

Their turkey's cooked



Marc Denzin of Schofield carves a 10-pound turkey that was deep-fried in peanut oil. Right: Denzin, fourth from left, and Rib Mountain resident Greg Sperry, far right, enjoy their turkey with guests.

Photos and story by Veronica Hinke
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Have fun, but play it safe, when deep frying turkey

Marc Denzin and Greg Sperry are pretty sure they have a fool-proof formula for melt-in-your-mouth moist and tender turkey meat every time. And they usually can guarantee a gorgeous dark brown, crispy coating, too. Their secret? They deep fry turkey in peanut oil. They say their party-pleasing technique is easy enough, but safety is critical.

"A deep-fried turkey is the perfect cornerstone for any holiday meal or Packers party," said Denzin, a Schofield resident. "Have fun with it, but play it safe."

Prep time is very important.

"It is imperative that the turkey be thawed and completely dried before immersing it in oil," Denzin said. "Imagine throwing an ice cube in a pot of boiling oil. It will explode."

After the bird has thawed, he removes the giblets and neck, and rinses it under cold running water. Then, Denzin pats the cavity and exterior

thoroughly dry with paper towel and trims the wings.

Meanwhile, outside, in a fryer on a flat surface in an area away from flammables and buildings, the peanut oil heats to 325 degrees.

"Peanut oil gives the turkey a beautiful, dark-brown color on the outside, plus it has less trans fat than many other oils," said Sperry, a Rib Mountain resident.

Denzin said he likes the more robust flavor peanut oil adds to the turkey. He said he serves it with Shiraz or Spanish Rioja, two red wines suggested by Brian Larson of the Lil' Ole Winemaker Shoppe in Rib Mountain.

"It seems unthinkable to serve red wine with



white meat, but these work well with the richness of a turkey that's been fried in peanut oil," Denzin said.

Following the recommendations of The Culinary Institute of America in St. Helena, Calif., Denzin and Sperry control the oil heat so it stays at 325 degrees. They take at least one minute to gradually lower the turkey with a grab hook. The hook was included in the 30-quart aluminum turkey frying kit Denzin purchased at Menard's. It's connected to a propane tank.

"A tank for any gas grill will work," he said.

When the internal temperature reaches 165 degrees, their turkey is cooked. They let it rest for 15 minutes to allow the juices to redistribute before carving and serving. >>>

Safe frying

The Culinary Institute of America recommends following these additional safety precautions:

■ Keep a safe distance from the fryer.

■ Ensure you read and understand the manual that comes with your fryer.

■ Never attempt to deep-fry indoors.

■ Never leave fryer unattended.

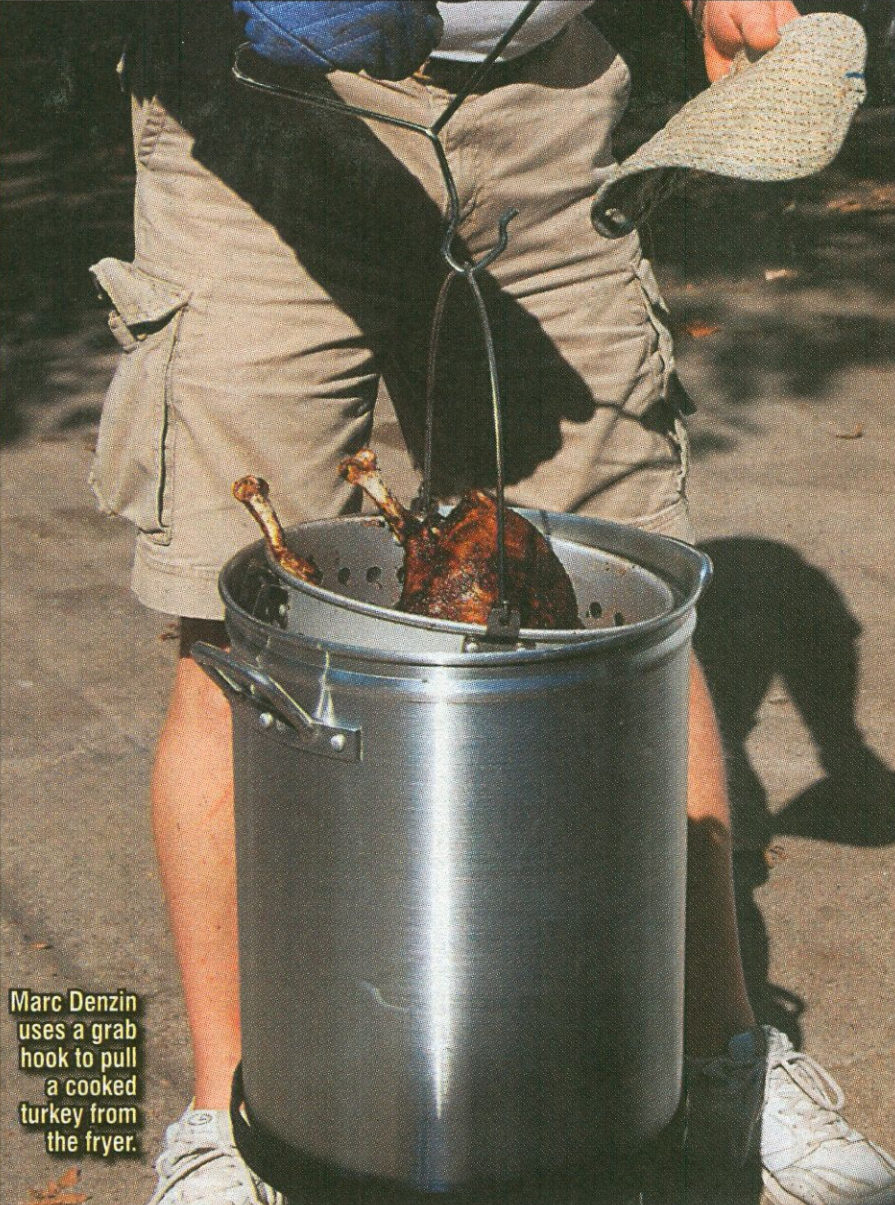
■ Do not allow pets or children near fryer.

■ Do not attempt to fry a turkey in rainy weather.

■ Wear long, thick gloves and goggles.

■ Do not cover with lid while frying.

■ Allow oil to cool to 110 degrees before handling or cleaning up.



Marc Denzin
uses a grab
hook to pull
a cooked
turkey from
the fryer.

Deep-fried turkey

Marc Denzin and Greg Sperry follow a recipe developed by The Culinary Institute of America.

For the brine

- 1 gallon water
- 1 gallon ice
- 2 cups Kosher salt
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 6 bay leaves
- 4 onions, peeled and halved
- 4 garlic heads, halved
- 2 tablespoons cayenne, to taste
- 2 cups Worcestershire

For the turkey

- 1 12- to 15-pound whole turkey, fully defrosted
- 3 gallons fresh, unused peanut oil

For the brine: Bring all of the brine ingredients, except for the ice, to a boil. Remove from heat and pour into a bucket with gallon markings. Add ice until you reach the 2-gallon mark. The turkey should rest, completely covered in the brine, in a cool spot for about one hour per pound of turkey.

For the turkey: When ready to fry, rinse the turkey well in cold water, ensuring all salt is removed. Dry thoroughly, inside and out.

Heat peanut oil to 325 degrees. Fry turkey $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes per pound, or until internal temperature reaches 165 degrees. ■ ■ ■