (green beans, peas, etc.), and you'll have the ideal Thanksgiving dinner.

Of course that's not really true. You have to invite some really good friends over to help you eat the food and do the dishes. After the dishes are done I'd suggest you retire to the living room to play some parlor games. Pictionary is great if you get a big dry-erase board and make everybody play. Botticelli is also excellent (the rules for this superb game are easy to find online). But the big deal at our house is Thrill Tower. Years ago I was perform-

ing in Tokyo and spent the afternoon at Tokyu Hands, a gigantic department store in the Shinjuku district. In the toy department there was a 9 year old kid playing this game that looked like a gigantic version of Jenga, but cooler. Despite this kid's limited English, and my even more limited Japanese, we played this game for over an hour. I brought back one the games and we have played it every Thanksgiving since then.

P.S. Make sure everybody takes home some leftovers.



¹ Tuesday through Saturday at 1pm and 3pm. No shows on Thanksgiving, I'm at home cooking.

² You know, it occurs to me that magic shows are a lot like mashed potatoes: Some are obviously the instant kind that come straight from a box, and some are unmistakably hand-crafted with dedication and hard work. I think they're better because they're a little lumpy.

Thompson's Turkey

About the Turkey

First, let's be clear. Have you ever cooked a turkey before? Because if you haven't, this is not the way I'd begin. This is a complicated, all day affair with almost 50 ingredients. But, once you're an experienced bird roaster, please give this a try.

I know it seems so backwards and wrong to cook a turkey like this, but you just wait. Some brave soul is going to try it and you'll be sorry you weren't the first on your block to convert over to the Thompson's Turkey gang.

I first learned of Thompson's Turkey from my pal Gene Anderson, the guy who invented the Torn and Restored Newspaper trick that you see in most every magic show³. He knew I was interested in cooking in general, and Thanksgiving recipes in particular. Gene has a big Thompson's Turkey party every year where people arrive early, prepare the Turkey together, visit all day while it cooks, and then sit down and consume it together. It's like Thanksgiving, but there's no football. Gene got the recipe from a fabulous cookbook called *The Haphazard Gourmet* by Richard Gehman. Gene sent me a photocopy of the recipe. The Turkey recipe was so great and so well written that I tracked down a copy of the actual cookbook, and if you've read this far in the recipe you're probably the kind of oddball who'd like Gehman's cookbook. Obviously Gehman himself didn't think of Thompson's Turkey or it would be called Gehman's Turkey (or perhaps Gehman's Gobbler to preserve the pleasing alliteration). Thompson's Turkey was invented by Morton Thompson who wrote a best-seller in the late 50's-early 60's called *Not as a Stranger* which was made into a movie.

I haven't read Thompson's book, nor seen his movie, but I can tell you Morton Thompson is a damn genius. Whereas most traditional turkeys come out of the oven beautiful golden brown, Thompson's Turkey

³I, myself, don't do the trick in my show—The Mac King Comedy Magic Show at Harrah's Casino and Hotel, Tuesday through Saturday at 1pm and 3pm.



My pal Gene Anderson cooking in my kitchen.

More About the Turkey

comes out looking like you've made a horrible, tragic mistake. Thompson's Turkey comes out a black, ugly, crusty jet-black. The first time you serve this you might want to carve the Turkey before bringing it to the table so as not to alarm your guests. Once they taste this delectable, luscious, yummy delicacy they will be permanent converts. It is that good.

But don't take my word for it. Here's what a satisfied customer had to say about it:

Several years ago I ate a turkey prepared and roasted by Morton Thompson. I didn't eat the whole turkey, but that wasn't my fault. There were outsiders present who ganged up on me.

Now turkey, despite its build-up as the Great American Bird, can be, and usually is, a mighty full slice of nothing teed up on a mound of double-nothing billed as "dressing." Not so with Thompson's turkey. I am not even going to try to describe Thompson's turkey. I leave all that sexy writing to the younger men. I will say I decided at the time that Morton Thompson was the greatest man [ever].

The author of the above lines was the late Robert Benchley of *New Yorker* magazine fame.



Four of the five tables we set up each year.

The Actual Turkey Recipe (*Finally*)

Okay, okay, enough ballyhoo. Here's how you create this greatest of all Turkeys in your own kitchen.

Get a **big turkey**. Between 16 and 22 pounds. If you can find a fresh Kosher turkey that's what I'd recommend. But really any turkey will be fine.

Rub the turkey inside and out with...

**salt and
pepper**

Turn on your oven as hot⁴ as it will go (500 degrees or so).

In a pot put...

**the chopped gizzard
the heart
the neck
four or five cups of water
a large bay leaf
1 teaspoon of paprika
½ teaspoon of coriander
a clove of garlic
and a bit of salt**

Let it simmer while you work on the stuffing.

Set the **liver** aside. You'll put that in later.



Plus the fifth one. It's a good idea to have kids around to remind you what you're thankful for. But a separate "kids' table" is a very good idea.

⁴ What's hot in Vegas? The Mac King Comedy Magic Show at Harrah's Casino and Hotel, Tuesday through Saturday at 1pm and 3pm (of course).

More of the Actual Turkey Recipe

In as big a bowl as you've got, put...

- 1 apple (diced)
- 1 orange (diced)
- 1 large can crushed pineapple
- 1 can water chestnuts (chopped)
- 1 lemon's worth of grated lemon rind
- 3 tablespoons of chopped preserved ginger
- 2 teaspoons dry mustard
- 2 teaspoons caraway seeds
- 3 teaspoons celery seeds
- 2 teaspoons poppy seeds
- 2 ½ teaspoons oregano
- 1 well crushed bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon mace
- 4 tablespoons well chopped fresh parsley (or dried is okay too)
- 5 cloves crushed garlic
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 2 or 3 chopped onions
- 5-6 stalks of chopped celery
- ½ teaspoon marjoram
- ½ teaspoon savory
- 1 tablespoon poultry seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- a couple of dashes Tabasco™
- 1 teaspoon sesame seeds
- 1 teaspoon salt

Mix all the above stuff thoroughly together.



Your humble scribe (Mac King), David Hoyt (Jumble® puzzle designer), Mike Caveney (magician/historian), and Derek DelGaudio (close-up magician of the year) wait for Turkey by trading card tricks.

Still More of the Actual Turkey Recipe

In your second biggest bowl put...

4 cups of bread crumbs
1 pound ground pork
½ stick melted butter

Mix all these things together and then mix the contents of the two bowls together. Stuff the turkey with this glop. Fill the whole inside. Cram it in there. Put it in the neck hole. Pack that bird full.

Either put the stuffed bird breast up in your roasting pan, or breast down on a roasting rack in the pan. Make sure your oven is hell-hot and put the Turkey in it.

Now you make the paste. In a big coffee mug put the following...

3 egg yolks
2 teaspoons dry mustard
1 clove well mashed-up garlic
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
3 teaspoons lemon juice
enough flour to make a very thick paste

Shake or stir (it doesn't matter—you're not James Bond) these things 'til they make a thick paste. Too wet? Add more flour. Too dry? More lemon juice.

Let the Turkey sit in the inferno hot oven 'til smoke builds up. This takes about 20 minutes. Then reduce the heat to 325 degrees. Take out the Turkey and, using a pastry brush, paint it all over with the paste. Put it back in the oven for 15 minutes. Paint it with the paste again. Put it back in the oven for 15 more minutes. Keep repeating this paint and roast for 15 minutes cycle until you run out of paste. Usually you'll get 3 to 5 paintings.



A lovely relish tray made by my wife Jennifer for us to eat between basting. (She calls these kinds of pictures "food porn.")

Add a cup of **apple cider** to the giblet mixture you've still got simmering on your stove. Throw the **liver** in too. Keep this mixture simmering while the Turkey cooks. It is your basting liquid. Ideally you'd pour a couple of cups of this liquid over the Turkey every 15 minutes. In the real world, just do it every time you think about it. Whatever liquid you remove from the pot for basting you should replenish with a mixture of half water, half cider.

The Last Page of the Actual Turkey Recipe (Finally!)

After it cooks for about an hour and a half you should turn the Turkey over onto its stomach. There is no real good way to do this. What I generally do is just put on two oven mitts and just pick up the Turkey and turn it over. That's right, just pick it up; the mitts get really messy, but you can wash 'em. Let it cook back-up like this 'til the last 15 minutes, then turn it belly-up for the remainder of the time (unless you're cooking it in a rack—then don't turn it over onto its back until the last half hour). The Turkey should cook about five and a half hours. Every time you open the oven door to baste it, the appearance will shock you. The paste will begin to turn coal black very early in the proceedings. Here's what the great man Morton Thompson himself wrote in his original write up:

You will think, "My God! I have ruined it." Be calm. Take a tweezer and pry loose the paste coating. It will come off readily. Beneath this burnt, harmless, now worthless shell the bird will be golden and dark brown, succulent, giddy-making with wild aromas, crisp and crunchable and crackling. The meat beneath this crazing panorama of lip-wetting skin will be wet, juice will spurt from it in tiny fountains as high as the handle of the fork plunged into it; the meat will be white, crammed with mocking flavor, delirious with things that rush over your palate and are drowned and gone as fast as you can swallow; cut a little of it with a spoon, it will spread as eagerly and readily as soft wurst. You do not have to be a carver to eat this turkey; speak harshly to it and it will fall apart.

If you decide to be brave and make this Turkey, no doubt one of the things you'll be thankful for on Thanksgiving Day is that when Morton Thompson died on July 7, 1953, he didn't take this recipe with him.



That's right, this is what all that work will yield. But, wait til you crack it open. It's tender and oh so juicy on the inside (just like The Mac King Show).

The Best Cranberry Sauce In All the Land

When I was a kid cranberry sauce came from a can. It didn't taste that good, and it looked hilarious sitting there on a dish like a red, can-shaped, Jell-O® cylinder. Don't be an idiot; make your own. This recipe comes from Julee Rosso and Sheila Lukins, the women who wrote *The Silver Palate Cookbook*. This stuff is so good you might even have it sometime besides Thanksgiving.

In a saucepan on the stove put...

- 12 ounces of fresh cranberries (conveniently that's one bag) make sure you rinse them well under cold water**
- 1 cup pure maple syrup (don't be a numbskull, get REAL maple syrup, not Mrs. Butterworth's or Aunt Jemima maple flavored syrup; you can tell the difference)**
- 1 cup raspberry-cranberry juice (preferably the kind with no added sugar; Trader Joe's sells a good one, but use what you can find; this isn't like the maple syrup, it won't make too much difference)**
- Grated zest of one orange**

Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to about medium and cook for 10 more minutes.

Then dump in...

- 1 cup walnut pieces**

Stir the sauce and then turn off the heat. Dump the mixture into something you can cover and put in the refrigerator. As it gets cool it will thicken up. I always make this the day before I'm going to consume it.

This serves about 10 or 12 people.

Kentucky Derby Pie

Can a pie be copyrighted? The story around Kentucky is that, yes, it can. I've always heard that Kentucky Derby Pie was a copyrighted pie. Searching the internet I can't find any evidence to confirm that, but if there was ever any pie deserving of a copyright, this is that pie.

One of the reasons to make this pie is its uniqueness.⁵ No one (outside of Kentucky) that I've served this to has ever tasted anything like it. Actually, that's not exactly true; they've all tasted something sort of like it. Imagine the hugest, most delicious chocolate-chip cookie you've ever had. This tastes sort of like that, only even more scrumptious. Here's how to concoct this amazing treat.

Pre-heat your oven to 350 degrees. You'll need...

1 deep-dish frozen pie shell (if you've got a good recipe for home-made pie crust feel free to use it—usually at Thanksgiving we're making six or eight of these, so we use Marie Calendar's frozen and they turn out just fine)

1 cup sugar

½ cup flour

2 large eggs

1 stick butter (melted and cooled)

6 ounces chocolate chips

1 cup pecan pieces

1 teaspoon vanilla

Whipped Cream (see below)

In a big bowl, slightly beat the eggs together with the vanilla. Then dump in the rest of the ingredients (except the whipped cream) and stir them thoroughly together. Pour the entire mixture into the pie shell. Put it in the oven for about 45 minutes. You don't want it too brown, or too liquid-y either. You can jiggle it a little to test for doneness; try to pull it out of the oven just before it's completely firm.

Serve it with a generous helping of whipped cream.

⁵Certainly, uniqueness is not in and of itself enough to recommend anything. The thing in question should be a superb example of its form. In the case of pie, it should taste good. In the case of a show, say for instance, The Mac King Comedy Magic Show, it should (in addition to its obvious uniqueness) be both funny and astonishing. Hopefully you'll come down to Harrah's and judge for yourself if there's any reason to recommend it.

Whipped Cream

If you have a really good mixer you should make your own whipped cream. To whip cream you should start with a **pint of very cold heavy whipping cream**, and make sure the bowl you're whipping it in and the whipping attachment for your mixer are cold as well. The easiest way to do this is to simply put them in the freezer for a while ahead of time. But the most **fun** way to do this is to put a few ice cubes in the mixing bowl and then turn the mixer on low. Of course, the ice will cool the bowl and the beater, but the excellent part is, every few seconds one of the cubes will catch just right on the beater and shoot out of the bowl across the room.

Okay, so you're ready to whip. Pour the cream into the cold bowl and start whipping it at high speed. Add a **bit of confectioner's (powdered) sugar** (no more than a tablespoon for every pint of cream) and keep whipping 'til it looks like whipped cream. How stiff the cream will get depends on the quality of your mixer and/or beating/whisking attachments.

You can make this a day ahead of time and store it in an airtight glass or plastic bowl in the refrigerator. If you don't have a good mixer, buy Readywhip™ in a can. Please, no **light** whipped cream, and for goodness sake (literally!), no Cool Whip™—this is **Thanksgiving** we're talking about!



Derby Pie with Whipped Cream (surrounded by cookies).

A Couple of Toasts

So the food is all prepared, the guests are all seated, now what? We have a tradition at the dinner table at our house: Before every meal we all clink glasses and say, "Three cheers for the cooks! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray!" and then everyone at the table names one thing that they're thankful for or happy about. But at Thanksgiving, because there are so many people (we generally have about 40, but have had as many as 60), after the "Three Cheers" I usually offer up a simple toast. If you'd like to do the same, here are a couple of suggestions.

First, a humorous little poem...

May your stuffing be tasty
May your turkey plump,
May your potatoes and gravy
Have nary a lump.
May your yams be delicious
And your pies take the prize,
And may your Thanksgiving dinner
Stay off your thighs!
~Anonymous

And if you're in the mood for something a bit more moving...

Stand up, on this Thanksgiving Day, stand upon your feet. Believe in man. Soberly and with clear eyes, believe in your own time and place. There is not, and there never has been a better time, or a better place to live in.
~Phillips Brooks

That's it. I hope you get some enjoyment out of this little booklet. And if you're reading this it's because you've had some part in making my 13 years at Harrah's something I'm truly thankful for.

Thank you, and Happy Thanksgiving.



Mac offers a toast to two rooms full of friends.



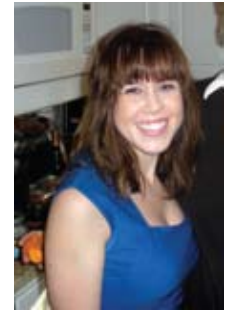
Cousin Bill & Joetta King with their child.



Gene looks on as John Carney begins the meal with a cake.



Tina Lenert & Ton Onasaka



Vanessa is more than just a pretty face; she's an excellent dishwasher.



After dinner magic. Elizabeth appears from a cardboard box!



Serve it up!



Nancy Keener, gravy champ.



Clint & Kelly not singing



Mac's brother John and sister Elizabeth are not married to each other even tho they were born in Kentucky.



Three cheers for the hosts!



Last minute rush



Kathy and Jeff Knurek at prom Thanksgiving.



Kevin Burke got the short end of the wishbone.



Handsome Jack and (decent looking) Chris Kenner.



Uncle Max Maven. Mindreader & expert Turkey carver.



Mimi makes her traditional Thanksgiving Potstickers.



The day begins with the traditional (vicious) croquet match.



Some of the cooking/set-up crew. Max, Kelly, Pete, Lisa, Mimi, Jen, Maggie, and Claire.

Thanksgiving at My House

Happy Thanksgiving



THE
MacKing
COMEDY MAGIC SHOW

*Please enjoy this lovely Thanksgiving
decoration (suitable for framing)
compliments of your pals at
The Mac King Comedy Magic Show
at Harrah's Casino and Hotel,
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