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SPRING TURKEYS

WHOLESOME, NUTRITIOUS, ECONOMICAL

In the spring each year from March to June we find turkeys on the retail shelf labelled as Yearling or Mature Turkeys. These are different from the young turkeys sold throughout the year either as fresh-frozen or fresh. Yearling or Mature turkeys are generally lower priced than young turkeys and usually larger.

Look at the label. This is what it means:

Young turkey - less than 8 months old. About 5 months old if female (hen)
and 6 months old if a male (tom)

Yearling turkey - may be either sex but under 15 months of age

Mature turkey - may be either sex but over 15 months of age

USDA Inspection

In 1959 the Mandatory Poultry Inspection Act was initiated requiring that all poultry processed for interstate shipments be inspected for wholesomeness. This inspection work is conducted by USDA-trained personnel guaranteeing wholesome poultry meat. The USDA seal and statement of Inspected for Wholesomeness is assurance of fitness for the consumer.

Other Inspection

Poultry processed for sale within a state may not carry this report of USDA inspection. This means merely that these carcasses were not inspected by a USDA inspector but does not necessarily mean they are not wholesome. The integrity of the processor in this case requires him to provide for private inspectors for the protection of the consumer.

Special Treatment

These Yearling turkeys are very wholesome, nutritious and usually a good buy for the consumer. They do require some special handling because of their very

nature. Handling and preparation of Yearling and Mature turkeys is a little different than that for young turkeys. Generally this difference is one of longer cooking time and different methods of cooking. These birds being older, should be allowed to cook about $1\frac{1}{2}$ times that allowed for young turkeys. Use the same temperature. Cook books show cooking schedules and temperatures for young turkeys.

Since this turkey is older, it will probably be less moist and less tender than young turkey. Moist heat cooking should be used. This means a covered pan and added moisture.

Buy them frozen, but don't forget them

Yearlings are generally heavier than young turkeys. Be sure the plastic bag has no breaks or tears if you are planning to keep it in the freezer for a short time. Punctures permit drying out and flavor loss. For best results we recommend that they be held in the freezer for only a short time. The sooner the turkeys are served, the better the flavor. Frozen turkeys should be allowed to thaw in the original bag for about four days in the refrigerator.

These Yearlings are not Thanksgiving or Christmas turkeys. For those festive events, the young turkey is your best bet. For economy and good family nutrition before the holidays, try a Yearling turkey. Read the label and prepare it properly.

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