



LET'S TALK TURKEY:

HOW TO DECODE LABELS TO CHOOSE A BETTER THANKSGIVING BIRD

DELICIOUS ALTERNATIVES

For a better bird, look for these types or labels. Some turkeys may fit more than one category.

USDA CERTIFIED ORGANIC



No GMO feed, antibiotics or growth promoters
Outdoor access

HERITAGE OR HEIRLOOM



Descended from a historic breed to preserve genetic diversity and prevent extinction
Tend to be smaller than conventional turkeys
True heritage turkeys should be bred by natural mating and raised mostly outdoors

CONVENTIONAL

Almost all turkeys raised and sold in the U.S. are:

1. Bred for abnormally large, white breasts
2. Raised in crowded conditions
3. Likely treated with antibiotics and growth-boosting hormones
4. Possibly injected with saline/brine, oils, flavors or preservatives

PASTURE RAISED



The amount of time they spend outdoors and their conditions can vary. To confirm a pasture raised claim has been verified on the farm, look for one of the animal welfare certifications below.

HUMANELY RAISED



Some claims do not require the turkeys have access to the outdoors. However, these animal welfare certifications do, and they ensure the turkeys were raised without antibiotics or growth promoters, too:

Certified Humane

Global Animal Partnership—3-5+ Steps®

Animal Welfare Approved



LABELS THAT DON'T MEAN MUCH

Don't be fooled by these labeling claims.

✗ "SUSTAINABLE"

There's no standard definition—contact the producer for details.

✗ "FREE RANGE"

These turkeys get less outdoor access than you think—they're raised mostly indoors.

✗ "NATURAL"

Questionable. The only clear benefit is that turkeys cannot be injected with colors or artificial flavors. Natural flavors may be allowed.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HEALTHY HOLIDAY MEALS:

EWG.ORG/FOODSCORES/HOLIDAY

