

Jeez, was I wrong!

A few weeks ago I sent you a few happy thoughts about Thanksgiving. I was mostly thankful that my oldest sister, who lives in Florida, was not going to be able to join Dolores and me for Thanksgiving. I figured she was too old to travel anymore.

Jeez, was I wrong! Older sister is coming for Christmas. And yes, she has volunteered to cook her traditional dish: Fish-stuffed turkey. Of course she'll be dipping into my confessed assets of seven frozen turkeys.

I'm aware of the fact that there are many ways to prepare stuffing, but I don't know too many people who shove fish into the cavity of an otherwise perfectly edible bird. It starts out conventional enough as she sautés onions and artery-clogging butter and adds bread crumbs, but then the recipe takes a radical turn with the addition of oysters and other mollusks plus any other denizens of the deep she can get her hands on. In fact, there's no telling what might wind up in that stuffing. I don't want to accuse her of anything, but I noticed the last time she cooked a turkey for us, that after we finished dinner, three of our goldfish were missing.

"The cat probably ate them," Dolores insisted.

"That reminds me," I said. "The cat is also missing."

"If you don't like the stuffing," Dolores groaned, "leave it and just eat the turkey!"

That would be all well and good, but when older sister cooks a turkey for five hours with fish inside of it, the whole bird tastes like fish. Trust me when I tell you, it doesn't matter if you're eating a wing, or a thigh, or the breast, you're eating halibut. Frankly, I don't understand why she doesn't forget about turkey and just bake a fish.

AND for dessert, she has promised to prepare her famous sesame cookies. The last time she visited, she baked them all week. I'm guessing she made over a thousand that time. She uses a traditional recipe, probably introduced by the Pilgrims who often used their ovens to bake bricks. Until older sister's sesame cookies, science had considered the diamond to be the world's hardest material.

Don't get me wrong, they really have a delicious flavor. The problem is, you can't chew them. Your sort of suck on them like cough lozenges.

I've suggested that she approach people in the construction industry to see if her cookies might have an application as a type of building material. With all the cookies she

made, my guess is she had enough to build a small subdivision. Here again, Dolores rushed to her defense suggesting that older sister never intended – as I claim – to bake homes. Dolores insists they were intentionally baked hard because traditionally they are made to be dunked into coffee.

Here's another delightful tradition followed by all of the family who apparently can't put anything into their mouths before it has first been submerged into a cup of coffee. I submit for your pleasure, an account of my family's favorite breakfast: Toast a slice of white bread. Spread liberally with that artery-clogging butter. Fold in half and dunk into a cup of coffee. Pull the soaked bread out and watch it fall back into the cup splashing coffee all over your new pants. Continue eating the coffee with a spoon. New Englanders call this traditional favorite, pan latte. I call it coffee and bread soup.

Wish me luck. AND you have a nice Christmas.

Cecil