

# Gordon and Katharyn's *Holiday Favorites*



Gordon Robertson and his wife Katharyn are wonderful cooks. Recently they joined Terry Meeuwse on the set of *The 700 Club* to share some favorite family recipes.

Below you'll find the same holiday recipes that Pat raves about and Gordon's family has come to enjoy as a Thanksgiving tradition each year.

If you are looking for a delicious addition to your holiday table, be sure to try one of the Robertsons' recipes. From Gordon's Best Turkey Brine to Very Fancy Pecan Pie, these dishes are destined to become an absolute tradition at your feast as well. You can also log on to [CBN.com](http://CBN.com) for more of Gordon and Katharyn's favorite recipes.

From all of us here at CBN and *The 700 Club*, God bless you! Have a wonderful Holiday, and may your hearts be filled with joy and praise.

## Gordon's Best Turkey Brine

To make the brining solution, in a large stockpot, bring the water, ginger, black peppercorn, bay leaves and salt to a boil. Lower to a simmer and stir in the honey (or brown sugar) and maple syrup until well blended. Turn off heat and allow to cool to room temperature. Transfer the brine to a non-reactive container (such as a clean bucket or a clean, heavy-duty, plastic garbage bag placed inside a cooler). Add the oranges and lemons.

*Note: If you have a big turkey and need more brine than this, use ½ cup salt and ½ cup brown sugar for every gallon of water.*

Rinse the turkey inside and out with cold tap water. Reserve the neck and specialty meats for pan gravy. Set the turkey in the brine, making sure that the turkey is fully immersed in the brine. Place a weight on top of the turkey to make sure it is always covered with brine. Marinate for at least 4 hours to overnight, depending on the weight of the turkey, in the refrigerator or in a cooler with ice.

**YOU MUST KEEP THE TURKEY AT A TEMPERATURE BELOW 50° F  
TO PREVENT BACTERIA FROM GROWING.**

Preheat oven to 325°F.

In a heavy roasting pan, place the carrots, celery and onions. Use a thick, heavy duty roasting pan – enameled cast iron or heavy stainless steel – not a thin, throw-away pan – these leave hot spots that burn portions and leave other portions uncooked.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 (10-12 pound) whole fresh turkey, giblets and neck removed and reserved for stock
- 2 apples, quartered and cored
- 1 onion, peeled and quartered
- 2 rosemary sprigs
- 3 sprigs sage
- Olive oil, for drizzling
- 1 cup cubed carrots
- 1 cup cubed celery
- 1 cup cubed onions

### TURKEY BRINE:

- 2 gallons water
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 3 tablespoons cracked black peppercorns
- 12 bay leaves
- 1 cup kosher salt
- 24 ounces honey or 1 cup of brown sugar
- 24 ounces maple syrup (optional)
- 2 oranges, quartered
- 2 lemons, quartered



Thermal/Conventional Oven Open Pan  
Method Timetable for  
Roasting a Turkey at 325 Degrees F.

**Un-stuffed Turkey**

- \* 8 to 12 pounds    \*\*2¼ to 3 hours
- \* 12 to 14 pounds    \*\*3 to 3¾ hours
- \* 14 to 18 pounds    \*\*3¾ to 4¼ hours
- \* 18 to 20 pounds    \*\*4¼ to 4½ hours
- \* 20 to 24 pounds    \*\*4½ to 5 hours

Gravy:

**INGREDIENTS:**

Turkey stock made from boiling the neck and giblets in four cups of water

1 sprig thyme

2 sprigs parsley

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons flour

pepper – you do not need to salt the gravy because of the brine

Remove turkey from brine and drain – a brined turkey will release water while cooking so drain as much water as possible before you place in oven. You need to check on the turkey as it cooks to make sure that water is not accumulating in the roasting pan.

Insert the apples, onions, and whole rosemary and sage into the cavity of the turkey. Place the turkey over the vegetables, breast-side up, in the roasting pan. Use a thick, heavy duty roasting pan – enameled cast iron or heavy stainless steel – not a thin, throw-away pan – these leave hot spots that burn portions and leave other portions uncooked. Tuck the wings back and under the turkey. Using kitchen twine, tie the legs together to keep the cavity closed.

Drizzle the top of the turkey with olive oil and rub it into the skin – this will create a golden brown color and help crisp the skin. Tent with aluminum foil. Roast a [see chart at left #lbs]\* turkey for [see chart at left \*\*hours] at 325°F. The turkey is done when the juices run clear at the joint of the thigh or when a meat thermometer reads at least 165°F in the breast.

Once cooked, transfer turkey to a platter, tent with foil and allow to rest for at least 15 minutes for the juices to settle.

## While the turkey is resting, prepare the gravy.

While the turkey is cooking, place neck and giblets in 4 cups of water – bring water to a boil and then reduce to simmer, stirring occasionally for about 1 hour. Once the turkey is removed from the oven and the pan, remove the vegetables from the pan being careful to leave as much liquid as possible in the pan. Pour the remaining liquid in a separator to separate the fat from the liquid or try to skim as much fat as possible off the juice in the pan with a spoon. Reserve the pan drippings.

Set the pan on 2 burners set on medium heat. Deglaze roasting pan with a small amount of turkey stock, scraping the bottom of the pan to loosen any brown bits. Reduce and then add butter and then the flour when the butter has melted – cook until the flour turns golden brown and thickens. Gradually add the pan drippings and then the turkey stock, whisking it into the flour mixture until it thins into a gravy that coats the back of a spoon. You may not need all of the turkey stock depending on the thickness of the gravy. Add the thyme and parsley and bring to a boil.

Strain into a saucepan to remove lumps and keep the gravy at a simmer. Add pepper to taste and continue to cook until gravy has thickened – if the gravy thickens too much, just thin with remaining turkey stock.

Place the gravy in a sauceboat and the turkey on the serving platter and you are ready to eat a great tasting turkey!

# Sweet Potato Biscuits

(adapted from Blue Pete's Restaurant, Virginia Beach, VA)

Bake sweet potatoes until soft, about 45 minutes at 400°F. While potatoes are still warm, measure 1½ cups of pulp into a large bowl. Add butter, sugar, milk, and salt; mix well.

Sift together flour and baking powder; add to sweet potato mixture. Work lightly with hands to make a soft dough. Do not knead. Shape dough into a flattened ball, cover in plastic or wax paper, and chill. Dough can be made early in the day to this point.

Do not overwork the dough because it will keep the biscuits from rising – be gentle – the less the dough is worked, the better.

About 10 minutes before meal time, pre-heat oven to 400°F and position a rack in the upper third of the oven. Lightly grease 2 round cake pans. Gently roll dough out to a thickness of about 2 inches, then cut into 2-inch diameter biscuits. Nestle rounds closely in cake pans, and bake on the upper rack for 15 to 20 minutes until golden brown. Time will vary with the width of the biscuit. Makes a dozen 2-inch biscuits.

*A note from Katharyn: I like to serve these biscuits hot, hot, hot. As dinner guests fill their plates, I can slip away to the kitchen and return with a basketful fresh from the oven. Be sure to have a plate of high-quality butter at the ready. Oh, yes, a thin slice of country ham sends these over the top!*

## Katharyn's Holiday Sweet Potatoes

*Make ahead:* Line 1 or 2 baking sheets with tin foil. Halve squash lengthwise and scoop out seeds. Place squash cut side down on foil and bake them with the sweet potatoes in a hot oven until soft, about 45 minutes at 400°F. Remove from oven and allow to cool to touch. *This step can be done even days ahead and the pulp stored in the refrigerator until final assembly.*

Generously grease bottom and sides of large casserole dish with butter. Measure 4 cups of sweet potato pulp into a large mixing bowl. Remove excess liquid from the butternut squash pulp by rolling a cup or two of pulp in a clean, lint-free dishtowel and wringing tightly. Add 4 cups of prepared squash pulp to the bowl, followed by the butter, salt, egg, and milk. Blend with an electric mixer until very fluffy. Smooth evenly into prepared dish. *Assemble early in the day or the night before, and refrigerate.*

*1½ hours before serving:* Preheat oven to 375°F. Mix all topping ingredients in a medium bowl with a fork. Spread streusel-like topping over potato casserole, and bake until topping is bubbly and browned, about 45 minutes to 1 hour. If topping darkens too quickly, reduce oven temperature. Allow to cool and set at least 30 minutes before serving.

*A note from Katharyn: Butternut squash adds a brightness and kick to the usual sweet potato dish. Its flavor merits the extra work it takes to squeeze out its high moisture content. Also, I use sugar only in the topping, not in the potatoes. Beware of assembling the oatmeal topping in advance: it can turn mushy. The best result is a crispy, crunchy top layer in contrast to the creamy, flavorful potatoes.*

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 to 3 medium sweet potatoes (enough for 1½ cups mashed)
- ½ cup high-quality butter (1 stick), softened
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¾ to 3½ cups all-purpose flour
- 4½ teaspoons baking powder



### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups sweet potato pulp (4 large sweet potatoes)
- 4 cups butternut squash pulp (2 medium squash)
- ½ cup high-quality butter (1 stick), very soft
- 1½ teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 3 teaspoons milk or cream

### Topping:

- ½ cup high-quality butter (1 stick), just softened
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup whole oats
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg



# Very Fancy Pecan Pie

## Filling:

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup high-quality butter, softened
- 4 eggs
- ¼ cup light corn syrup
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 cup chopped pecans

## Topping:

- ½ cup brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons high-quality butter
- 4 tablespoons honey
- additional 1 cup pecan halves

Preheat oven to 375°F. Cream butter and sugar in mixing bowl. Beat in eggs, syrup and vanilla. Stir in pecans. Pour filling into unbaked deep-dish pie shell. Bake at 375°F for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to 325°F and bake for another 30 minutes. Remove pie from the oven.

While the pie is baking, combine the brown sugar, remaining butter and honey in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat until sugar is fully dissolved. Arrange remaining 1 cup pecan halves in a pretty circular pattern on top of the pie. Gently pour honey glaze from saucepan, keeping the arrangement intact. Return pie to oven for a final 10 to 15 minutes until the topping is bubbly. Cool completely before serving.

*A note from Katharyn: This pie steals the show. If you want complements, put in the extra effort for this beauty. The honey glaze can burn if left too long, so keep a sharp eye on it during the final minutes. A deep-dish crust helps, as the topping adds a bit of height.*

## Pie Crust

Combine flour and salt in mixing bowl. Cut in Crisco using fork or pastry blender until all flour is blended in, forming pea-size chunks. Sprinkle water, one tablespoon at a time. Lightly toss with a fork after each addition, until dough will form a ball. Shape dough between hands to form a 6-inch flattened ball. *Dough can be chilled at this point for use later or to help it roll out without sticking.*

On a floured surface, roll dough into a circle by rolling out from the center in all directions, avoiding downward pressure. Keep edges neat by pressing together with fingers or repairing with a bit of water. To lift dough into pie plate, place the rolling pin at the edge of the pastry circle and roll dough around the rolling pin. With one hand lifting the rolling pin and the other hand supporting the pastry from underneath, move the circle of dough over the pie pan and unroll. Gently press into pan, being careful not to stretch the dough. Fold edges under and flute with fingers. Prick bottom and sides lightly with a fork to prevent bubbling and shrinkage. *More than one crust can be made ahead to this point.*

*A note from Katharyn: Making pie crusts is like riding a bike. Intimidating at first, but with practice, a cook can confidently whip out a bunch of these homemade delights and make the holiday pies truly special. Sometimes I make 3 great crusts in a row, and then the next one feels like granite. Bad dough can't be fixed: just throw it out and start over. Keep a light touch, keep ingredients chilled (especially in a warm kitchen), and try glass pie plates for an evenly browned crust. If I see the crust edges browning too quickly, I shield them with a few strips of tin foil.*



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