

How to Cook A Thanksgiving Turkey

Perfect Turkey Every Time

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How to Cook a Turkey Perfectly

How to cook a turkey. It took me 56 years to find out the secret of how to cook turkey!

What if cooking turkey could be totally carefree? Why deep fry a turkey and have to worry about the safety hazards and all the mess and cleanup? Because cooking the perfect, juiciest, mouth watering Thanksgiving turkey is as easy as popping it in the oven and knowing with absolute certainty that at the exact time you plan your meal your turkey will be done. And your turkey will be the most tender, moist and succulent turkey you and your family and guests have ever tasted!



Thanksgiving turkey is now the big hit at our house where before it was always the other great recipes on the table. Why? Because turkey is usually dry. Why? Because they're usually overcooked. Now you'll learn how to cook turkey to keep it moist and delicious.



Small 11 lb. turkey cooked using this method using the Pyrex roasting dish. It was cooked uncovered, but I recommend covering the turkey. You can see the sprigs of fresh Rosemary and Thyme under the breast.

OK, before I tell you how to cook turkey there are three prerequisites to successfully cooking turkey using the method I'm suggesting:

Number One: The temperature in your oven has to be accurate.

Number Two: Your turkey has been safely and totally thawed and cleaned. The only safe way to thaw a frozen turkey is to place it in the refrigerator. Other methods such as running cold water over it or placing it in a microwave oven are not safe because of the chance of bacterial growth and contamination. So, because of that risk I will only give you guidelines using the refrigerator method.

Time Required to Thaw a Turkey	
8 to 12 lbs.	2 to 3 Days
13 to 16 lbs.	3 to 4 Days
17 to 20 lbs.	4 to 5 Days
21 to 24 lbs.	5 to 6 Days

Number Three: And this one is for the newest aspiring chefs in the audience, be sure to remove the neck and giblets from the inside of the turkey! Don't laugh!



You can see how the skin is crisp but tender and how "sealing" the turkey keeps the white meat unbelievably moist and tender. [Click here or on the picture above to see a larger picture.](#)



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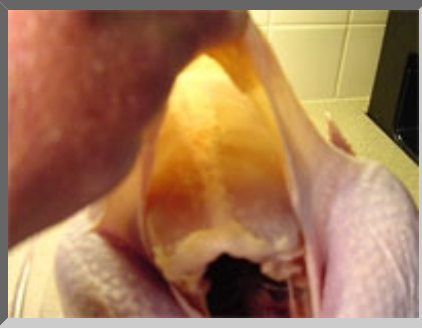
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I now recommend limiting using this method for cooking turkey to turkeys of 20 lbs. or less. [Click Here to find out why.](#) If you need more turkey, cook two.

How to cook a turkey. This is how you'll be cooking turkey from this day forward! No more fighting for the dark meat because the white meat is just as moist!

Preheat the oven to 475°F. This is not a typo! I will explain later.

Melt some butter.



Now the part that some people find a bit gross. But it is essential! Gently separate the skin from the breast but don't remove it. You just want to be able to get your hand **between** the skin the breast meat. Your goal is to rub that melted butter on to the turkey breast between the breast skin and the meat. You might want to use a rubber glove. Don't butter the outside of the skin.

Peek-A-Boo! My wife tells me this picture is a bit gross. But you're here to learn how to cook turkey and pictures help.

This part is optional. But I recommend putting some Rosemary and Thyme again **between** the breast skin and the meat. I've used fresh and dried and I can't really notice the difference. I wouldn't go overboard. Just use a little bit. If you think it needs a little more you can always add more the next time you cook a turkey.



Lightly Salt and Pepper all the skin on the outside. This will help make the skin crisp!

Don't place stuffing in the turkey! Stuffing plays havoc with cooking times and is a recognized health hazard. Cook your stuffing separately in a casserole dish and be safe.

Place the turkey in a covered roasting pan place in the oven preheated to 475°F **for 20 minutes**. Our goal here is to "seal the bird" to help keep it juicy.

Reduce the heat to 250°F. This again is not a typo! Don't let anybody tell you that the temperature has to be higher for it to get done. The reason that turkey is so often very dry is that it's overcooked. We want to slow cook the turkey. [Click Here to find out about concerns when slow-cooking a turkey.](#)

Cook the turkey at **250°F for 20 additional minutes for each pound**. No basting is necessary.

Many variables come into play when cooking a turkey. The only way to be absolutely sure that your turkey is fully cooked is to use a meat thermometer. **Interior breast meat should be 170°F and 180°F for thigh meat.**

Remove the turkey from the oven and allow it to rest at least 20 minutes before carving it. This allows the juices to redistribute themselves inside the turkey making the turkey even more juicy, delicious, and easy to carve.

Questions?

[Click Here to find my Frequently Asked Questions about how to cook thanksgiving turkey.](#)

[Click Here to find a chart with examples of turkey cooking times.](#)

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