

Talkin' Turkey with Tony's

*Everything you ever wanted to know about turkeys,
but were afraid to ask.*

Turkey Terminology

Fresh Turkeys

Turkeys may be labeled as 'Fresh' if they have never been chilled below 26° F. Turkey meat does not freeze at 32°, but at 26° F (according to the NTF.) Since no preservatives are used, turkeys are shipped from the processing facility at low temperatures to minimize bacterial growth.

Frozen Turkeys

Turkeys chilled below 0° F must be labeled 'Frozen'. Turkey producers, retailers and chefs agree that the taste and texture of frozen turkey is diminished.

Hard-chilled or Deep-chilled Turkeys

Turkeys that have been chilled below 26° but not below 0° cannot be labeled as fresh, but don't have to be labeled as frozen either. Also identified as "not previously frozen."

Self-Basting, or Basted Turkeys

Poultry products that are injected or marinated with a solution containing butter or other edible fat, broth, stock or water plus spices, flavor enhancers and other approved substances must be labeled as basted or self basted. 'Self-basting' is most often used to counter the negative effects of freezing.

Natural Turkeys

A product containing no artificial ingredient or added color and is only minimally processed.

'Hen' or 'Tom' Turkeys

Hen turkeys are female birds, usually weighing in from 8-16 pounds. Tom turkeys are males, usually weighing from 16 to 32 pounds. In your grandmother's day hen turkeys offered more white meat, but with today's selective breeding, both Hen and Tom turkeys offer a high ratio of white to dark meat.

Kosher Turkeys

Kosher turkeys are high quality birds individually processed and inspected under rabbinical supervision. Soaked in a salt brine, they possess a distinctive, savory character.

Free Range Turkey

According to the USDA... "Producers must demonstrate to the Agency that the poultry has been allowed access to the outside to be called free-range or free roaming." Most growers avoid this due to the increased stress and risk for disease transmission from wild and migrating birds. While these turkeys are usually of high quality, 'Free-range' is a marketing term rather than a quality level and has no effect on taste, tenderness or juiciness.

Organic Turkeys

At this time, the USDA does not have a definition for organic turkey, but is permitting certain meat and poultry products to be labeled "certified organic by (name of certifying entity)." Note: The use of hormones is prohibited in the raising of all poultry. While turkeys sold as 'organic' are usually of high quality, "Certified Organic" is a marketing term rather than a quality level and has no effect on taste, tenderness or juiciness.

Premium Brand Turkeys

Many producers go above and beyond to produce premium turkeys with quality emphasized over price. Selling turkeys based on their hard-earned reputations and history, premium brand turkeys consistently offer superior quality.

More great information at:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/lablterm.htm>

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/focustky.htm>

*Courtesy of Chef Mick Rosacci
and Tony's Meats & Specialty Foods
www.TonysMarket.com*



Chef Mick's Turkey Tips

Choose a fresh, natural bird from a reputable retailer and producer, picking it up a couple of days early will allow a greater selection plus time to brine before cooking.

Smaller turkeys fit better into the refrigerator and are easier to handle. If you have more than one oven and a lot of folks to feed, consider cooking two smaller turkeys or an additional breast. Why not try two different dressings?

Brining your turkey is highly recommended, enhancing both flavor and moisture.

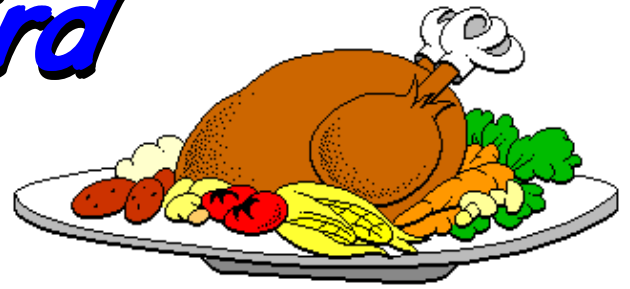
A large, heavy roasting pan with a rack is a worthwhile investment - they are safer, easier to handle and produce the best gravies.

Un-stuffed turkeys cook more quickly and evenly than stuffed. Turkeys cooked stuffed offer a richer and more flavorful dressing.

Homemade turkey stock is simple to make and offers a huge payoff in better gravy & dressing.

Invest in a reliable meat thermometer, they're essential for consistently perfect roasting results.

Cooking your Bird



Meal Planning Tips

A little planning ahead will make your time in the kitchen stress free, and dare I say, actually fun and rewarding! Start by committing your entire menu to paper. Not only will that give you plenty of time to shop; you can also create a preparation time line - a reality check that will avert most problems in advance. Consider how much will fit in your oven at one time and try to select items you can make ahead versus those that must be made at the last minute.

This is going to be great! Buon Appetito - Salut ! Chef Mick

Classic Oven Roasted Turkey

Preheat oven to 325 . Remove neck and giblets (check the neck cavity too.) Rinse bird in cool water and pat dry. Rub outer skin with oil and season inside and out with your favorite seasoning blend. Stuff lightly if desired — do not pack dressing!

Place turkey on a sturdy rack in a heavy roasting pan of ample size. Roast uncovered for approximately 15 min / pound, basting to improve color if desired. Add 40-60 minutes for stuffed birds. Loosely tent with foil near the end of cooking time if breast is browning too much.

Test for doneness with a reliable meat thermometer, 165 in stuffing and 180 degrees in thigh. Carefully remove turkey from oven, cover with a clean towel or aluminum foil and let rest 15-20 minutes before carving. This is the perfect time to make gravy.

** The meat of a perfectly cooked and rested turkey may have a slightly pink hue, but the juices will run clear. 'Resting' your turkey is very important, assuring a juicy, fully cooked turkey.*

Inverted Roasting:

Roasting a turkey inverted theoretically allows the turkey's juices to flow into the breast, while raising the slower cooking thighs for more even cooking. It's a good plan, but there are a couple negative trade-offs: 1) The finished bird does not have the same level of eye appeal for presentation at the table. 2) Have you ever tried to turn over a hot turkey? Be careful, it may end up on the floor.

Roasting Bags:

Roasting bags speed cooking time and reserve drippings well. Some people swear by roasting bags while others think they diminish texture. I suggest doing whatever mom did (especially if she will be in attendance!)

Grilling your Turkey:

The classic 22-inch Weber kettle used with an indirect grilling method produces a fabulous cooked turkey - but any covered, charcoal grill big enough for indirect grilling will work. Pre-brining your turkey is highly recommended when grilling a turkey. Brining recipes at TonysMarket.com

Deep Fried Turkeys:

Deep frying at turkey takes a lot of preparation and special equipment but most agree it's worth it! The result is a quick cooking, moist, and juicy bird that is not at all greasy. Recipes at TonysMarket.com

Turkey Roasting Times

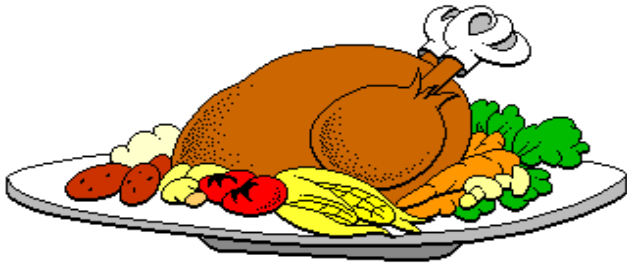
Roasting conditions will vary, these times are a guidelines for planning. Test your turkey for done-ness with a reliable meat thermometer and rest before serving.

| Weight | Unstuffed Turkey | Stuffed Turkey |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 8 to 12 lbs. | 2 3/4 to 3 hours | 3 to 3 1/2 hours |
| 12 to 14 lbs. | 3 to 3 3/4 hours | 3 1/2 to 4 hours |
| 14 to 18 lbs. | 3 3/4 to 4 1/4 hours | 4 to 4 1/4 hours |
| 18 to 20 lbs. | 4 1/4 to 4 1/2 hours | 4 1/4 to 4 3/4 hours |
| 20 to 24 lbs. | 4 1/2 to 5 hours | 4 3/4 to 5 1/4 hours |
| 24 to 30 lbs. | 5 to 5 1/4 hours | 5 1/4 to 6 1/4 hours |

When is it Done?

Over-cooking does not make your turkey safer, only tougher and drier. For a perfectly safe turkey that is still moist and delicious, test with a reliable meat thermometer at 180 degrees in the thigh, and 165 degrees in the dressing. Pop-up timers are helpful as a preliminary step in judging the correct temperature, but an accurate meat thermometer is the final authority.

...and all the trimmings...



Dressing & Stuffing Tips:

Some folks wouldn't consider it Thanksgiving without a turkey stuffed with mom's dressing. Roasting a stuffed bird allows the dressing to gather natural juices for a juicy, savory character. Not stuffing promotes faster, more even cooking and thus a moister result. Dressing can be roasted on the side and given a flavor boost with turkey stock.

- * Allow 3/4 cups dressing per pound - stuff lightly, do n't pack!
- * Never stuff a turkey until it's time to roast.
- * For a faster and more evenly cooked turkey, preheat your dressing to 120 - 140 degrees in the microwave before gently stuffing with a spoon into turkey.
- * Dressing can be cooked in a casserole pan on the side of the turkey with fabulous results, especially if it is doused with homemade turkey stock before serving.

Brined Turkey

Adds a wonderful savory character to a grilled or roasted turkeys.

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| One fresh turkey, 12-16 pounds | The evening before cooking, bring 2 quarts of water to boil, add salt and sugar, remove from heat and stir to dissolve. Cool for 30-40 minutes then add remaining spices. Fill a 5-gallon bucket half way with plenty of ice and cold water. Add seasoned water and stir to combine. Water must be cold. Place bucket of brine in refrigerator, or a large cooler filled with ice water, or in garage if below 40 degrees (but not freezing). Add turkey to cold brine and allow to soak overnight. Rinse, pat dry, and roast as usual. |
| 3 gallons water (12 quarts) | |
| 2 c. Kosher salt | |
| 1 1/4 c. brown sugar | |
| 4 bay leaves | |
| 4-5 cloves garlic, crushed | |
| 12-18 peppercorns | |

Simple Turkey Stock

Simply prepared while your turkey roasts, homemade stock adds magic to your dressing and gravy. This is a basic recipe, feel free to adjust.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 lbs. butter | - As soon as the turkey is in the oven, set a large saucepan over medium-high heat and melt butter. Add the turkey neck, heart and gizzard - stir and brown well. |
| Turkey neck, & giblets | - Chop and add carrot, onion and celery tops along with bay leaf, cloves and peppercorns. Cook until the vegetables begin to brown. Add 12 cups water, bring to a boil, and reduce the heat to low. Simmer slowly until the liquid is reduced to about one-third it's original volume, about 3 hours, adding water if needed. Strain into a measuring cup, pressing on the solids to extract all the liquid; you should have about 4 cups. Discard solids. - Chef Mick, Tony's Meats & Specialty Foods |
| 1 carrot, minced | |
| 1 onion, minced | |
| Tops from a bundle of celery | |
| 1-2 bay leaves | |
| 4-5 whole cloves | |
| 10-12 whole peppercorns | |

Classic Turkey Gravy

- 3 cups low sodium Turkey or Chicken Stock (approx.)
- Pan drippings
- splash of white wine or Madiera
- Milk and flour slurry
- Seasonings if desired

Once turkey is roasted, pour off all the drippings and separate fats. Do not wash roasting pan and place directly over burners on stove, de-glazing with a splash of wine. When brown bits are dissolved, add de-fatted drippings and stock and bring to boil. Taste, and reduce as needed to form a rich stock.

Whisk 1-2 Tbs. flour for every cup of liquid into just enough cold milk to make a thick, smooth slurry. To avoid lumps, slowly whisk a few Tbs of stock and drippings into hot stock 1 Tbs at a time, then slowly whisk slurry into simmering stock. Simmer for 5-10 minutes to thicken, stirring regularly. Taste, adjust and serve.

* Note: To produce a full flavored gravy, it is critical not to burn the drippings in the roasting pan while cooking. Avoid this by using a heavy roasting pan and adding a little water.

Gravy Rescue Tips

Not enough gravy: Double the recipe by using melted butter and more poultry stock, taste and adjust.

Gravy is lumpy: With a whisk or rotary beater, beat the gravy until smooth. If all other attempts fail, use strainer or blender. Reheat, stirring constantly.

Gravy is too salty: If oversalting is slight: Add several raw potato slices and cook until the potato slices are translucent - remove. You can also add a few pinches of light brown sugar (only a few pinches or the gravy will become too sweet.) **If oversalting is severe,** the gravy must be diluted. Prepare another batch of gravy, omitting all salt. Blend the two batches together.

Gravy is not thick: 1) Whisk a smooth slurry of flour and cold water and slowly whisk into gravy, simmer to thicken. 2) Slowly sprinkle and whisk Wondra brand superfine flour directly into gravy, simmer to thicken. 3) Blend equal parts of butter and flour with a fork and slowly stir into gravy, simmer until thick.

Gravy is too thick: Slowly whisk in more broth until the desired thickness is reached.

Gravy is greasy/fatty: For an immediate fix, the fat can be skimmed off the top or soaked up with a fresh bread slice. If more time allows, chill the gravy, skim off the fat and reheat the gravy until it bubbles.

Play it Safe - Turkey Tips

Handling Poultry Safely

Thawing Frozen Turkeys:

Never thaw a turkey at room temperature! It's best to thaw slowly in the refrigerator. Thaw a small frozen turkey for 3-4 days, and a large turkey for 5-6 days in refrigerator. If you are short on time, place your wrapped turkey in a sink of cool water, changing it every couple hours. This will safely thaw most turkeys in less than a day.

Cross Contamination:

Contamination of ready to serve foods by raw poultry bacteria is a common problem - and easily avoided. Immediately after you place your turkey in the oven, sanitize all food contact surfaces (countertops, cutting boards, knives, etc.) with a sanitizing solution of one capful chlorine bleach in a sink full of hot soapy water. Soak your cutting boards, dishtowels and sponges for at least 1 minute, wash and rinse well.

Pre-Stuffing Turkeys: Bad idea. Never stuff a turkey until it is time to put it in the oven.

Slow-Cooking Overnight: Don't even think about it! This is unsafe since the turkey will spend long periods of time at hazardous temperatures.

Leftovers: Do not allow your cooked turkey to sit at room temperature for over 90 minutes. Get your leftover turkey, dressing and gravy under refrigeration asap. Re-heat leftover turkey and dressing in microwave to at least 165 degrees (steaming hot) in a covered dish with a sprinkle of water. Re-heat gravy to a rolling boil.

Internal Temperature

Your turkey is fully cooked when the internal temperature reaches 180 degrees F. in the thigh and 165 degrees F. in the center of the stuffing. Use a reliable meat thermometer to ensure a delicious and safe holiday feast.

**USDA's Meat & Poultry Hotline:
800-535-4555**

Mon-Fri, 10 am - 4 pm ET
Thanksgiving day, 8 - 2 pm ET
TTY - 800-256-7072
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>



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www.TonysMarket.com

Meat Thermometers

The secret to a perfectly cooked turkey.

Pop-up timers:

Handy but highly unreliable. A reliable instant read thermometer should always be your final authority.

Oven-Proof Thermometers:

Older oven thermometers tend to be inaccurate, newer digital units are more reliable, using a sensor in the bird attached to a digital thermometer on the outside of the oven. Made by Polder, they sell for about \$30.

Quick Read Thermometers:

An industry standard used by chefs and health inspectors all over the country. Quick read thermometers are inexpensive, simple to use, and easily calibrated if they do come out of adjustment. Do not roast quick read thermometers in the oven.

To Test Your Thermometer:

Ice Method

Prepare a 50/50 mixture of ice and water in a cup. Place at least two inches of the thermometer stem into the cup, making sure the sensing tip is fully inserted. The tip should not touch the bottom or side of the cup. Wait about five minutes, adjust to 32 degrees if needed.

Boiling Method

Fill a pan with about three inches of water and bring to a rolling boil. Place at least two inches of the thermometer stem into the water, making sure the sensing tip is fully inserted. The tip should not touch the bottom or side of the pan. Wait about one minute or until the needle is steady and verify the needle registers 202 degrees F. for Denver's 5,000 ft altitude (adjust 2 degrees for every 1,000 feet of altitude - 212 degrees at sea level.) Adjust as needed.



When Is My Turkey Done?

Over-cooking does not make your turkey safer, only tougher and drier. For a perfectly safe turkey that is still delicious test with a reliable meat thermometer at 180 degrees in the thigh and 160 degrees in the stuffing.

How to take temperature readings

Insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the inner thigh near the breast and not touching a bone. Test dressing by inserting thermometer tip well into the center of the dressing. Take several temperature readings in both the turkey and dressing to be sure.

A special thanks to the folks at the USDA and the Tri-County Health Department for their help in putting together this guide.