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Turkey is a nutritious choice for the holidays

Thanksgiving is probably the favorite holiday of most Americans. Regardless of its theme of gratitude, the emphasis is on food. With 67 percent of adults in the U.S. overweight or obese, the traditional main course is a blessing in itself.

Turkey is naturally low in fat, containing only 1 gram of fat per ounce of flesh. It is a good source of vitamins B6, B12 and niacin, as well as the minerals calcium, magnesium, phosphorous, potassium, zinc and selenium, an essential component of several major metabolic pathways, including thyroid hormone metabolism,

antioxidant defense systems, and immune function.

The amino acid tryptophan found in turkey is needed for T cells, a type of immune system cell that kills cancer cells. T cells activated in the absence of free tryptophan become susceptible to death via apoptosis.

Overall, the nutrients found in turkey have been shown to keep blood cholesterol down, protect against birth defects cancer and heart disease, aid in nerve function and growth, boost the immune system, regulate blood pressure, and assist in healing processes.



One 3.5 oz Serving Turkey Breast Supplies:

- 1.4 gram fat
- 22 grams protein
- 0 gram carbohydrate
- 42 mg cholesterol
- 126 calories

Turkey Shepherd's Pie, a low calorie suggestion for leftovers

1 lb. baking potatoes, peeled and cubed	2 Tbsp chopped, fresh tarragon
1 tsp canola oil	1/2 tsp ground black pepper
1 cup chopped onion	1/4 tsp salt
1 cup chopped carrot	1 cup fat-free chicken broth
1 cup chopped celery	2 Tbsp flour
1 cup frozen peas	2 oz. light cream cheese, softened (1/4 cup)
1 1/2 cups chopped, roasted turkey breast	2 egg whites

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Prepare mashed potatoes and set aside. Heat oil in skillet and sauté vegetables until tender. Add peas, turkey, tarragon, black pepper, and salt and cook until heated through. Pour chicken broth into turkey mixture, bring to a light boil. In a separate dish, whisk together 1/4 cup of milk and 2 tablespoons of flour, and pour into the turkey mixture, stirring constantly. Continue cooking the mixture for 1-2 minutes, or until a thick gravy is formed. To mashed potatoes, add the cream cheese, egg whites and mix well. Pour turkey mixture into a 7x11 inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Spread potatoes evenly over top of the turkey mixture. Bake 25 minutes, until the potatoes are lightly browned. Serves 6: 257 calories per serving.

[Kimberley Eggleston](#), About.com