



WATERCREST

SENIOR LIVING

Let's Talk Turkey!

Holidays seem to evoke memories of traditional feasts, and these often include turkey as the centerpiece of the table.

Since the average person in the United States may consume 15 pounds of turkey in a year, we were curious . . . and turned to the Farmer's Almanac and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to learn a bit of trivia about the infamous TURKEY!

Wild turkeys are native to Mexico, and European explorers brought the wild birds home with them in the early 1500's. They were domesticated in Europe and later brought to North America by English colonists. These birds differed from their wild ancestors by a white-tipped tail, rather than the dark-tipped tails of wild turkeys.

Adult domestic male turkeys are called toms and can reach up to 50 pounds! A domestic hen can weigh up to 16 pounds. Did you know that a baby turkey may be called a poult, a chick, or even a turklette!

A wild turkey can live three to four years, surviving on seeds, nuts, insects and berries. Domestic turkeys bred for consumption will consume about 75 pounds of turkey feed during their average 26 week life span from birth to the freezer.

Turkeys can cluck and purr, but perhaps are best known for their GOBBLE! Only toms make the call known as a "gobble" – it's a mating call and attracts hens. Wild turkey might gobble if surprised by loud sounds.

Feathers, Flight and Fancy – A wild turkey can indeed fly, but prefers ground travel and can run 18 miles per hour on foot! Domestic turkeys are not good flyers, but can be found perching in trees to escape predators. Tom turkeys typically swagger and fan their tail feathers to woo mates and deter rivals – and by the way, an adult turkey has 5000 to 6000 feathers!

Wild turkeys were on the brink of extinction in the early 1900's, with a remaining number of only about 200,000. Through conservation efforts over the past century, with funds derived from the Pittman-Robertson Act, and thanks to sportsmen and women, there are approximately 6.5 million wild birds in the United States today, according to the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Did you know that Ben Franklin called the wild turkey a "bird of courage" and thought it would make a better national symbol – the bald eagle might disagree!

Please consult your doctor before making any changes to your diet.