

Thanksgiving in Hawaii

An island-style feast of fresh local produce and easy cooking celebrates the coming together of traditions and friends

BY KATHLEEN N. BRENZEL RECIPES BY KATE WASHINGTON PHOTOGRAPHS BY LISA ROMEREIN
FOOD STYLING BY VALERIE AIKMAN-SMITH



Hawaiian-
Portuguese
smoked turkey



Greg and Lynn Boyer
(at head of table)
with guests.

IT'S A LAZY ISLAND DAY. Palms rustle in the trade winds near a breezy garden pavilion where Greg and Lynn Boyer have set their table for a luau. From the grill, just up a grassy path, a nearly done turkey sends out tantalizing aromas. Guests, guava drinks in hand, have gathered around a low seat wall where Mihana Souza, a popular island singer, strums her guitar and sings a sultry island ballad while her cousin, Maile Meyer, sways in a graceful hula. This is Hawaii, after all. And in these islands, Thanksgiving springs from a calabash of traditions—very few of them rooted in the pilgrims' first feast.

"My wife and I are expats in paradise," says Greg, who moved from Michigan to Oahu 33 years ago to start a landscape-design business. "We don't have lots of aunts, cousins, and grandmas nearby to share the holidays with us. So for us it's a day of friends, hanging out in the garden, and turkey that 'broke da mouth.'"

For Mihana and Maile and their families, Thanksgiving coincides with a season of giving thanks, roughly four months long, that native Hawaiians call Makahiki (see page 113). "We set a few extra places for anyone who doesn't have relatives in the islands," says Maile of the times when her family does the hosting. "Then we find a way to slip into the ocean." Adds Mihana, mother of four grown sons and a daughter, "All our men cook. And we sing. We Hawaiians love to share our music."

Today the Boyers and their guests are exchanging traditions. When the party moves to the table covered in filmy coral fabric and a bouquet of flaming heliconias, Greg slices the turkey he's marinated, using a recipe from a Hawaiian-Portuguese friend. Mihana sings a chant that blesses the food as well as the gathering. Maile shares the season's most Hawaiian greeting, "Lono-i-ka-makahiki," she says, acknowledging the spirit of the occasion. "We're grateful for the land. Happy to be here."

Guava-lime coolers

Grenadine adds a pretty coral tinge to this easy, festive drink, but it can be omitted.

PREP TIME 10 minutes

MAKES About 2 qts.; 12 servings

NOTES Use 100 percent guava juice, not pre-sweetened guava nectar.

7 cups guava juice

3 cups white (light) rum

2/3 cup fresh lime juice

1/4 cup grenadine (pomegranate-flavored syrup)

Ice cubes

Lime slices or wedges, or fresh guava slices

In a large pitcher, mix guava juice, rum, lime juice, and grenadine. Pour over ice in cocktail glasses and garnish with slices of lime or guava.

PER SERVING 232 CAL., 0% (0 CAL.) FROM FAT; 0.1 G PROTEIN; 0 G FAT; 26 G CARBO (0 G FIBER); 4.7 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

Steamed mahimahi laulau

Glossy, green Hawaiian ti ("tee") leaves are traditionally used both to wrap food and in flower arrangements.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 1 1/2 hours

MAKES 12 servings

NOTES Find ti leaves at www.tropicalgardensofmaui.com or at florists' shops (ask

for leaves that have not been sprayed). You can also use banana leaves, available frozen in Asian- and Latin-food markets (they aren't as flexible, but will work). Wrap the laulau up to 4 hours ahead, then cover and chill (if chilled, steam for an extra minute or two). Hawaiian red clay salt is sold in specialty-food stores; it has a distinctive color, crunch, and earthy flavor.

About 8 large fresh ti leaves or 1 package (1 lb.) thawed frozen banana leaves

1 1/2 lbs. mahimahi fillets, rinsed and patted dry

2 tsp. coarse kosher salt

1 large carrot, peeled

1 red bell pepper, stem and inner ribs trimmed

8 green onions, white and pale green parts only

1 tbsp. butter

1 piece fresh ginger (4 in.), peeled and minced

2 limes, cut into wedges

About 1 1/2 tbsp. Hawaiian red clay salt or sea salt

1. If using ti leaves, cut each leaf in half along center rib and discard rib. If using banana leaves, soak in warm water to soften. Tear 12 long, narrow strips from 1 or 2 leaves and boil 30 seconds; drain. Cut remaining leaves with the grain into

24 strips, each about 12 in. by 3 in.

2. Cut fish into 12 equal pieces (about 2 in. by 2 in. each) and sprinkle both sides with coarse kosher salt. Chill 30 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, cut carrot, bell pepper, and green onions into 2-in. lengths and then cut into thinnest possible slivers. Melt butter in a frying pan over medium heat. Add vegetables and ginger and sauté, stirring often, until softened but not browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat.

4. Arrange 2 strips of ti or banana leaves, shiny sides down, on top of one another in a cross shape. Place 1 mahimahi piece in center of cross, then top with a generous tbsp. vegetable mixture. Beginning with lower strip, fold leaves over filling, alternating strips and using each new strip to fold loose end of previous strip over filling. Tuck last strip beneath packet, then tie closed with boiled leaf strips. Repeat with remaining leaf strips, fish, and vegetables.

5. Set a rack or steamer basket in a large pot and add water to about 1/2 in. below top of rack. Bring water to a boil over high heat. Place fish packets in a single layer on rack or in basket (steam in batches if necessary). Cover pot tightly and steam until fish is just barely opaque in the center, 6 to 10 minutes (do not overcook; cut to test). Tip packets to drain any water. Serve hot or warm, with lime wedges and Hawaiian red clay salt.

PER SERVING 67 CAL., 19% (13 CAL.) FROM FAT; 1.1 G PROTEIN; 1.4 G FAT (0.7 G SAT.); 2.3 G CARBO (0.6 G FIBER); 391 MG SODIUM; 44 MG CHOL.

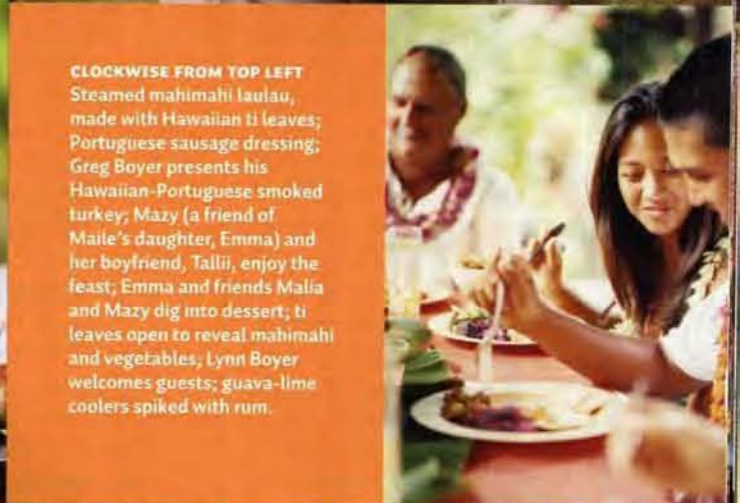
Hawaiian-Portuguese smoked turkey

A wave of Portuguese came to Hawaii in the late 1800s to work the sugarcane fields, and over time their cooking traditions fused with those of other cultures in the islands, including Chinese and Japanese. Greg Boyer picked up this recipe from a Hawaiian-Portuguese acquaintance some 30 years ago.

PREP AND COOK TIME 4 to 5 hours, plus 2 days to marinate

MAKES 1 turkey (18 to 20 lbs.)

NOTES Boyer starts with a frozen turkey and marinates it for 3 days; our version starts with a thawed or fresh bird. If your arms aren't strong, it's helpful to have a



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Steamed mahimahi laulau, made with Hawaiian ti leaves; Portuguese sausage dressing; Greg Boyer presents his Hawaiian-Portuguese smoked turkey; Mazy (a friend of Maile's daughter, Emma) and her boyfriend, Talli, enjoy the feast; Emma and friends Malia and Mazy dig into dessert; ti leaves open to reveal mahimahi and vegetables; Lynn Boyer welcomes guests; guava-lime coolers spiked with rum.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Green salad with papaya-seed dressing; Greg and Lynn Boyer sway to Mihana's music in the garden Greg designed; Malia savors a slice of macadamia nut tart; coconut pudding (*haupia*), Mihana sings a song from her *Rust on the Moon* CD; guests wear leis—Maile's is fragrant tuberose; Portuguese sausage dressing and Okinawa sweet potatoes with lime butter; Maile and her youngest daughter, Hannah, take an after-dinner stroll among the gingers.



friend or relative help you ease the turkey on and off the grill.

- 1 turkey (18 to 20 lbs.), thawed if frozen**
- 1 tbsp. each coarsely chopped ginger and garlic, plus 4 tbsp. each minced garlic and ginger**
- 4 cups soy sauce**
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar**
- 2 tbsp. light brown or turbinado sugar**
- 6 cups hickory chips**
- 2 cups chicken broth**
- 2 large onions, peeled and quartered lengthwise**

1. On day 1 (2 days before Thanksgiving), remove giblets from turkey and rinse turkey inside and out. Set turkey, breast side down, in a large disposable roasting pan set on a rimless baking sheet. Add giblets to pan (discard neck). Into cavity of turkey, sprinkle coarsely chopped ginger and garlic. In a bowl, whisk together minced garlic, minced ginger, soy sauce, vinegar, and brown sugar; pour over turkey. Cover turkey with plastic wrap and marinate 2 days, basting 3 to 5 times a day.

2. On day 3 (Thanksgiving Day), remove giblets and 1 cup marinade from pan and set aside for Portuguese Sausage Dressing (see recipe, this page). About 4 hours before serving, remove turkey from refrigerator. Let stand for 30 minutes in pan; meanwhile, soak hickory chips in water 30 minutes.

3. Remove turkey from pan and pour marinade into a bowl; add chicken broth and set aside. Return turkey to pan, breast side up, and add onions (put 2 or 3 quarters inside turkey). Truss turkey, tying drumsticks together tightly with kitchen twine; truss wingtips together the same way. Cover wingtips and drumsticks with heavy-duty foil "caps," molding them snugly to prevent scorching. Cover entire pan loosely with a double layer of foil, extending foil beyond turkey like an umbrella.

4. Prepare a charcoal or gas grill, large enough to hold turkey, for indirect cooking: On charcoal grill, ignite about 60 charcoal briquets. When coals are spotted with ash (about 20 minutes), mound equally on opposite sides of firegrate. To each mound, add 5 unlit briquets and

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup drained soaked wood chips now and every 30 minutes during smoking. If using gas grill (with at least 11 in. between indirect-heat burners), put $\frac{1}{2}$ cup drained soaked wood chips in a drip pan directly on heat in a front corner and add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chips through grate every 30 minutes during smoking. Turn heat to high and adjust gas for indirect cooking. Close lid and preheat grill 10 minutes.

5. Carefully slide pan with turkey from baking sheet onto center of grill. Pour in marinade and broth. Close grill lid. (If your grill has a lip on it, rest pan at an angle on grill, then carefully slide pan onto grill.) Smoke turkey, basting every $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, until an instant-read thermometer inserted straight down through thickest part of breast to bone registers 150°, about 2½ hours (begin checking after 2 hours). Ladle marinade from pan into a heatproof bowl and reserve for Hawaiian-Portuguese Turkey Gravy and Portuguese Sausage Dressing (recipes follow).

6. Slide baking sheet under turkey pan, ease baking pan onto sheet, and lift pan with turkey off grill. Let turkey rest, covered with foil, at least 20 minutes (internal temperature will rise to 160°) before carving.

PER SERVING 368 CAL., 39% (144 CAL.) FROM FAT; 50 G PROTEIN; 16 G FAT (4.5 G SAT.); 3.8 G CARBO (0.3 G FIBER); SODIUM N/A; 141 MG CHOL.

Hawaiian-Portuguese turkey gravy

The soy sauce in the turkey marinade turns this gravy an appetizing deep brown color.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 20 minutes
MAKES About 4 cups; 16 servings

- 6 tbsp. turkey fat (skimmed from cooked marinade of Hawaiian-Portuguese Smoked Turkey; see recipe, page 108) or 6 tbsp. unsalted butter**

- 6 tbsp. flour**
- 4 to 4½ cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- ½ cup defatted cooked marinade from Hawaiian-Portuguese Smoked Turkey (see recipe, page 108), strained**

Heat fat or butter in a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat and whisk in flour. Cook, whisking, until roux is nut brown, 10 minutes. Whisk

in 4 cups chicken broth and marinade (if thick, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup broth). Serve hot.

PER SERVING 61 CAL., 70% (43 CAL.) FROM FAT; 1.3 G PROTEIN; 4.8 G FAT (1.4 G SAT.); 3.1 G CARBO (0.1 G FIBER); 423 MG SODIUM; 4.9 MG CHOL.

Portuguese sausage dressing

In a spin on the familiar Thanksgiving sausage and bread dressing, this version uses *linguiça* (Portuguese sausage), a common ingredient in Hawaii.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 1 hour, plus 30 to 40 minutes baking time

MAKES 16 servings

NOTES You can assemble the dressing up to 1 day ahead; cover and chill.

Marinated giblets and 1 cup marinade from Hawaiian-Portuguese Smoked Turkey (see recipe, page 108)

- ½ cup butter**
- 3 cups finely chopped celery**
- 2 cups chopped onion**
- 1¾ cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- 1 tsp. poultry seasoning**
- 1 tsp. minced fresh sage**
- 1 tbsp. minced garlic**
- 8 oz. linguica (Portuguese sausage)**
- 16 cups ¾-in. cubes coarse, crusty white bread**
- ½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley**

1. In a small saucepan, bring giblets and marinade to a simmer over medium heat, cover. Cook giblets 20 minutes, or until cooked through. Let cool; finely chop. Reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooking liquid.

2. Preheat oven to 375°. Melt butter in a 10- to 12-in. skillet over medium-high heat. Add celery, onion, and chopped giblets and sauté, stirring occasionally, 2 minutes. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chicken broth, poultry seasoning, sage, and garlic. Lower heat to medium-low and cook, stirring occasionally, until celery and onion are tender, 20 minutes. Meanwhile, cut linguica in half lengthwise, then slice into $\frac{1}{4}$ -in.-thick half-moons.

3. Put bread cubes in a large bowl and stir in celery mixture, linguica, and parsley. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup giblet cooking liquid and remaining 1 cup chicken broth.

4. Spoon dressing into a 4- to 5-qt. baking dish and cover loosely with foil. Bake 25 minutes, uncover, and cook until browned on top, 10 to 20 minutes more. Serve hot.

PER SERVING 270 CAL., 40% (108 CAL.) FROM FAT; 8.3 G PROTEIN; 12 G FAT (5.5 G SAT.); 33 G CARBO (2.5 G FIBER); 1,243 MG SODIUM; 25 MG CHOL.

Okinawa sweet potatoes

Sweet potatoes are a very old food in Hawaii, thought to have been transported to the islands by the earliest Polynesian settlers. Okinawa sweet potatoes, so named because they're native to the Japanese island of Okinawa, turn a stunning deep purple when cooked and have a dense, starchy texture.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 1 hour

MAKES 10 to 12 servings

NOTES Okinawa sweet potatoes, also called purple sweet potatoes, are available at some Asian-food markets, farmers' markets, or online (one good source is Melissa's, www.melissas.com or 800/588-0151).

4 lbs. Okinawa (purple) sweet potatoes
or white sweet potatoes, scrubbed

2 limes

¼ cup butter

Hawaiian red clay salt or sea salt

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Prick sweet potatoes with a fork and boil until tender when pierced, 30 to 35 minutes. Drain.

2. While potatoes are boiling, grate zest from limes and set aside; then squeeze juice from limes and set aside.

3. When potatoes are cool enough to handle, peel and slice into ½-in.-thick slices. Arrange on a platter, cover with foil, and put in a 200° oven to keep warm.

4. Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium heat until foaming. Stir in zest and cook until fragrant, 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in lime juice. Drizzle lime butter over potatoes and sprinkle with salt.

PER SERVING 136 CAL., 29% (39 CAL.) FROM FAT; 2.6 G PROTEIN; 4.3 G FAT (2.6 G SAT.); 23 G CARBO (2.1 G FIBER); 50 MG SODIUM; 11 MG CHOL.

Green salad with papaya-seed dressing

The creamy-looking dressing for this salad gets its texture and zing from sweet onions and peppery, crunchy papaya seeds.

PREP TIME 15 minutes

MAKES 10 to 12 servings

½ cup rice vinegar

½ cup canola oil

½ small sweet onion (such as Maui), chopped,
plus **1 large sweet onion, thinly sliced into**
rings and rinsed with cold water

1½ tsp. sugar

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. dry mustard

1½ tbsp. fresh papaya seeds

1 lb. mixed salad greens

2 avocados, pitted, peeled, and sliced

1. In a blender, whirl vinegar, oil, chopped onion, sugar, salt, and mustard until smooth. Add papaya seeds and pulse until seeds look like coarsely ground peppercorns.

2. In a large bowl, combine onion rings, salad greens, and ¾ of avocado slices; pour dressing over salad and toss gently to coat. Arrange salad on a large platter and top with remaining slices of avocado.

PER SERVING 145 CAL., 74% (108 CAL.) FROM FAT; 1.8 G PROTEIN; 12 G FAT (1.4 G SAT.); 8.4 G CARBO (1.7 G FIBER); 122 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

Coconut pudding triangles

Coconut pudding, or haupia, is a traditional Hawaiian sweet usually cut into small squares. It shows up at just about every potluck on the islands.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 10 minutes, plus 1 hour to chill

MAKES 22 to 24 triangles; 12 servings

NOTES Coconut milk is fun to make from scratch and has a more delicate flavor than canned, but it's time-consuming. If you'd like to try, visit www.sunset.com/coconut for a method.

½ cup sweetened flaked coconut

Vegetable oil for oiling baking dish

1 can (14 oz.) coconut milk

6 tbsp. cornstarch

½ cup sugar

½ tsp. vanilla

½ tsp. salt

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Spread flaked coconut on a baking sheet and bake until golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes.

2. Oil an 8-in.-square baking dish. In a small bowl, stir together ½ cup coconut milk and cornstarch until smooth.

3. In a medium nonstick saucepan, combine 1½ cups coconut milk (if you don't have enough, augment with water) and sugar. Stir over medium heat until sugar has dissolved. Drizzle cornstarch mixture slowly into saucepan, whisking, and whisk in vanilla and salt. Cook, whisking vigorously (do not allow to boil), until mixture is very thick, pulling away from pan, and no longer tastes floury,

4 to 6 minutes. Pour into prepared dish and spread evenly. Let cool briefly, then cover with plastic wrap and chill until set, at least 1 hour.

4. Cut haupia into 22 to 24 triangles and sprinkle each with a pinch of toasted coconut.

PER SERVING 188 CAL., 62% (117 CAL.) FROM FAT; 1.3 G PROTEIN; 13 G FAT (11 G SAT.); 19 G CARBO (0.3 G FIBER); 58 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

Macadamia nut tart

This buttery tart has just enough sweet filling to hold the nuts together, no more.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 1 hour, plus 1 hour to cool

MAKES 1 tart (9 in.); 12 servings

1¼ cups all-purpose flour

2 tbsp. plus ½ cup packed dark brown sugar

½ tsp. salt

¾ cup cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces,
plus **2 tbsp. melted butter**

1 large egg yolk, plus 1 large egg

¼ cup light corn syrup

2 tbsp. dark rum

1½ cups unsalted macadamia nuts, coarsely
chopped

1. Preheat oven to 375°. In a food processor, whirl flour, 2 tbsp. brown sugar, and ¼ tsp. salt. Add cold butter and pulse until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add egg yolk and pulse to combine. Add 2 to 3 tbsp. ice water, pulsing until mixture begins to come together in a ball.

2. Press dough into bottom and up sides of a 9-in. round tart pan with 1-in. sides. Prick bottom of tart with a fork and chill in freezer 15 minutes. Bake crust until medium golden brown, 15 to 25 minutes, and remove from oven (leave oven on).

3. Meanwhile, in a standing electric mixer on high speed, beat whole egg, remaining ½ cup brown sugar, and remaining ¼ tsp. salt until pale and ribboney, 7 to 10 minutes. Beat in melted butter, corn syrup, and rum.

4. Pour sugar mixture into tart shell and sprinkle with macadamia nuts. Bake tart until a knife inserted in center comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Cool tart on a wire rack at least 1 hour. Cut into wedges and serve with vanilla or ginger ice cream, if you like.

PER SERVING 350 CAL., 64% (225 CAL.) FROM FAT; 3.5 G PROTEIN; 25 G FAT (10 G SAT.); 28 G CARBO (0.4 G FIBER); 118 MG SODIUM; 72 MG CHOL.

Hawaii's Makahiki

In the islands, the continental American Thanksgiving coincides with a very Hawaiian season of sharing and gratitude called Makahiki. For ancient Hawaiians, this period—spanning the appearance and fading of the Pleiades star cluster during the ho'oilu, or cooler rainy season, from October to February—was devoted to peace, feasting, dancing, and games. These days, Makahiki is a growing trend as people continue to rediscover native Hawaiian culture. A time for cultural and spiritual renewal, today's Makahiki echoes the past with school games, surf competitions, organized walks, and feasts. It's a reminder to native Hawaiians and all Pacific Islanders of their roots. "We give thanks to the place that provides for us," says Maile Meyer, who grew up on Oahu. "We acknowledge the land and the ocean that nourish our bodies and souls." ■



Macadamia nut tart