

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.

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.