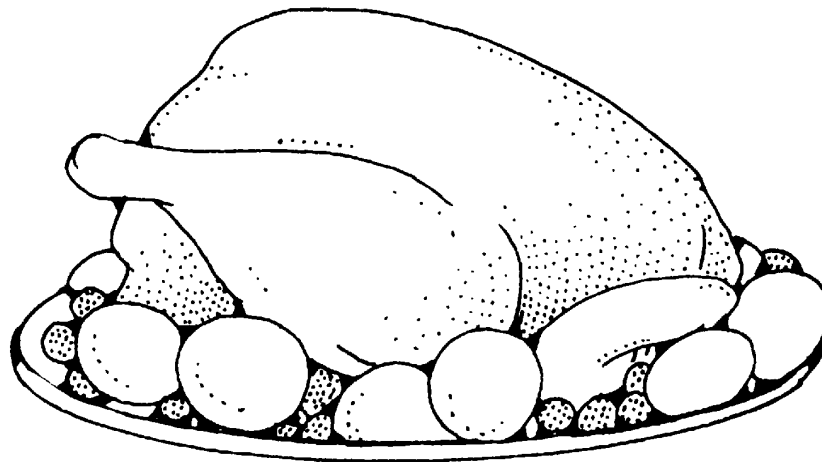




Holiday Turkey Tips

from Butterball Turkey



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TOP TEN TURKEY QUESTIONS

From first-timers to seasoned pros, cooks of all levels may experience anxiety over preparing the holiday turkey dinner. Fortunately, the Butterball Turkey Talk-Line™ is available to smooth Americans' ruffled feathers by providing expert, one-on-one turkey-related advice.

Every November and December, the Talk-Line's 48 professionally trained home economists respond to nearly 170,000 inquiries on virtually every turkey topic, from thawing to carving. Below are the ten most commonly asked questions.

1. WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO THAW A TURKEY?

Refrigerator thawing is recommended. However, if short on time, submerge the turkey in cold water. Thawing the turkey at room temperature allows bacterial growth and is not recommended.

- ▶ Refrigerator Thawing: Thaw breast-side up in its unopened wrapper on a tray in the refrigerator. Allow at least one day of thawing for every four pounds of turkey.
- ▶ Cold Water Thawing: Place breast down in its unopened wrapper in cold water to cover. Change the water every 30 minutes to keep surface cold. Estimate minimum thawing time to be 30 minutes per pound for whole turkey.

2. HOW DO YOU RECOMMEND HANDLING A TURKEY SO IT'S SAFE TO EAT?

Follow these food safety guidelines. Refer to specific categories for additional directions.

- ▶ Thaw frozen turkey in the refrigerator or cold water.
- ▶ Keep thawed or fresh turkey in a refrigerator.
- ▶ Prevent uncooked juices from dripping onto other foods in the refrigerator by placing packaged turkey on a tray.
- ▶ Thawed turkey may be kept in a refrigerator up to four days before cooking.
- ▶ Roast fresh turkey as soon as possible, but no later than the "use by" date on the package.
- ▶ Place raw poultry on non-porous surfaces; these are easy to clean. It is recommended that two cutting boards are used: one strictly to cut raw meats; and

the other for ready-to-eat foods, such as breads, fruits, and vegetables. If using one cutting board, be sure it is used for raw meats only. Cutting boards should be washed thoroughly in hot, soapy water before and after each use, and allowed to air dry or patted dry with fresh paper towels.

- ▶ Use paper towels, not cloth, to pat dry turkey and wipe up juices.
- ▶ Combine stuffing ingredients and stuff turkey just before roasting, not the night before.
- ▶ Wash hands, work surfaces and utensils touched by raw poultry and its juices with hot, soapy water.
- ▶ Use cooking methods that allow turkey to reach an internal temperature of 140°F in less than four hours. Avoid using low roasting temperatures or partial cooking methods.
- ▶ Use a meat thermometer to determine turkey's doneness.
- ▶ Store turkey, stuffing, gravy, broth and other left-over cooked foods in refrigerator within two hours after cooking.

3. WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO ROAST A TURKEY?

The open pan roasting method will consistently create a juicy, tender, golden brown, picture-perfect turkey.

- ▶ Place thawed or fresh turkey, breast up, on a flat rack in a shallow pan, 2 to 2-1/2 inches deep.
- ▶ If unstuffed, insert oven-safe meat thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh. If stuffed, place the tip of the meat thermometer inside the stuffed cavity of the turkey.
- ▶ Brush or rub skin with oil to prevent drying of the skin and to enhance the golden color.
- ▶ Place in a preheated 325°F oven.
- ▶ When the skin is a light golden color and the turkey is about two-thirds done, shield the breast loosely with a tent of lightweight foil to prevent overcooking of the breast.
- ▶ Use this roasting schedule as a guideline; start checking for doneness ½ hour before recommended end times:

<u>Net Weigh</u> <i>(in pounds)</i>	<u>Unstuffed</u> <i>(in hours)</i>	<u>Stuffed</u> <i>(in hours)</i>
10 to 18	3 to 3½	3¾ to 4½
18 to 22	3½ to 4	4½ to 5
22 to 24	4 to 4½	5 to 5½
24 to 30	4½ to 5	5½ to 6¼

- ▶ Turkey is done when the meat thermometer reaches the following temperatures:
 - ▶ 180° F deep in the thigh; also, juices should be clear, not reddish pink when thigh muscle is pierced deeply.
 - ▶ 160°F in the center of the stuffing, if turkey is stuffed.
- ▶ Let turkey stand 15 minutes before removing stuffing and carving to allow juices to set.

4. WHERE DOES THE MEAT THERMOMETER GO?

- ▶ If stuffed, the tip of the meat thermometer should be placed inside the stuffed cavity of the turkey. If unstuffed, the tip of the meat thermometer should be placed in the thigh muscle just above and beyond the lower part of the thigh bone, but not touching the bone, and pointing toward the body.
- ▶ If using an **oven-safe meat thermometer**, insert the thermometer prior to placing the turkey in the oven and leave in while the turkey is roasting. Turn the thermometer so it can be read while the turkey is in the oven.
- ▶ If using an **instant-read meat thermometer**, do not leave the thermometer in the turkey during roasting.

5. HOW CAN LEFTOVER TURKEY BE STORED SAFELY?

- ▶ Within two hours after roasting, remove stuffing from turkey and carve meat off bones, then store in refrigerator or freezer.
- ▶ Refrigerator Storage: Wrap turkey slices and stuffing separately and use within three days.
- ▶ Frozen Storage: Wrap in heavy foil, freezer wrap or place in freezer container or

bags. For optimum flavor, use stuffing within one month and turkey within two months.

6. HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE TURKEY IS DONE?

Turkey is done when the meat thermometer reaches the following temperatures:

- ▶ 180°F deep in the thigh; also, juices should be clear, not reddish pink when thigh muscle is pierced deeply.
- ▶ 160°F in the center of the stuffing, if turkey is stuffed.

7. WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO A TURKEY JUST BEFORE ROASTING IT?

- ▶ Remove original plastic wrapper from thawed or fresh turkey.
- ▶ Remove the neck and giblets from the body and neck cavities.
- ▶ Drain juices and blot turkey dry with paper towels.
- ▶ Stuff the turkey (optional) just before roasting; ingredients may be prepared earlier, but keep moist and dry ingredients separate and combine just before stuffing.
- ▶ Return legs to tucked position, if untucked for cleaning or stuffing.
- ▶ Insert oven-safe meat thermometer into the deepest part of the thigh.
- ▶ Brush with oil to prevent drying of the skin.

8. WHAT'S THE PROPER WAY TO STUFF A TURKEY?

Generations of Americans have been enjoying turkeys -- stuffed and unstuffed. Whether you choose to stuff your turkey or cook stuffing in a casserole dish is a matter of personal preference. As with any preparation involving raw food ingredients, it's important to carefully follow proper food safety and handling procedures to ensure a safe turkey every time. For consumers who choose to stuff their turkey, we recommend the following four guidelines.

- ▶ Prepare stuffing just *before* placing in turkey. Use only cooked ingredients in stuffing -- saute vegetables, use only cooked meats and seafood (oysters), and use pasteurized egg products instead of raw eggs. Place prepared stuffing in turkey *just before* roasting. Do not stuff the turkey the night before roasting.
- ▶ Stuff both neck and body cavities of completely thawed turkey, allowing 1/2 to 3/4

cup of stuffing per pound of turkey. Do not pack stuffing tightly in turkey.

- ▶ Return legs to original tucked position, if untucked for cleaning or stuffing.
- ▶ Always use a meat thermometer. The turkey is done when the thigh temperature reaches 180°F on a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh next to body, not touching bone. Move the meat thermometer to the center of stuffing; temperature should be 160°F. When the stuffed turkey is done, remove turkey from oven and let turkey with stuffing stand 15 minutes. This stand time allows the stuffing temperature to reach 165°F for an added measure of safety.
- ▶ When the turkey is cooked on an outdoor grill, water smoker or by fast cook methods where the turkey typically gets done faster than the stuffing, it is recommended that the turkey not be stuffed.

9. SHOULD I BUY A FRESH OR FROZEN TURKEY?

- ▶ Selecting a fresh or frozen turkey is your choice.
- ▶ Fresh turkeys need no thawing and are ready to cook.
- ▶ Frozen turkeys can be purchased weeks in advance, but require several days of thawing time before roasting.

10. IS IT NECESSARY TO BASTE A TURKEY?

- ▶ No.
- ▶ Basting the skin during the roasting process is not necessary. Pouring juices over the turkey's skin while it roasts will not make the meat juicier. The liquid penetrates only about 1/8 to 1/4 of an inch beneath the skin and most of the juice will run off into the pan. Opening the oven door periodically to baste a turkey can interrupt roasting and may possibly lengthen the roasting time.
- ▶ Before roasting, lightly coat the turkey's skin with oil, shortening or vegetable cooking spray to prevent the skin from drying.

If you have any additional questions, please call the experts at the Butterball Turkey Talk-Line at 1-800-323-4848 or visit them at www.butterball.com