

Keep Kitchen Safety as Your Main Ingredient for Thanksgiving

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U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — From mashed potato stuffing to turkey or curry goat to leftovers, everyone has a favorite Caribbean Thanksgiving dinner menu. As you plan your holiday meal, follow these turkey tips from FEMA and the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency. They will help you keep your Thanksgiving dinner delicious and safe.

Cooking is the biggest cause of home fires and fire injuries, and Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires. So, there's no better time to focus on safety.

"We look forward to everyone having a blessed and safe Thanksgiving this year in the Virgin Islands. As you and your loved ones gather to cook your holiday meals, please include safety as your main ingredient," said FEMA Virgin Islands Caribbean Area Office Coordinator Aaron VanDoren.

Start with these prevention tips:

- Make your cooking area safe. Move things that can burn away from the stove. Turn pot handles toward the back so that they can't be bumped.
- Watch what you are cooking. Use a timer when roasting a turkey, ham or baking pies.
- Be prepared. Keep a large pan lid or baking sheet handy in case you need to smother a pan fire.
- Stay awake and alert while you are cooking. If you see smoke or the grease starts to boil in your pan, turn the burner off.
- Prevent burns. Wear short sleeves when you cook or roll them up. Do not lean over the burner. Use potholders and oven mitts to handle hot cookware.

Know what to do if you have a cooking fire:

- If you have a fire in your oven, turn it off. Let the contents cool before cleaning.



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- If you have a fire in your oven and flames escape it, leave your home and call 911.
- If a small grease fire starts in a pan, slide the pan lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Do not move the pan. To keep the fire from restarting, leave the lid on until the pan has cooled.

There's nothing more satisfying than cooking a good meal for the people we love. Make safety a priority in your kitchen at Thanksgiving and all year long.

For additional fire safety and burn prevention information, visit www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires/ and <https://go.dhs.gov/UhB>.

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