



Tips for Cooking a Turkey

Following these cooking guidelines can help you prepare a safe holiday dinner that everyone will enjoy.

Safe Preparation

Bacteria present on raw poultry can contaminate your hands, utensils, and work surfaces as you prepare the turkey. If these areas are not cleaned thoroughly before working with other foods, bacteria from the raw poultry can then be transferred to other foods. After working with raw poultry, always wash your hands, utensils, and work surfaces before they touch other foods.

Thawing a Turkey Properly

You can thaw your frozen bird in the refrigerator. Allow about 24 hours per five pounds of turkey. (That means a 20-pound frozen turkey for Thanksgiving has to start defrosting the previous Sunday.)

Once thawed, you should only continue to refrigerate the turkey for another 1 or 2 days, so plan accordingly.

If you forget to thaw the turkey in time, don't worry; simply submerge the whole turkey in COLD water (using a leak-proof plastic bag is recommended), changing the water every 30 minutes. This will generally take 30 minutes defrosting time for each pound of frozen turkey.

It is safest to cook stuffing separately.

Thanksgiving Leftovers

It is also important to eat your leftovers in a timely manner

Leftover turkey, stuffing, and other cooked dishes will only stay safe to eat in the refrigerator for 3-4 days, so you may want to freeze any portions you can't finish by then.

Gravy lasts only 1-2 days in the refrigerator but can also be frozen and enjoyed at a later date.

In the freezer cooked turkey pieces stay safe to eat for 4 months while stuffing and gravy are safe to eat for 1 month.

Tips for Healthy Living

Be physically active! The best way to compensate for eating a little more than usual is to be active. Start a new tradition that involves being physically active and away from the food. Ideas include taking a walk with the whole family or playing Frisbee, soccer, or touch football with your children, grandchildren, or the neighborhood kids

Have foods to nibble on while you are cooking – or waiting – that won't sabotage blood glucose levels before you sit down to eat. Try setting out a platter of raw or blanched veggies with your favorite low-calorie dip.

Eat smaller portions. Because high carbohydrate foods are plentiful at most Thanksgiving tables, watch your portion sizes. If you can't decide on one or two carbohydrate containing favorites to eat, have very small portions or "samples" of several dishes. Overall, try to keep your total carbohydrate intake like your everyday meals

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

<http://www.mealsmatter.org/>

<http://www.diabetes.org>