

Better Homes and Gardens

NOVEMBER 2008
BHG.com

THOMAS KELLER YOUNTVILLE, CALIFORNIA



FOR THOMAS KELLER, REVERED CHEF, COOKBOOK AUTHOR, AND RESTAURATEUR, FAMILY IS THE MAIN INGREDIENT ON THANKSGIVING,

whether he creates the meal himself or dines at one of his eight renowned restaurants in New York, Las Vegas, or California. When he chooses to take the holiday off, he brings his family to Per Se in New York City's Time Warner Center over looking Central Park, complete with a perfect view of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and a three-star Michelin-rated meal. The only Thanksgiving meal to surpass this is the one cooked at home by Thomas, which is his other ideal way to celebrate.

What advice does one of America's greatest chefs have for new Thanksgiving hosts? Thomas recommends "restraint. Just do three or four things instead of trying to do eight or nine."

"I like to be as traditional as possible when it comes to Thanksgiving," says Thomas. In his restaurants, he is known for serving meticulous meals of perfect balance and flavor. At home, he applies the same focus but sticks to standards. "I love to make cranberry relish and, of course, turkey," he says, as well as creamed spinach, glazed pearl onions, sautéed mushrooms, and sweet potatoes.

Thomas's turkey carving technique is something hosts of all levels should know. "I take the whole breast off, then carve from there. You have much more control and slices are much more even." What advice does one of America's greatest chefs have for new Thanksgiving hosts? Thomas recommends "restraint. Just do three or four things instead trying to do eight or nine." For dessert, his lemon tart "is so good the recipe ended up in both *The French Laundry* and *Bouchon* cookbooks." He adds, "It's not traditionally Thanksgiving; but it is my favorite."

MENU INSPIRATIONS

MUSCOVADO SUGAR

Pecan pie may be a Thanksgiving standard, but Thomas adds ingredients that bring it to a higher level. Molasses and bourbon add intrigue, while the addition of Muscovado sugar, a natural brown sugar from the island of Mauritius, makes it richer and toastier. \$4, 888/636-8162; zingers.com

