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HUNTERS WILD ABOUT TRANS-FREE TURKEY THIS SPRING

Cottonseed oil offers a heart-healthy frying medium for the prized bird

CORDOVA, Tenn. – (April 13, 2007) – With sportsmen gearing up for wild turkey season opens across the nation this month, the hunt will soon be on for cooking oils that bring out the taste of the turkey, sans the *trans*.

Dr. Clay King, a Texas Woman's University professor who specializes in sensory and nutritive values of oilseeds, says cottonseed oil is one of the healthiest oils for deep frying turkey. King adds that cottonseed oil's bland flavor – a desirable trait – enhances the flavor of the bird, rather than masking it.

"There is a huge effort underway to educate consumers on how to avoid *trans* fatty acids, which form during hydrogenation," a process used to make oils more stable, he explains. "Cottonseed oil is naturally stable, so it does not require hydrogenation, plus it is 'heart-healthy' when used in moderation, according to the American Heart Association."

Each year, cottonseed oil is gobbled up in commercial quantities by large snack food processors and foodservice operators, so finding consumer-friendly sizes can be a challenge, King notes.

"You have to know where to look," he says. "Cottonseed and other frying oils can be purchased at sporting good stores, along with other items for frying turkeys."

Deep fried turkey is healthier than it sounds, he notes. "Deep fried turkey is moist and delicious and not at all greasy. The inside of the bird steams, and that keeps the nutrients and flavors in. When you boil or bake, many of those nutrients and flavors escape."

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Marinades and other seasonings injected into the turkey and a dry rub on the outside can provide additional flavor, he says.

WILD TURKEY ENCHILADAS

- 2 (10 3/4-ounce) cans cream of mushroom soup
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup diced chilies
- 12 tortillas, flour or corn
- 1 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 cup cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 cups cooked cubed wild turkey
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1/2 cup sliced, ripe black olives (optional)

Combine soup, sour cream and chilies. Heat thoroughly. Warm tortillas in damp towel in microwave or in a non-stick skillet over the stove. Coat a 13x9x2-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Mix cheeses, onion, turkey and 1 cup of the soup mixture. Put two tablespoons of cheese-turkey mixture in the center of each tortilla. Roll tortillas and place in baking dish. Pour remaining soup mixture over top. Cover, and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Uncover, and top with sliced, ripe black olives and additional cheese, if desired. Yield: 4 to 5 servings

Source: National Wild Turkey Federation website (www.nwtf.org)

About the National Cottonseed Products Association

NCPA is the national trade association for the cottonseed processing industry. In addition to the U.S. cottonseed crushing industry, association membership includes refiners, who process cottonseed oil into semi-finished and finished products, dealers and brokers who market cottonseed products, and other firms that provide goods and services to the industry.

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COOKING WITH COTTONSEED OIL

Frying a whole turkey might seem a little intimidating at first, especially if you are not an experienced outdoor cook. However, with a little care and caution, you can get great results your first time out.

So that your turkey is done perfectly and safely, following are recommendations on what equipment you should use when doing this for the first time. Rely heavily on an internal temperature probe to determine cooking times and temperatures.

Caution: Frying a turkey involves handling hot oil. You need to be careful and take your time. Follow the steps provided, and take all possible precautions to prevent injury.

#1. Defrost the turkey completely and wash thoroughly. Using a marinade is optional. If you would like to use one, either purchase a commercial turkey marinating product, or create your own.

#2. Inject the marinade into the turkey using a turkey injector kit and let the turkey sit, preferably overnight. Also, it is recommended that you "season" the pot before use. Pour a small amount of vegetable oil in the pot and spread it around with a paper towel until the entire bottom and sides are coated.

#3. Pour COTTONSEED OIL into a turkey frying pot. Make sure you leave enough room for your turkey so that the oil will be just enough to cover it completely during frying. Do not overfill. COTTONSEED OIL is best since it's stable and won't mask the natural flavor of the turkey.

#4. Set the pot on your burner and start heating it. For best results, use a temperature probe to control the temperature of the oil and avoid guesswork. Raise the oil temperature to 360 F. A mechanical thermometer may be used, but a digital one is best. Try using an internal temperature probe specially designed for turkey frying and other types of outdoor cooking, such as grilling, smoking, etc.

For safety, turn off the burner before proceeding to the next step. Remove the temperature probe or mechanical thermometer to give yourself plenty of room to work.

#5. Put the turkey on the frying rack. Wearing a heavy glove to protect your hand from spills, slowly lower the turkey into the hot oil. Lower the bird very slowly to prevent accidents. Your oil temperature will drop significantly once the turkey has been fully immersed. You will be using your mechanical thermometer or temperature probe to get the oil back up to the correct temperature, so place it in the oil at this time.

#6. Turn the burner high until the oil reaches 350 F, and then ease up to a steady 360 F. If you are using an internal temperature probe, insert it into the center of the dark meat area of the thigh. Be sure not to leave the tip of the probe near a bone. When the internal temperature reaches 180 F, the turkey is ready. Generally, it takes 3.5 to 4 minutes per pound frying time.

Be very careful removing the turkey from the pot. First, turn the burner off and remove the probe. Then carefully lift the turkey out using your glove. Remember, the oil is still extremely hot.

Be sure to retain the original cottonseed oil carton to store for reuse, or to transport spent oil to a local biodiesel facility for recycling. If your area is not serviced by a recycling program, call a biodiesel facility who will arrange for someone to pick up your oil. When saving the oil for reuse, let it cool before returning it to the carton. The oil should be strained as it is returned to the storage container to prolong its useful life.

Enjoy and encourage others to buy COTTONSEED OIL.

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