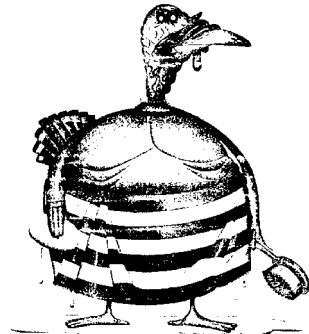


## Holiday Hot-Line

by John Farrow

Judging from the questions picked up by the Half-Fast Runner this past holiday season, some of you are seriously confused about our more esoteric traditions. Here are but a few examples:



**Q:** *Do I clean the turkey with soap and water?*

**HFR:** This is only one accepted method. Some turkey-lovers shower with their birds. However, shampooing your

turkey is generally considered not only unnecessary but downright kinky.

**Q:** *I put the turkey on the back porch last week. Can we still eat it?*

**HFR:** I don't see why not, as long as he hasn't run away. Even if he has, you can get in a good tempo run chasing him down, as well as some speed work at the end.

**Q:** *Do I take the insides out of the turkey before cooking?*

**HFR:** This is unnecessary unless you are not an *aficionado* of turkey menudo.

**Q:** *Do I have to remove the plastic wrap when I bake the turkey?*

**HFR:** No. This is a widespread misconception. By far the great weight of scientific opinion today is that shredded plastic wrap, while an excellent mulch in the garden, also adds fiber to your diet, not to mention spare PolyChlorinated Biphenyls.

**Q:** *Do I need to tie the legs together?*

**HFR:** No. This is one of the many benefits

of *rigor mortis*.

**Q:** *Is it still called stuffing if it's not cooked inside the turkey?*

**HFR:** Yes. Where it's cooked has nothing to do with the name. It refers to what it does to your waistline.

**Q:** *Are there any edible ingredients in the fruitcakes my Aunt Albertine insists on sending year after year?*

**HFR:** Important question. There is considerable research ongoing at this time; however, the best guess of the scientific community is "possibly." Fruitcakes do, however, have an indeterminate half-life, and some archaeologists have come to believe that the Assyrians used them to practice their cuneiform writing. Early versions of the Ten Commandments are also thought to have been inscribed on fruitcakes ("Thou shalt not rain down a plague of fruitcakes upon thy neighbor's house").

**Q:** *I've had these eggs for six months. Are they still good?*

**HFR:** Certainly. They will be perfect for tossing at your Aunt Albertine's house after she sends you yet another fruitcake this year.

**Q:** *Can you get drunk on rum cake?*

**HFR:** Unlikely. The better practice is to finish the bottle yourself before it gets wasted on some stupid cake.

**Q:** *My husband shot a duck last year and it's still in the freezer with the feathers on. Is it OK to eat it?*

**HFR:** Only if you are a cat.

**Q:** *Would I have a problem taking a potato from New Jersey to New York?*

**HFR:** It all depends on your intentions. However, the Half-Fast Runner is not aware that the Mann Act, which forbids the

transportation of women across state lines for immoral purposes, has been held to apply to potatoes.

**Q:** *My husband is a taxidermist and he left a fox carcass in the freezer. How can I get rid of the smell?*

**HFR:** Put your husband's carcass in the freezer next to the fox and move to Calcutta to work with Mother Teresa.

(Actual questions received by one of the following: American Dietetic Association; U.S. Department of Agriculture; National Potato Promotion Board; food writer Penny Popken of Sunset Magazine; Whirlpool's Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day Hotline).

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