



NOVEMBER 19, 2020

Tips and Recipes to Make Your Thanksgiving Safe and Allergy-Friendly



It is hard to think of Thanksgiving without big crowds, a big Turkey, and a big table filled with more pies and side items than are reasonable for folks to eat. But this year, in the time of Covid-19, try to remember that your safest option is to have a small meal with your family bubble and then interact with friends and extended family via Zoom, GoToMeeting, or phone calls. With a little creativity, a small celebration can be just as memorable as a large one, and it will be far safer for everyone involved.

For the millions of Americans with allergies, a smaller Thanksgiving may be far easier to navigate, but whether your celebration is large or small common food allergens such as nuts, soy, dairy, and wheat are still something to keep in mind.

Greater Austin Allergy has a few suggestions to avoid common holiday-related triggers that can aggravate allergies.

The Main Dish:

Turkey seems pretty simple, and you might think it would be safe, but that isn't always the case. A few things to remember when it comes to your Thanksgiving turkey is that some self-basting turkeys can include soy, wheat, and dairy in the included basting solution. Purchasing a natural fresh turkey is your best bet to avoid this problem.

Look for a free-range, no antibiotics, non-marinated turkey. Call ahead to your local grocer, and they should be able to order you one. Natural Food Stores often have them as well. Remember that if your sensitivity is wheat or gluten, your immune system may react to a grain-fed turkey as they retain corn oil elements in their system, which is enough to cause issues for some.

Since your turkey will not be pre-basted, [here is a great recipe from Martha Stewart](#) that's wonderful to keep on hand. You can start with it and alter it for your family's allergies. If you need to leave out the wine, consider apple cider vinegar

or olive oil as a substitute.

Choosing to serve dressing on the side rather than as stuffing provides a safer solution for those allergic to wheat. There are many alternatives to allow you to make stuffing or dressing from wheat-free bread.

Ideas for Side Dishes:

Allergen-free mashed potatoes can be made by swapping the milk and butter for chicken broth and margarine. For those with potato allergies, consider mashed cauliflower.

When it comes to thickening gravy, corn starch is an excellent substitute for wheat flour.

Remember to skip nuts like slivered almonds on top of a green bean casserole.

Sweet Potato Souffle can be made without nut toppings, and you can still give it a flourish in the center with a little extra brown sugar. Consider using a decorative cookie cutter to create a brown sugar shape in the center of the dish of sweet potatoes.

Ideas for Desserts:

While pumpkin allergies are rare, there are people with allergies to the spices or the dairy included.

For those with nut allergies, a Southern Custard Pie or a Buttermilk Pie can be an excellent alternative to a Pecan Pie. For those with wheat allergies, a Chess Pie can be a great alternative as well because it uses cornmeal for thickener instead of flour.

Look below for our [Southern Buttermilk Pie Recipe](#)

Environmental Triggers:

Be on the lookout for environmental triggers if you do travel to a relative's house.

The fancy soaps your grandmother keeps in the guest bathroom often have a fragrance. It's easy to forget if you've divested your house of scented soaps.

If your relative has a pet, consider calling ahead and asking if the animal can be kept in a back bedroom while you are there.

While you may be able to tolerate the pet dander for a short period, your discomfort will increase if you sleep in a place with heavy concentration. If you are staying the night, consider asking them to make that room pet-free for about two weeks ahead of your visit.

Your allergist can recommend treatments for your pet allergies, such as nasal sprays, antihistamines, decongestants, or asthma medication. Make sure to schedule time with them in advance to plan.

Dust mites are another common problem and more likely to hang out in infrequently used spare bedrooms. Consider bringing your own pillow or at least an allergen-proof pillow cover.

Get Allergy tested for free this November!

If you think you may have allergies but aren't sure. Contact our offices for free allergy testing for ages seven and up during November. We look forward to serving you.

Creating New Nut-Free Holiday Traditions:

Southern Buttermilk Pie: A Nut-Free Alternative to Pecan Pie.

This classic southern recipe is sometimes called a Southern Custard Pie. For those that have never had it, it tastes a bit like Crème Brulee.

- **Ingredients**
 - 1 9-inch Pastry Crust of your choice. Remember if store-bought to carefully read the ingredients for allergens.
 - 3 eggs
 - 1 cup sugar

- 3 tablespoons flour
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 cup or 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled.
 - ¾ cup buttermilk
 - 2 tablespoons rum or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 - 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
 - Whipped cream
- **Instructions**
 - Keep pie crust chilled until ready to use.
 - Before preheating, set one rack in the lower part of the oven and the other in the center. Preheat oven to 325° F
 - Beat eggs on low speed.
 - Add the sugar, flour, and salt. Continuing mixing.
 - Add melted butter. Continuing mixing.
 - Remove mixer beaters and gently stir in buttermilk, rum, lemon juice, vanilla extract, and nutmeg.
 - Set the pie crust on a baking sheet and fill slowly.
 - Cook on the lowest rack for 20 minutes. Then transfer to the center rack and cook an additional 40 minutes. Check frequently to make sure it is not getting too brown. Use strips of aluminum foil to protect crust to prevent burning.
 - Serve warm or cool and top with lots of whipped cream.

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