

Safety Tips for Your Holiday Turkey

Buying

- A frozen turkey can be stored in your freezer for up to one year
- A fresh turkey should be purchased no more than two days before cooking and refrigerated

Thawing

In the refrigerator: very safe but slow, so plan ahead! It takes about 5 hours per pound to thaw a turkey in the refrigerator (3 days for a 15 pound turkey)

In cold water: wrap the turkey in a leak proof plastic bag and immerse in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes to ensure it stays cold. Allow 30 minutes per pound to thaw

In the microwave: Check the microwave manufacturer's recommendations for the appropriate time and power level for thawing.

Preparing

- You can reduce the risk of cross-contamination and foodborne illness by handling raw turkey properly during its preparation for cooking.
- Wash your hands thoroughly
- If you washed or thawed the turkey in a sink, clean the sink with soap and water and sanitize using 1.5 tsp. of bleach per litre of water
- If you are stuffing the turkey, be sure that it is moist and loosely packed in the cavity. The turkey should be stuffed just before putting it into the oven—not in advance!
- After putting the turkey in the oven, remember to thoroughly clean and sanitize all utensils and work surfaces that came into contact with the raw turkey—and wash your hands!

Cooking

- Be sure that the turkey is completely thawed before cooking
- Cook the turkey at an oven temperature of no lower than 164°C (325°F) It is not safe to 'slow cook' a turkey at a lower temperature than 164°C
- Use a meat thermometer to check internal temperature. The turkey is 'done' when the temperature in the thigh is 82°C (180°F) and at least 74°C (165°F) in the stuffing.

Approximate cooking times:

Weight	Stuffed	Unstuffed
9 – 11 pounds	3 – 3 ½ hours	2 ¾ - 3 hours
12 – 14 pounds	3 ½ - 4 hours	3 – 3 ¾ hours
15 – 17 pounds	4 – 4 ½ hours	3 ¾ - 4 ¼ hours
18 – 20 pounds	4 ¼ - 4 ¾ hours	4 ¼ - 4 ½ hours

Leftovers

- Don't leave the stuffing in the turkey, and don't leave either on the counter for 'picking'
- Refrigerate the turkey and stuffing separately in shallow containers within two hours of cooking
- Leftover turkey and stuffing should be eaten within four days. Leftover gravy should be eaten within two days.
- If you won't be using the leftovers within four days, they may be frozen. Frozen cooked turkey may be stored for up to four months; gravy and stuffing for one month
- Casseroles and soups made from turkey leftovers should be made within three days and may be kept frozen for up to six months
- Reheat refrigerated leftovers, or completely thawed frozen leftovers, to 74°C (165°F) or until hot and steaming all the way through