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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHEAT

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(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "THE HOLIDAY BIRD." INFORMATION FROM THE BUREAU OF HOME ECONOMICS
AND THE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

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If you have a taste for poultry, this is certainly the season to indulge it. If you like to serve the traditional roast fowl for Christmas and New Years, this is the year to serve it. Poultry prices are low this year. In fact, poultry is selling at the lowest figure since the War. Very nice for us housewives who are doing our holiday shopping on slim pocketbooks. Not so nice for the people who raise poultry.

I haven't exact information about prices in the market on Christmas or New Years' birds. But the experts tell me that holiday poultry will probably sell at about the same prices as it did at Thanksgiving this year. And if you'll look back to Thanksgiving, you'll remember that plenty of fine fat turkeys were retailing then at twenty-five to twenty-three cents a pound. Roasting chickens were only a few cents cheaper than turkeys. And that brings up an interesting point for any woman who plans the family's meals. Turkeys have definitely gone out of the class of luxury poultry. Time was when you and I only bought turkey when we were feeling very prosperous. If we wanted an economy Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, we had a roast chicken or a roast duck. Well, new methods of producing turkeys have come in in recent years. Growers have learned how to raise fine turkeys at much less expense. And as a result these cheap turkey prices are possible. Already the experts see some indications that turkey may one day be even cheaper than chicken. But that's only a guess about the future. At present chicken prices are running slightly below turkeys.

In New York City this year, dressed duck was as cheap as seventeen cents a pound. And that is very cheap indeed. This year geese happen to be about a cent lower than ducks in price. Perhaps you know that New York City is the biggest poultry market in the country. It is especially the market for ducks and geese. We Americans in general buy chicken and turkey in place of other fowl. But many of the foreign born residents of our large cities eat a great deal of goose and duck. The Kosher markets in New York sell a large percentage of these birds.

Well, now, if you're deciding on the kind and size of bird to have for Christmas, I have a few hints here that may help you. First, this matter of flavor and redness. Duck and goose flesh is darker and oilier than the white meat of turkey or chicken. Then, duck and goose contain more bone in proportion to flesh than turkey and chicken. An other point if you're buying a turkey, you'll find that it is more economical to buy a large bird than a small one, because the large bird contains more flesh in proportion to the total weight.

This is also true of chicken. Of course, you won't plan to use turkey for just one meal anyway. Count on it for several days. You'll roast it the first day; slice it cold the second day; make it into a creamed dish or a hash or croquettes the third day; and finally you'll use the bones and leavings in turkey soup. Used this way, you'll find that a big turkey or a big chicken for a large family is cheaper in the long run than a small or medium-sized turkey, or than a chicken, duck or goose. The specialists have figured out the quantity of meat on a fifteen-pound turkey and they say it gives about twenty generous home servings and then some left-overs.

You may prefer chicken. A good fat hen, pot-roasted, makes a delicious Christmas dinner meat. To make an older bird tender, cook it slowly in a covered roaster. A five-pound hen will serve a family of five or six, and then will give enough left-overs for chicken and noodles next day.

Ducks are also very cheap just now. A six-pound duck will serve a family of five and make soup for the next day. So there you have another Christmas bird for something like a dollar. Duck has a special flavor of its own that many people especially like. But when you come right down to measuring the cooked meat you get from duck and from a chicken that weighs the same amount, you discover that the chicken comes out ahead.

Old English tradition gives goose the place of importance as the Christmas bird. In the old days the goose was either made into pie or stuffed with a spicy stuffing of apples and prunes. Of course, you remember that favorite Dickens Christmas story about the Cratchit family and their Christmas goose and how the young Cratchits "crammed their spoons into their mouths lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped". Well, goose is still the most popular poultry with some of the English and with the Germans, the Italians and the Jews. To many people in the old countries goose is still a symbol of feasting and merry making. That's where the old expression, "the goose hangs high", came from. But if you are more interested in getting the most roast meat for your money, than in tradition and special flavor, you'll find that turkeys are actually a better bargain. Geese are much larger than chickens and ducks, so they can hardly be compared. But a goose of the same weight as a turkey, has less meat and more bone.

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Tomorrow: "Questions and Answers."

