



FARM

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THE TOP-10 REASONS TO SKIP THE TURKEY ON THANKSGIVING

10. Your body will appreciate a holiday from saturated fat, cholesterol, and hormones.
9. You won't sweat the environment and food resources devastation guilt trip.
8. You won't spend a sleepless night wondering how the turkey lived and died.
7. Animal advocates, including some of your best friends, won't shun you.
6. Fruits and vegetables don't have to carry government warning labels.
5. You won't have to call the Poultry Hotline to keep your family alive.
4. Commercial turkeys are too fat to have sex. Could happen to you.
3. Your kids can tell their friends about their cool 'unturkey.'
2. You are what you eat. Do you want to be a 'butterball?'
1. You won't fall asleep during the football game.



Fun and games aside, the fact remains that millions of vegetarians across the US will celebrate this Thanksgiving without a dead bird on their dinner table.

In hotel ballrooms, community and church halls, and private homes they will feast on a wholesome, nonviolent assortment of the earth's bounty: grains, vegetables, and fruits. The bill of fare may include an 'unturkey,' lentil or nut roast, stuffed squash, corn chowder or chestnut soup, candied yams, cranberry sauce, pumpkin or pecan pie, and carrot cake. **(For a listing of more than a hundred selected U.S. events, please visit www.farmusa.org/thanksgiving/events.htm.)**

Vegetarians believe that killing a tortured, innocent bird betrays the joyful, life-affirming spirit of giving thanks for our life, health, and happiness. The 330 million turkeys killed each year in the U.S. are crammed into large sheds filled with toxic fumes from their excrement. Their beaks and toes are trimmed to reduce damage from stress-induced aggression. After 16 weeks of misery, they are hung on a conveyer belt, beheaded by an electric saw, then dumped into scalding water to strip their feathers, sometime still conscious.

The birds exact their revenge. Their flesh is laced with cholesterol, saturated fats, hormones, antibiotics, and deadly pathogens. Avoiding acute illness requires careful adherence to federal warning labels and Poultry Hotline directions. Much of the 10 billion pounds of manure generated by 7,300 turkey farms in 33 states winds up in our drinking water. Finally, the grain fed to turkeys is denied to millions of starving Third World people.

Plant-based eating is becoming increasingly popular as Americans discover the health, environmental, and ethical benefits of kicking the meat habit. More than 30 million Americans have explored meatless eating, and one in three teens thinks vegetarianism is 'cool.' Mainstream health advocacy groups are touting plant-based diets, and major food manufacturers and retailers are marketing meatless meals. Even Burger King offers veggie burgers.

Vegetarian homemakers have many choices. Those pressed for time can buy a tofu and seitan 'unturkey,' as well as other wholesome, delicious, ready-to-eat dishes in their local food markets. More traditional homemakers can consult a number of cookbooks and web sites.

All this raises provocative questions. What do vegetarians eat on Thanksgiving? How do they handle family situations? How did the Thanksgiving turkey tradition get started? Why does a turkey receive a presidential pardon? Why do 12% of turkeys never reach the slaughterhouse? Why do turkey carcasses carry government warning labels? Where to get Thanksgiving recipes?

For an provocative interview and a delicious mock 'turkey', call Patti at 301-530-8344.

"Have a Gentle, Life-Affirming Thanksgiving"