



Nutrition Department
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Thanksgiving Food Safety Tips

Safe Preparation:

- Remember to wash your hands with hot soapy water for at least 20 seconds before touching the turkey or preparing other foods. Use hot soapy water to wash anything that comes in contact with the raw turkey or its juices.
- Keep your uncooked turkey separate from other foods – in your grocery bag and your refrigerator.
- Store your turkey on the lowest shelf in your refrigerator at 40°F or below. Place a tray or platter under the turkey to catch any juices. Discard any cooked or ready to eat foods that have come in contact with the raw turkey or its juices.
- Thawing a turkey at room temperature is never considered safe.
- The only acceptable methods of thawing a turkey include in the refrigerator at 40°F or below, in the microwave oven (if it is to be cooked immediately), under cold running water and as part of the cooking process.
- If thawing your turkey in the refrigerator, allow one day of thawing for every 4 pounds of turkey.
- If using a microwave to thaw your turkey, follow the microwave owner's manual for the size turkey that will fit, minutes per pound and power level used for thawing. Always cook your turkey immediately after microwave thawing.
- If using cold water to thaw your turkey, submerge the tightly wrapped turkey under running water at a temperature of 70°F or lower. The water flow should be strong enough to wash loose particles down the drain.
- Never refreeze a thawed turkey.

Please see reverse for additional Thanksgiving food safety tips.

Safe Cooking:

- When cooking your turkey and stuffing, set your oven temperature no lower than 325°F. Do not slow roast your turkey overnight.
- If you are cooking a frozen turkey, plan to cook it at least 50% longer than you would a thawed turkey. (See the chart below.)
- It is safest to cook the stuffing separately from the turkey. Cook the stuffing until it reaches 165°F for 15 seconds.
- Using a food thermometer is the only sure way to know when your turkey is done. The thermometer should read 180°F for 1 second, or 165°F for 15 seconds, with the stem in the thickest part of the breast or thigh.

Turkey Roasting Timetable				
<i>Times are approximate and based on an oven temperature of 325°F.</i>				
Size of Turkey	Thawed & Unstuffed	Thawed & Stuffed	Frozen & Unstuffed	Frozen & Stuffed
8 to 12 pounds	2¾ to 3 hours	3 to 3½ hours	4¼ to 4½ hours	4½ to 5¼ hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 to 3¾ hours	3½ to 4 hours	4½ to 5¾ hours	5¼ to 6 hours
14 to 18 pounds	3¾ to 4¼ hours	4 to 4¼ hours	5¾ to 6½ hours	6 to 6½ hours
18 to 20 pounds	4¼ to 4½ hours	4¼ to 4¾ hours	6½ to 6¾ hours	6½ to 7¼ hours
20 to 24 pounds	4½ to 5 hours	4¾ to 5¼ hours	6¾ to 7½ hours	7¼ to 8 hours

Safe Storage & Reheating:

- Divide leftovers into small portions and store them within 2 hours in covered, shallow containers in your refrigerator.
- Discard any turkey, stuffing or gravy left out at room temperature longer than 2 hours.
- Use refrigerated turkey and stuffing within 3 to 4 days, and gravy within 1 to 2 days.
- Reheat leftover sliced turkey, stuffing, gravy and other side dishes to 165°F for 15 seconds within 2 hours.

Courtesy of U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety & Inspection Service and The Greater Boston Food Bank Nutrition Department