

TURKEY Basics



Thawing

Quick Method

Place wrapped frozen turkey in sink and cover completely with cold water. Allow 1 hour per pound (2 hrs/kg) of turkey. Change water frequently.

Regular Method

Place wrapped frozen turkey on a pan in refrigerator. Allow 5 hours per pound (10 hrs/kg) of turkey. A 20 lb turkey (9 kg), will take approximately 4 days to completely thaw.

- *Never thaw turkey at room temperature.*
- *Refrigerate or cook turkey immediately once thawed. Never refreeze uncooked turkey.*
- *Do not thaw a pre-stuffed turkey; cook from frozen, following directions on packaging.*

Safe Handling

Wash hands thoroughly with hot soapy water before and after handling raw turkey. Do not let raw meat or juices touch ready-to-eat foods either in the refrigerator or during preparation. Do not put cooked foods on the same plate that held raw products.

Wash utensils, dishes and surfaces used for prepping turkey with hot, soapy water. Then rinse using a sanitizing solution of one capful of chlorine bleach in a sink full of warm water. Thoroughly rinse surfaces, dishes and utensils with hot water. Keep cutting board and utensils in good repair as they can harbour bacteria inside cracks and crevices.

Cooking tips:

- During barbecuing, broiling or cooking on a stove top, turn meats over at least once. When baking, set oven no lower than 325°F (160°C).
- After cooking, remove from heat, cover, and let stand for 15-20 minutes before carving.
- Refrigerate leftovers after the turkey has cooled. Separate into small portions for fast reheating.



Storing Turkey

Fresh

When storing fresh turkey, remove giblets and refrigerate in a covered container for use within 2 days. Ground turkey can be stored in the refrigerator for 1 day, in the freezer for 2 to 3 months.

Frozen

Whole turkeys can be kept frozen for 1 year, parts for 6 months. Wrap well. Once turkey is thawed, treat as a fresh turkey and do not refreeze until cooked.

Cooked

Turkey should be carved from the bone and the stuffing removed. All leftovers should be stored in shallow containers and refrigerated or frozen within two hours of cooking.

When reheating, be sure the turkey reaches a temperature of 165°F (74°C).

Cooked turkey products may be stored in a covered container, plastic bag or aluminum foil for up to 4 days in the refrigerator or up to 3 months in the freezer.

Cold cuts should be used within 3 to 4 days after placement in the refrigerator, 2 to 3 months in the freezer.

Previously Frozen

Any turkey labeled as previously frozen must be kept refrigerated and cooked within 24 hours.

Alert:

Bacteria tends to grow in a 'danger zone' between 40°F and 140°F (4°C and 60°C). Therefore, make sure it is refrigerated below 40°F (4°C), or kept hot, above 140°F (60°C).

Do not allow raw or cooked turkey to remain in the danger zone for more than two hours.



Oven Roasting

Whole Turkey

Remove plastic wrap from thawed turkey. Remove giblets and neck from body cavity. Rinsing is unnecessary. Place breast side up in roasting pan. Brush with oil or melted margarine and sprinkle outside and cavity with poultry seasoning, if desired. Roast turkey uncovered or loosely covered with foil in 325°F (160°C) oven.

Turkey Breasts

Turkey breasts are a popular choice and a sensible alternative to roasting a whole turkey. They vary in weight from 1 ½ to 3 lbs (750 g to 1.5 kg) and are sold boneless, with or without skin, and whole, halved or formed into a roast with netting around it. A turkey breast weighing 2 lbs (1 kg) will take approximately 1 hour to cook. But because of the variation in sizes and shapes, it is recommended to use a meat thermometer when roasting.

Prepare the turkey breast in a roasting pan as you would a whole turkey. Cover loosely with foil and place in an oven pre-heated to 325°F (160°C). Cook until a meat thermometer registers 165° to 170°F (73° to 77°C).

Turkey Thighs

For those who prefer dark meat, roasting turkey thighs is an ideal alternative to roasting a whole turkey. Thighs vary in weight from about ½ lb to 1 ¾ lbs (250 g to 850 g) and are sold either with bone and skin on or boneless and skinless.

Two boneless, skinless turkey thighs with a total weight of 2 lbs (1 kg) will take approximately 1 ½ to 1 ¾ hours to cook. Since all turkey thighs vary in size and shape, it is best to use a meat thermometer when roasting.

Prepare turkey thighs in a roasting pan or baking pan as you would a whole turkey. Loosely tent with foil or cover with a lid. Cook at 325°F (160°C) until the meat thermometer registers 170°F (77°C).



Roasting Times for Whole Turkey

Roasting times in hours. Cooking temperature 325°F (160°C).

When done...

Weight	Stuffed	Unstuffed	BBQ'd - Unstuffed (Medium Heat)
6 to 8 lbs (3.0 to 3.5kg)	3 to 3 ¼	2 ½ to 2 ¾	1 to 1 ¾
8 to 10 lbs (3.5 to 4.5kg)	3 ¼ to 3 ½	2 ¾ to 3	1 ¼ to 2
10 to 12 lbs (4.5 to 5.5kg)	3 ½ to 3 ¾	3 to 3 ¼	1 ½ to 2 ¼
12 to 16 lb (5.5 to 7.0kg)	3¾ to 4	3 ¼ to 3½	2 to 2 ¾
16 to 22 lbs (7.0 to 10.0kg)	4 to 4 ½	3 ½ to 4	2 ½ to 3 ½

- A meat thermometer inserted in the inner thigh reads 180°F (82°C) or in the breast reads 170°F (77°C).
- The legs move easily when twisted and the juices run clear.
- Remove from the oven or barbecue.
- Cover with foil and let stand for 15 to 20 minutes before carving.

Whole Turkey on the Barbecue

Prepare turkey as for oven roasting. Place breast side up in roasting pan. Lightly brush with oil or melted margarine; sprinkle outside and cavity with seasonings. Add ½ cup (125 mL) water to bottom of pan.

Place pan on grills preheated to medium and close lid. After 20 to 30 minutes, lower heat to medium-low and tent turkey with foil to prevent overbrowning. Baste every 15 to 20 minutes. For barbecues with temperature settings, keep barbecue adjusted to 325° to 375°F (160° to 190°C). Add more water to pan as needed.

Rotisserie Grilling Whole Turkey

Whole turkeys under 12 lbs (5.5 kg) work best on the spit. Season cavity with herbs and lemon slices. Tie the wings securely to the body and the legs to the tail. Insert the spit in front of the tail and through the bird so it is balanced and securely fastened. Brush the skin with oil, marinade or melted margarine. A foil drip pan under the turkey controls flare-ups. Fill the drip pan with water.

NOTE: It is not recommended to stuff a whole turkey for barbecuing since an uneven cooking temperature may not heat the stuffing safely to the required temperature.

Stuffing Tips



- 1 slice of bread yields $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 mL) coarse bread crumbs or 1 cup (250 mL) loosely packed $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1 cm) cubes.
- Allow $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (125 to 175 mL) of stuffing per 1 pound of turkey.
- Avoid packing the stuffing since it expands while cooking.
- Stuff the turkey just before roasting. Do not stuff the day before. Moistened stuffing does not keep well. If desired, ingredients may be prepared the day before and combined just before the turkey is to be stuffed.
- Do not stuff a fresh turkey before freezing.
- Remove leftover stuffing from turkey immediately and keep covered in the refrigerator. Use within 3 days. Reheat just enough stuffing for one meal.
- Cooked stuffing can be frozen up to 4 weeks. Heat without thawing (or thaw in the refrigerator first); use at once.
- Save cooking time... Place stuffing in covered baking dish; cook during last half hour of the turkey roasting time.

Turkey Gravy

When turkey is done pour drippings into a bowl, leaving all brown particles in the pan. Let fat rise to the top and skim off. Set juices to the side. Measure $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (50 mL) fat back into roasting pan and place over low heat.

Blend in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (50 mL) flour and cook until slightly brown and bubbly. Stir in 2 cups (500 mL) liquid (reserved juices plus broth, milk or water), until smooth. Scrape brown particles from bottom of pan, and cook, stirring until mixture is thick. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve hot, refrigerate or freeze leftovers.

NOTE: Use turkey gravy within 2 days. Be sure to bring the gravy to a boil before serving.

Traditional Bread Stuffing

Makes enough for a 16 to 20 lb (7 to 9 kg) turkey or an 8 cup (2 L) casserole dish.

¼ cup.....	butter or margarine.....	50 mL
2	medium onions, finely chopped	2
3 – 4.....	celery stalks, finely chopped.....	3 – 4
9 cups.....	day-old coarse bread crumbs.....	2.25 L
	or ½ inch (1 cm) cubes	
2 tsp.....	each dried sage and savory	10 mL
1 tsp.....	seasoned salt.....	5 mL
¼ tsp.....	pepper.....	1 mL
½ – 1 cup.....	chicken broth or giblet stock.....	125 – 250 mL

Melt butter in large skillet. Add onions and celery; cook, stirring until tender; about 5 minutes. Pour over bread in a large bowl. Add seasonings; stir until well combined. Gradually stir in broth until just moistened, but not wet.

Stuffing Variations

Apple: Add 1 ½ cups (375 mL) chopped apple to bread mixture.

Sausage: Brown 1 lb (500 g) sausage meat. Drain and add to bread mixture.

Mushrooms: Sauté 1 lb (500 g) sliced mushrooms in a little butter and add to bread mixture.

Oyster: Add 1 cup (250 mL) whole or chopped cooked oysters to bread mixture. Oyster broth may be substituted for all or part of the chicken broth.

Nut: Add 1 to 2 cups (250 to 500 mL) chopped nuts, pecans or walnuts to mixture.



Here's a tip:

For an easy way to remove stuffing from the cavity, prepare the turkey for the oven. Line cavity with cheesecloth, leaving excess at the opening. Stuff the turkey as usual. After roasting, simply pull the cheesecloth out of the turkey and remove stuffing!

Nutrition Facts¹

¹ Source: Health Canada, 2010. Canadian Nutrient file
www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cnf

Nutrient Information

Turkey Breast (boneless, skinless, roasted)

100 g

	Amount	
Calories	103	
Protein	32 g	Excellent source
Carbohydrate	0 g	
Fat	2.6 g	Low fat, Extra lean
Cholesterol	76 mg	
Sodium	47 mg	Low sodium
Potassium	354 mg	Good source
Iron	0.3 mg	
Phosphorus	244 mg	Good source
Magnesium	21 mg	Source
Zinc	1.1 mg	Source
Selenium	8.2 mcg	Good source
Vitamin B6	0.3 mg	Good source
Vitamin B12	0.9 mcg	Excellent source
Niacin	12 mg	Excellent source

Nutrient Information

Turkey Drumstick (skinless, roasted)

100 g

	Amount	
Calories	125	
Protein	31 g	Excellent source
Carbohydrate	0 g	
Fat	6.4 g	Extra lean
Cholesterol	143 mg	
Sodium	90 mg	Low sodium
Potassium	268 mg	Source
Iron	1.1 mg	Source
Phosphorus	201 mg	Good source
Magnesium	15 mg	Source
Zinc	3.6 mg	Excellent Source
Selenium	14 mcg	Excellent Source
Vitamin B6	0.2 mg	Source
Vitamin B12	2.2 mcg	Excellent source
Niacin	5.3 mg	Good source



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