

Holiday Food Safety Quiz

Before you cook the turkey, set up the buffet, or start making holiday goodies, see how you do on this holiday food safety quiz, based on information from the USDA.



1. Approximately, how long should you allow for thawing a frozen turkey in the refrigerator?
 - a. 24 hours per each 1–2 pounds of turkey
 - b. 24 hours per each 4–5 pounds of turkey
 - c. 24 hours per each 6–7 pounds of turkey
2. What is a safe internal temperature for cooking a whole turkey?
 - a. 145°F
 - b. 155°F
 - c. 165°F
3. Which of the following are important practices to follow if stuffing a turkey?
 - a. Don't mix wet and dry ingredients for stuffing until just before stuffing the bird
 - b. Stuff the turkey loosely
 - c. Cook a stuffed turkey immediately
 - d. Use a food thermometer
 - e. All of the above
4. What is the longest that perishable food should sit out at room temperature on a buffet table?
 - a. 2 hours
 - b. 3 hours
 - c. 4 hours
5. If you are serving 20 people at a holiday party, what size of turkey should you buy?
 - a. 10 pounds
 - b. 15 pounds
 - c. 20 pounds
 - d. 25 pounds
6. It is not recommended to wash your turkey before cooking it.
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. Is a pop-up thermometer in a turkey reliable?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. When should you buy a fresh turkey before cooking?
 - a. 1–2 days
 - b. 2–3 days
 - c. 3–4 days
 - d. 4–5 days
9. Which of the following are important practices to follow if traveling with food?
 - a. Keep hot foods hot by wrapping them in foil and then in heavy towels.
 - b. Keep cold foods cold by placing them in a cooler with ice or freezer packs.
 - c. Perishable foods such as meat, poultry, eggs, and casseroles kept at room temperature for longer than 2 hours should be thrown out.
 - d. All of the above.
10. If you have leftover turkey in the refrigerator, you should eat it within how many days?
 - a. 1–2 days
 - b. 2–3 days
 - c. 3–4 days
 - d. 4–5 days

Answers to Holiday Food Safety Quiz

1. **b. 24 hours per each 4–5 pounds of turkey.** Place the frozen bird in its original wrapper in the refrigerator (40°F or below). Allow approximately 24 hours per each 4–5 pounds of turkey. A thawed turkey can remain in the refrigerator for 1–2 days. Learn more about thawing a turkey at <https://go.unl.edu/thawturkey>.
2. **c. 165°F.** Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the turkey. A whole turkey is safe when cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F throughout the bird. Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. If you have stuffed your turkey, the center of the stuffing must also reach 165°F. Follow these estimated cooking times for different sizes of turkey to reach 165°F at: <https://go.unl.edu/turkeycookingtime>.
3. **e. All of the above.** Cooking a home-stuffed turkey is riskier than cooking one not stuffed. Even if the turkey itself has reached the safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F as measured in the innermost part of the thigh, the wing and the thickest part of the breast, the stuffing may not have reached a temperature high enough to destroy bacteria that may be present. Stuff it safely with these suggestions from USDA: <https://bit.ly/2U8HLLj>.
4. **a. 2 hours.** Foods should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours. Keep track of how long foods have been sitting on the buffet table and discard anything there for two hours or more.
5. **c. 20 pounds.** The general recommendation is to allow 1 pound of fresh or frozen turkey per person.
6. **a. True.** Avoid washing or rinsing a turkey (or any eggs, meat, or poultry products for that matter) before cooking. Juices can transfer bacteria onto kitchen surfaces, other foods, and utensils. If you must wash or rinse your turkey because of brining or other marinating processes, be sure to thoroughly clean and then sanitize all kitchen surfaces to eliminate the risk of cross-contamination.
7. **b. No.** It is recommended that you 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.
8. **a. 1-2 days.** Buy your fresh turkey only 1 to 2 days before you plan to cook it.
9. **d. All of the above.** By keeping hot food hot and cold food cold, you are avoiding the Danger Zone (temperatures between 40 - 140°F) where bacteria grow rapidly. More tips for traveling with food at <https://go.unl.edu/k4ph>.
10. **c. 3-4 days.** Refrigerate leftovers within two hours to prevent bacteria from growing on the food. Eat leftovers in the refrigerator within 3-4 days. Use the freezer to store leftovers for longer periods.

Originally written by Alice Henneman, MS, RD.
Reviewed and updated in 2026.

Sources:

- [Turkey 101: How to Plan, Cook, Serve, Store, and Reheat](#), Nebraska Extension
- [Safe Cooking Temperatures](#), Nebraska Extension
- [Traveling with Food](#), Nebraska Extension
- [Quick Tips for Thanksgiving Food Safety](#), Nebraska Extension