

Getting your gobble on

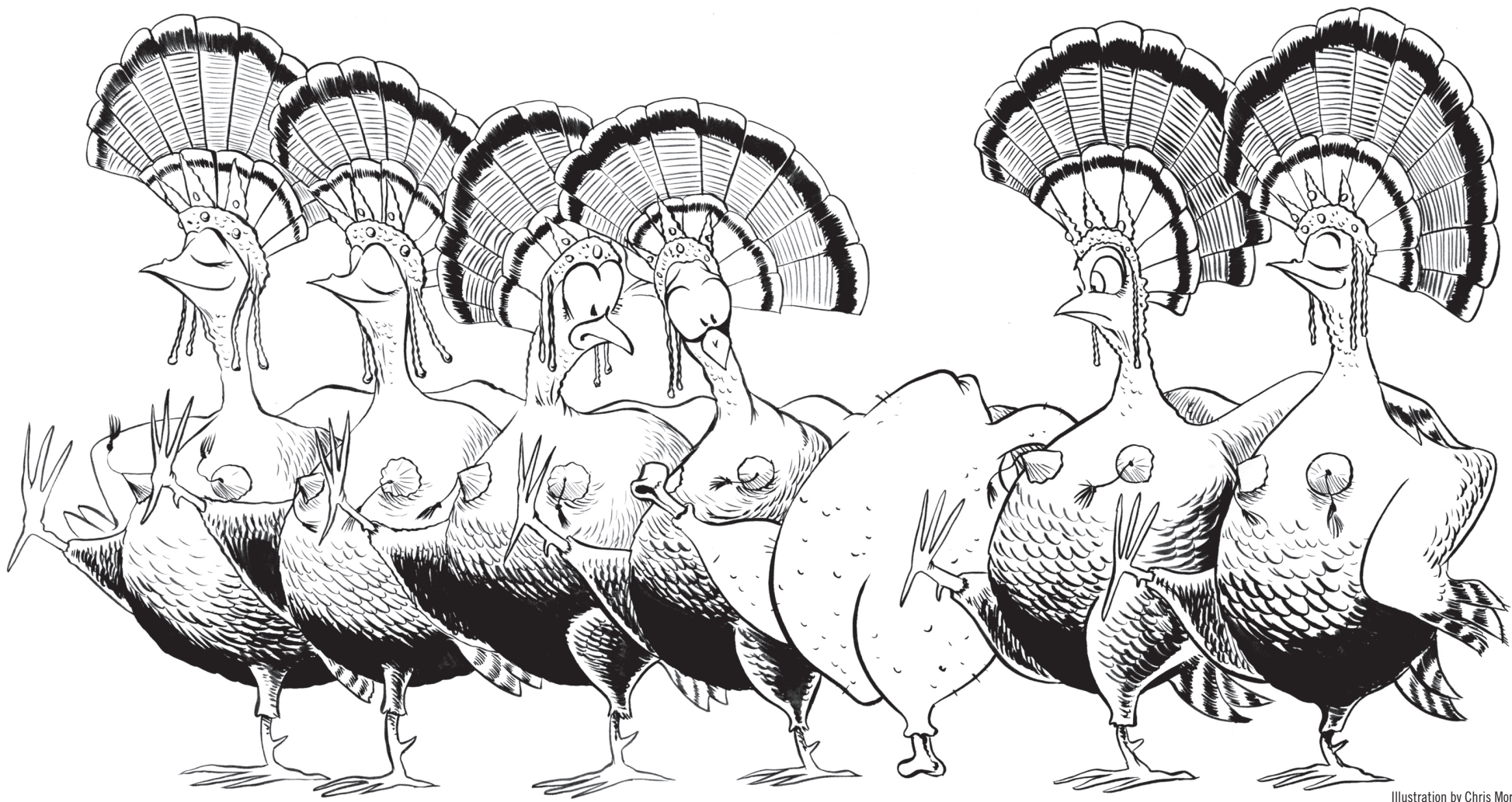


Illustration by Chris Morris

Don't be a turkey, celebrate Thanksgiving Las Vegas style

Turkey has come a long way, baby. Since the introduction of turkey to North America from Europe via Mexico in the 16th century, the birds have been raised for their great meat quality.

Today, the traditional roast turkey is still the most popular dish adorning Thanksgiving tables around the country.

Last year, more than 46 million turkeys were served on Thanksgiving Day alone. With many hotel restaurants serving special Thanksgiving meals, Las Vegas certainly contributed significantly to that number.

But in Las Vegas, you'll find a lot more than just your average turkey and gravy. The city serves turkey in every way possible, from traditional style to some more twisted takes.

Here are some Thanksgiving Day meals available at Las Vegas hotels that will make you get your gobble on. All prices are subject to change and exclude tax and gratuity.

Ago at Hard Rock

It's good, fellas. Even Ago's co-owner Robert De Niro would be pleased this Thanksgiving. The restaurant is offering a family-style, five-course dinner including an antipasti platter, butternut squash risotto and paired wines.

Turkey: Roasted organic.
Available: Thanksgiving Day, 5 p.m. – 11 p.m.
Price: \$49.95 per person

Alex at Wynn

Chef Alessandro Stratta's tempting trifles include butternut and chestnut velouté with black trumpet mushrooms and saddle of lamb with spelt, sundried apricots and honey-spice glaze.

Turkey: Slow roasted with chestnut apple stuffing and butternut squash purée.

Available: Thanksgiving Day, 6 p.m. – 10 p.m.
Price: \$165 per person

Buffet at Bellagio

The buffet changes its menu approximately every six weeks, and with more than 70 items being served at any given time, it might be difficult to keep the recipes current.

Luckily, Executive Chef of Garde Manger Sean Conway is up for the challenge.

"We have the name, we have Bellagio, we have a lot of very talented chefs, and I think that's part of our job; our job is to create something special, something unique even if it's a buffet."

For the Thanksgiving holiday season, the buffet's seasonally-inspired menu offers dishes like smoked salmon roulades wrapped in phyllo dough and pumpkin ravioli with sage

and pine nut brown butter sauce and a cream of butternut squash with maple toasted corn.

Turkey: Roasted. Also available: beef Wellington, cider glazed venison and a tahini and parmesan crusted rack of lamb.

Available: Nov. 27 – 30, 2008.
Cost: \$39.95 per person

CUT at Palazzo

A feast is being concocted at the newest Wolfgang Puck restaurant in Las Vegas. A five-course meal of Fuji apple salads, sides like Brussels sprouts and sourdough stuffing and sweet pumpkin tastings, round out this most heavenly meal. Specialty cocktails like hot buttered rum, mulled cider and cranberry martinis are also served.

Turkey: Natural raised heritage turkey
Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: \$65 per person for tasting menu, \$14 per cocktail.

Daniel Boulud Brasserie at Wynn

A special à la carte menu is available, including a creamy pumpkin cheesecake with cinnamon Chantilly cream.

Turkey: Chef Wesley's hot turkey lovin' with roasted Brussels sprouts, cornbread stuffing and sage gravy.

Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: \$36 turkey, \$13 cheesecake

Fleur de Lys at Mandalay Bay

A four-course prix fixe menu is being offered with options in each category, like pan-seared scallops with butternut squash and pumpkin seed



Courtesy Palazzo

SushiSamba's Harvest Spice Martini.

oil or sweet onion veloute with duck ragout and black truffle.

Turkey: Oven roasted, with wild mushroom stuffing, turnip purée and cranberry compote.

Price: \$89 per person

Le Cirque

With dishes like lobster salad, foie gras, sea bass and pumpkin soufflé, this high-end, five-course meal leaves nothing to be desired.

Turkey: Stuffed and roasted with honey cardamom jus, sweet potato purée and cranberry relish.

Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: \$145 per person

Trattoria del Lupo at Mandalay Bay

Lupo is offering special dishes like butternut squash soup with apple and golden raisin compote, cranberry sauce and pumpkin seed oil.

Turkey: Honey glazed turkey breast with cranberry relish and herbed gravy.

Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: \$29 turkey

Morels at Palazzo

Morels' holiday menu includes a roasted butternut squash soup with a rosemary parmesan flan and glazed chestnuts.

Turkey: Roasted with chorizo and brioche stuffing and glazed root vegetables and giblet gravy.

Available: Thanksgiving Day, 11:30



Courtesy T&T

Turkey tacos are made from flour tortillas stuffed with oven roasted turkey breast, ancho aioli, pico de gallo, shredded lettuce and topped with onion and cranberry marmalade.

a.m. – 11 p.m.

Price: \$65 per person

Olives at Bellagio

Olives is offering a pear and pecorino tartlet with confit duck ragu, frisée and aged balsamic, among other dishes offered in a special à la carte holiday menu.

Turkey: Turkey stuffed agnolotti or oven roasted turkey skewer with apple and fennel risotto, juniper berry glaze and spiced baked pecans.

Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: \$32 Agnolotti, \$39 turkey skewer

Pampas Brazilian Steakhouse and Grille at Miracle Mile Shops in Planet Hollywood

Pampas has more than 60 dishes for the buffet portion of the meal, as well as full rodizio service. Pork, lamb, ham, chicken, turkey and sausage will be served and special desserts like pumpkin and apple pie round off the Brazilian-style Thanksgiving.

Price: \$42.95 per person
Available: Thanksgiving Day, 11:30 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Picasso at Bellagio

Crème of butternut squash soup, sautéed steak of foie gras, and roasted langoustine are just some of the options available in Picasso's four-course offerings.

Turkey: Not exactly. However, Picasso is offering a roast breast of pheasant with pears, morel mushrooms and wild rice risotto.

Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: \$150 per person

Postrio at Venetian (Grand Canal Shoppes)

The highlight of this meal might be a purée of pumpkin soup with coriander scented crème fraiche and toasted pumpkin seeds. The dish oozes Thanksgiving comfort.

"Most people do want the traditional Thanksgiving, stuffing, cranberry relish, and pumpkin pie. We try to keep it close to what people are comfortable with and what people recognize," says Executive Chef Mark Sandoval.

The artisan touch Sandoval and his team gives to this budget-friendly meal includes fresh baked brioche stuffing, and an heirloom grain polenta. He says his list of purveyors is selective.

"We try to utilize all these artisan producers to make what can be a pretty typical standard Thanksgiving meal, but really kind of dress it up and jazz it up with all these fresh and wonderful ingredients."

Turkey: Roasted free range turkey breast, brioche stuffing and herb gravy.

Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: \$39 per person

Medici Café at The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Las Vegas

A traditional four-course menu with all the trimmings includes a



Courtesy Wynn Las Vegas

Wynn's Pumpkin Spiced Martini.

dessert sampler and hot Calvados.
Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: \$85 per person

SushiSamba at Palazzo

A harvest dessert cocktail is available with Monte Cristo spiced rum, canton and pear juice, drizzled with caramel sauce and topped with fresh whipped cream and candied pecans.

Turkey: Mojo marinated with cornbread-linguica stuffing and pan gravy.

Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: \$28 turkey, \$11 cocktail

T&T at Luxor

T&T (Tacos & Tequila) is the newest kid on the Luxor block. The modern Mexican restaurant is run by Executive Chef Saul Ortiz, who uses a mixture of traditional recipes his grandma handed down and a modern flair.

Turkey: T&T is doing two turkey dishes. Turkey tacos are made from flour tortillas stuffed with oven roasted turkey breast, ancho aioli, pico de gallo, shredded lettuce and topped with onion and cranberry marmalade.

Turkey mole is oven roasted turkey breast, mole poblano, Spanish rice, chive oil and caramelized plantains. The mole is made with more than 16 spices and ingredients. It takes 10 hours to prepare.

"For us Mexicans, every time you talk about a dish with mole, you know you put time and effort to present it. It's such a signature for us Mexicans to do a good mole," says Ortiz.

Hosting Thanksgiving festivities is another way T&T differentiates itself from other Mexican-inspired restaurants in Las Vegas.

"Rarely do any ethnic restaurants do anything for Thanksgiving because [guests] figure a steakhouse or something will do a Thanksgiving dinner," explains Ortiz.

Available: Thanksgiving Day
Price: Tacos \$14, Turkey mole \$21

-- Written by Nikki Neu