

THE TURKEY

Did you know that the turkey is related to chickens, peafowl, and pheasants? They are all large birds. Turkeys were being raised by Native Americans for food hundreds of years ago. Turkeys are still raised for food today. Many families enjoy eating them, especially on Thanksgiving and Christmas.



There are many different kinds of turkeys. The turkeys we normally eat are **domesticated** turkeys. This means they are raised for human use and do not live in the wild. Domesticated turkeys live on farms and are fed a special diet of grains by the breeders. Some turkeys live in the wild. Wild turkeys live in forests, and eat seeds, insects, and nuts.

Male turkeys are called **toms**. Domesticated toms can weigh up to fifty pounds. They are unable to fly because of their weight. Wild toms usually weigh between ten and sixteen pounds. They are able to fly because they weigh less. Female turkeys are called **hens**. Hens are smaller than toms. Domesticated hens weigh about sixteen pounds. Hens living in the wild weigh about ten pounds. Baby turkeys are called **poults**.

Millions of turkeys are sold every year in the United States. Turkey is popular because most people think it tastes good, the price is reasonable compared to other meats, and there is a large amount of turkey meat available. Turkeys are also low in fat and easy to digest. The greatest number of turkeys are sold in November, because of the holidays, although people eat turkey year round. "Gobble" up some turkey today!

