

# Food Safety for Families

## Let's Talk Turkey

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### Fresh or Frozen?

#### **Fresh Turkeys**

- ▶ Allow 1 pound of turkey per person.
- ▶ Buy your turkey only 1 to 2 days before you plan to use it.
- ▶ Keep it stored in the refrigerator until you're ready to cook it. Place it on a tray or in a pan to catch any juices that may drip.

#### **Frozen Turkeys**

- ▶ Allow 1 pound of turkey per person.
- ▶ Keep frozen until you're ready to thaw it.
- ▶ Turkeys can be kept frozen in the freezer; cook within 1 year for best quality.

### Thawing Your Turkey



**There are three ways to thaw turkeys safely:** Refrigerator (as shown), in cold water, or in the microwave oven. Remove giblets from turkey cavity after thawing.

**Refrigerator Method:** (40°F or below). Allow approximately 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds.

(See next column for refrigerator thawing time table).

### Refrigerator Thawing Method:

**4 to 12 pounds** . . . . . 1 to 3 days  
**12 to 16 pounds** . . . . . 3 to 4 days  
**16 to 20 pounds** . . . . . 4 to 5 days  
**20 to 24 pounds** . . . . . 5 to 6 days

Keep the turkey in the original wrapper. Place it on a tray or in a pan to catch any juices that may drip. A thawed turkey can remain in the refrigerator for 1 to 2 days. If necessary, a turkey that has been properly thawed in the refrigerator may be refrozen.

### Cold Water Thawing Method:

Allow approximately 30 minutes per pound

**4 to 12 pounds** . . . . . 2 to 6 hours  
**12 to 16 pounds** . . . . . 6 to 8 hours  
**16 to 20 pounds** . . . . . 8 to 10 hours  
**20 to 24 pounds** . . . . . 10 to 12 hours

Wrap your turkey securely, making sure the water is not able to leak through the wrapping. Submerge your wrapped turkey in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook the turkey immediately after it is thawed. **Do NOT refreeze.**

### Cold water method



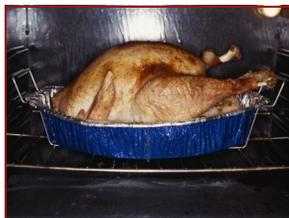
### Thawing in Microwave Oven:

- ◆ Check your owner's manual for the size turkey that will fit in your microwave oven, the minutes per pound, and power level to use for thawing.
- ◆ Remove all outside wrapping, including any metal or plastic that holds the legs together.
- ◆ Place turkey on a microwave-safe dish to catch any juices that may drip.
- ◆ Cook your turkey immediately. Do not refreeze or refrigerate your turkey after thawing in the microwave oven.

### Roasting Your Turkey

- ◆ Set your oven temperature no lower than 325°F.
- ◆ Place your turkey or turkey breast on a rack in a shallow roasting pan.
- ◆ For optimum safety, stuffing a turkey is not recommended. For more even cooking, cook your stuffing outside the bird in a casserole. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the stuffing. The stuffing must reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.
- ◆ A whole turkey is safe when cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F as measured with a food thermometer. Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. Consumers may choose to cook turkey to higher temperatures.

- ◆ If your turkey has a "pop-up" temperature indicator, also check the internal temperature of the turkey in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast with a food thermometer. The minimum internal temperature should reach 165°F for safety.



- ◆ For quality, let the turkey stand for 20 minutes before carving to allow juices to set. The turkey will carve more easily.

### Timetables for Turkey Roasting

325°F oven temperature

Use the timetables below to determine how long to cook your turkey. These times are approximate. Always use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of your turkey and stuffing.



#### Unstuffed

<b>4 to 8 pounds (breast)</b>	1½ to 3¼ hours
<b>8 to 12 pounds</b>	2¾ to 3 hours
<b>12 to 14 pounds</b>	3 to 3¾ hours
<b>14 to 18 pounds</b>	3¾ to 4¼ hours
<b>18 to 20 pounds</b>	4¼ to 4½ hours
<b>20 to 24 pounds</b>	4¼ to 5 hours



### Optional Cooking Hints

1. Tuck wing tips under the shoulders of the bird for more even cooking.
2. Add ½ cup of water to the bottom of the pan.
3. If your roasting pan does not have a lid, you may place a tent of heavy-duty aluminum foil over the turkey for the first 1 to 1½ hours. This allows for maximum heat circulation, keeps the turkey moist, and reduced oven spatter. To prevent overbrowning, foil may also be placed over the turkey until it reaches the desired color.
4. If using an oven-proof food thermometer, place it in the turkey at the start of the cooking cycle. It will allow you to check the internal temperature of the turkey while it is cooking. For turkey breasts, place thermometer in the thickest part. For whole turkeys, place in the thickest part of the thigh. Once the thigh has reached 165°F, check the wing and the thickest part of the breast to ensure the turkey has reached a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F throughout the product.
5. If using an oven cooking bag, follow the manufacturer's guidelines on the package.