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Safely include your cat in your Turkey Day celebrations with these tips.

Written by [Caitlin Ultimo](#) ✓



Help your cat enjoy the festivities with small amounts of turkey and vegetables. *Nailla Schwartz/iStock/Thinkstock*

If your kitty cat tops the list of things you are thankful for, you are not alone! Our furry friends give us warmth, love and laughs all year long. So it makes purrfect – sorry, couldn't help it! – sense if you want to include your cat in the Turkey Day festivities. Unfortunately, some of what we love most about Thanksgiving – the food, the friends, the family – can actually cause problems for our pets. Incorporate these tips for a day of feline-approved feasting and fun.

Foods To Avoid

Food is a major part of Thanksgiving, but not all foods are safe for cats to ingest.

"I think one of the more serious hazards for cats at Thanksgiving is all the food that is available," says Kathleen Furth, DVM, associate veterinarian at Schoolhouse Animal Hospital in Burlington, New Jersey. "While most foods that we eat are safe for cats in general, some animals have sensitive stomachs and cannot tolerate any different foods from their normal diet. If this is the case, these animals can end up with gastrointestinal distress leading to vomiting and diarrhea."



CAITLIN ULTIMO
3 months ago

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Avoid giving your cat the following:

- **Raw Meat:** If your cat gets a bite of uncooked turkey or other meats, he risks ingesting salmonella and E. coli, which can cause your cat to become very sick.
- **Turkey Bones:** Not only a choking hazard, meat bones can damage your cat's digestive system and may lead to emergency surgery.
- **Fatty Foods:** Vomiting and diarrhea are common after ingesting fatty foods found at the Thanksgiving table. Be careful with stuffing, gravy and turkey fat scraps.
- **Alcohol:** Wine, beer and mixed drinks may add frivolity to a party for people, but not for cats; alcohol can cause severe liver and brain damage.
- **Chocolate:** The infamous toxic sweet for dogs is equally as dangerous for cats, especially in unsweetened baking form. If ingested, cats may experience heart arrhythmias, muscle tremors and seizures.
- **Tea and Coffee:** These after-dinner caffeine drinks may give you the jolt of energy you need after a day of feasting, but they can cause your cat to become restless and have heart palpitations.

"We also have to warn our guests not to give tidbits to our pets, as these can cause stomach upset as well," says Furth, who serves on the [New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association's](#) Public Relations Committee.

Keep cat treats aside and point your guests to them to help monitor what your cat is eating – and how much of it for that matter!

Cat Snacks

"It is okay to give either your cat a small amount of turkey or vegetables with their normal food if you know they can tolerate these things," Furth says.

If you want to make a kitty-safe platter, stick to small amounts of turkey meat, cranberries, carrots, green beans and sweet potatoes – and be sure the food is cut into easily digestible pieces. Take it a step up by blending together and serving atop your cat's regular bowl of food. Pumpkin is another ingredient safe for cats and can be super tasty in homemade kitty treats – just be sure guests are clear on which cookie platter is made specifically for your cat!

Party Animal

Some cats are more social, while others tend to become overwhelmed by crowds and things that are out of their routine.

"As far as allowing your pets to be part of the celebration, it really depends on the pet," Furth says. "If your pet is comfortable around company, let them join in. If they are not comfortable with company, you should find a quiet room for them to stay in with water and whatever they need to be comfortable and leave them alone."

Another common hazard with people coming in and out is that your cat may slip outside during all of the commotion. Be sure your guests are aware you have a pet so that they open and close the door quickly. Also, it's a good idea for your cat to keep his collar with info tags on just in case he does get out.

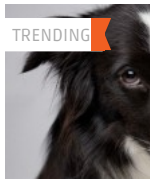
Setting up your cat's scratching station in a private spot will provide a getaway in case your cat needs a break. Think about getting him a new toy to keep him entertained and finish up your evening with a little one-on-one snuggle once everyone has left, letting him know just how thankful you are to have him in your life!

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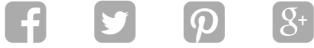
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