

FACT SHEET

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Historical file -

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CARVING THE FAMILY TURKEY

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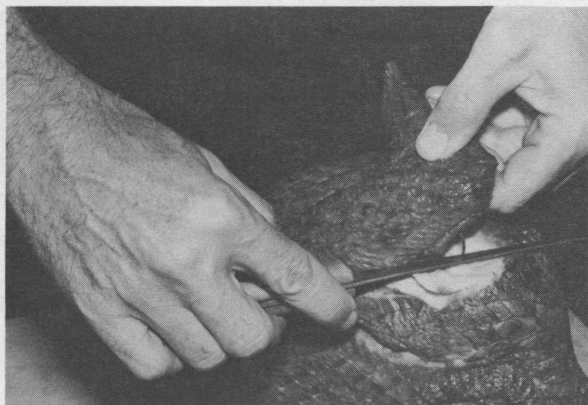
Carving a turkey at the table seems to make a meal, whether for company or the family, just a little more special and festive. This impressive looking task is easy if the carver knows where to make a few important cuts and the order to make them. Two steps are important before beginning to slice any of the white meat.

The wing usually is folded up and in the way. Remove the last two of the three wing sections by cutting the skin and separating at the second joint. When cutting chickens or turkeys, raw or cooked, cutting at a joint or through cartilage prevents ever having to cut through bone. A thoroughly cooked turkey's joints seem to separate almost by themselves. With a lesser cooked, a cold or a smoked bird, it is necessary to cut the skin, meat and cartilage at the joints. This is illustrated in the following two pictures of a fully cooked, cold, smoked turkey.

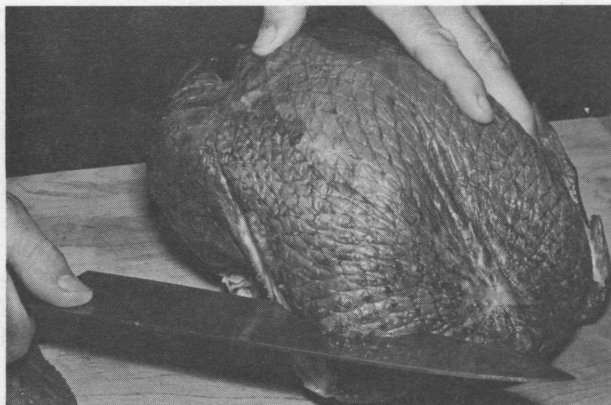


Separate the last two wing sections from the rest of the turkey.

After removing the two joints from the wing, make a "bench mark" or "end of the line" cut. This is made into the breast meat just above the joint where the wing joins the body. Cut deeply into the breast to the rib cage and then cut all around one side of the breast as illustrated in the following picture.



Cut through the skin at the second joint of the wing section.

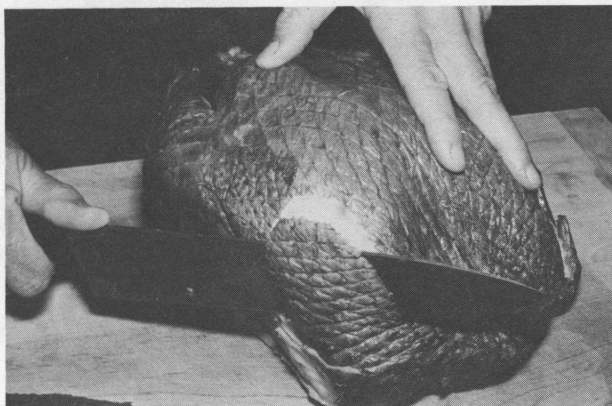


Make a bench mark cut into the breast meat just above the joint where the wing joins the body.

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Once these two preliminary cuts have been made, it is an easy matter to carve the turkey and have each slice of white meat neatly fall in place. The bench mark cut prevents "hanging on" or slices sticking with the carcass.

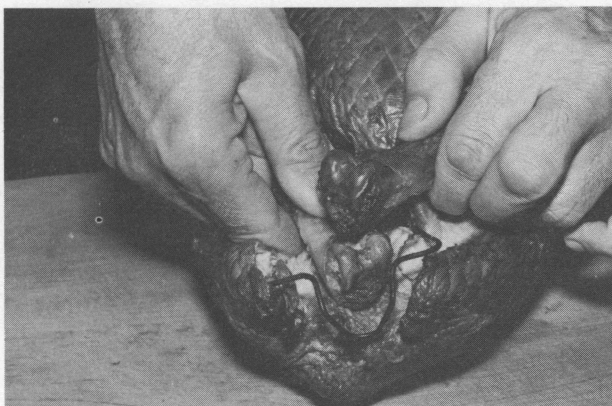
After making a few slices of breast meat, the leg should be removed as it will get in the way of slicing



Slice down to the bench mark cut as shown above.



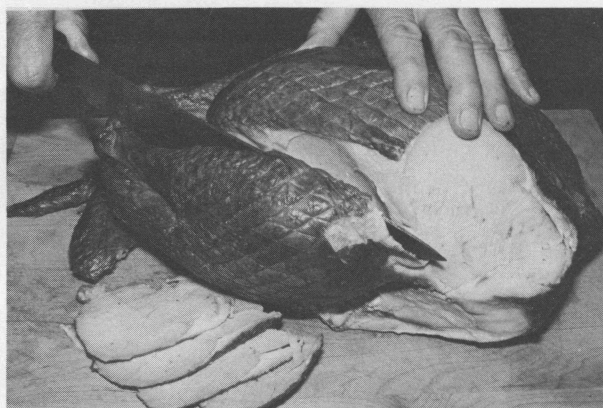
Slice a few slices of the breast meat, cutting all the way down to the bench mark cut.



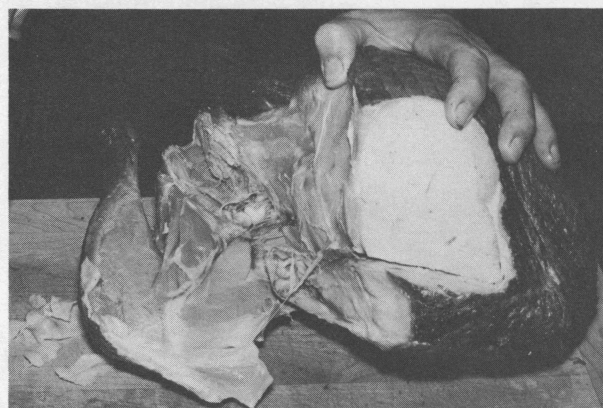
Remove the metal clip holding the legs in place by pulling the legs up and out.

the rest of the breast meat. Move the bone ends of the legs vertically to release them from the metal clip that held them and the stuffing in place during baking. This is done a little more gently than was necessary to remove the clip to stuff the body cavity prior to cooking.

Cut the skin between the leg and breast as shown in the following picture. In a thoroughly cooked turkey, the leg will separate from the carcass at the hip joint after the skin is cut with almost no help or with just a slight push from the side of the knife. Leg removal is a little more difficult with a cold turkey and some cutting of muscle and skin along the back and leg joint may be needed after the leg is forced from the hip socket. Force the leg from the hip socket by pushing the knee away from the body with the side of the knife or with the hand.

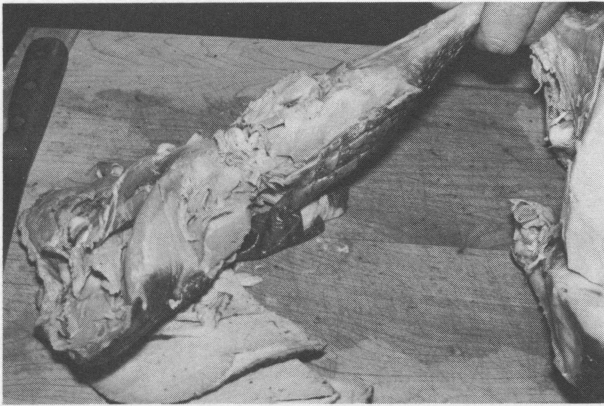


Force the leg from the hip socket with the side of the knife or with the hand.



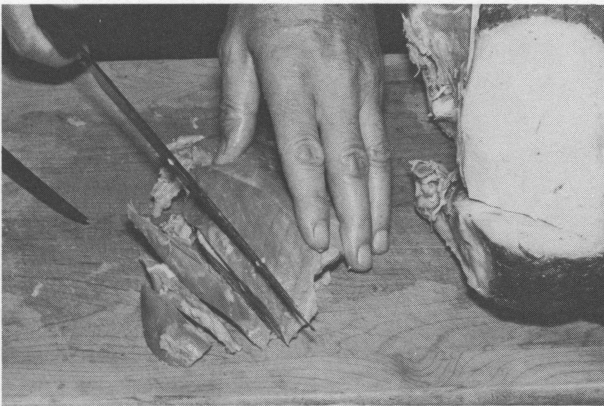
Remove the leg from the carcass by cutting through the remaining muscle and skin.

Cut the muscle and skin to separate the leg from the carcass. Separate the drumstick from the thigh by cutting from the inside of the joint. This is quite easy on a thoroughly roasted bird.



Separate the drumstick from the thigh by cutting from the inside of the joint.

After separating, slice the thigh meat by placing the thigh on the cutting board, skin side up, and making slices parallel with the bone. Remove enough meat that the bone becomes more manageable for those who enjoy a serving with the bone in.



Slice the thigh meat parallel with the bone.

Meat also may be removed from the thigh by separating the various muscles. This happens almost by itself with a thoroughly roasted bird.

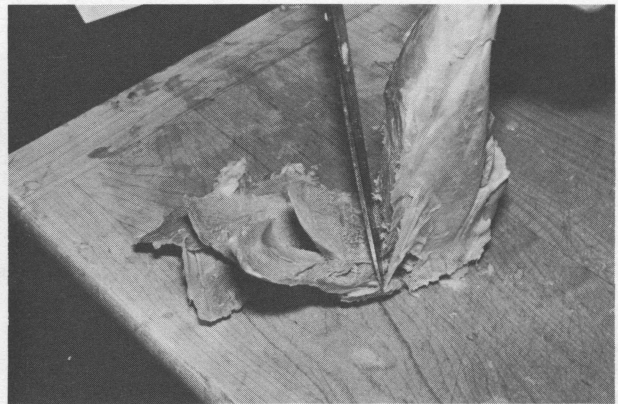


Meat also may be removed from the thigh by separating the various muscles.

Most of the meat can be removed from the drumstick by muscle separation or by holding the drumstick vertically and slicing meat from around the outside until the tendons are reached. Cooking hardens the tendons and it is recommended that slicing be stopped when they are reached. The rest of the drumstick can be served to those who like to chew meat from a bone.



Hold the drumstick vertically and slice meat from around the outside until the tendons are reached.

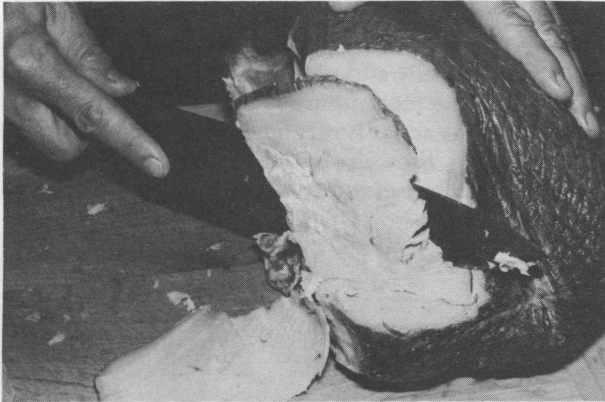


After slicing most of the meat from the drumstick, the bone is manageable enough to serve to someone who enjoys chewing meat from a bone.

After removing the legs from the turkey and slicing the dark meat, continue removing large slices of white, breast meat. Cut the slices of breast meat in the desired thickness, slicing the meat with smooth, even cuts all the way down until the bone is reached.

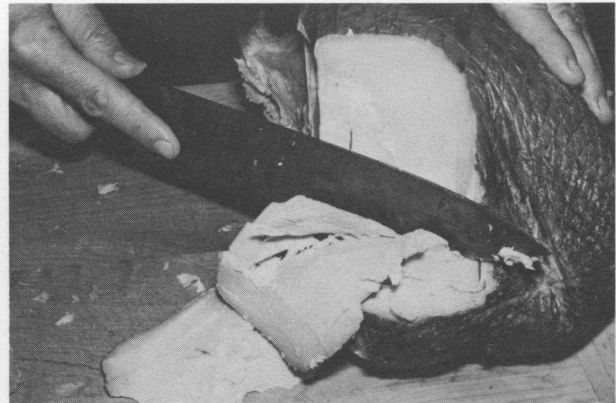
Any remaining meat, especially in the upper wing sections, around the shoulder blades and along the back, can be removed after both sides of the turkey have been carved.

If you wish to carve at the table but space and time are at a premium, drumsticks and thighs can be prepared in the kitchen leaving the breast for table carving.



Continue carving the breast meat by slicing as shown above.

A large cutting board and a sharp knife make carving more pleasant. The knife blade should be 8 to 10 inches long. A cutting surface of hard rubber or plastic is recommended. Wooden cutting boards do not clean easily and tend to harbor more bacteria than harder, smooth surface boards.



Slices of breast meat will fall neatly in place as carving is continued.

Always cut cooked turkey (or any other cooked product) on a clean surface. The same surface should not be used for cooked and raw meats. Some families purchase three cutting boards — one for raw vegetables, one for raw meats and one for cooked meats or other cooked products.

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