



STACEY HAWKINS

time savor
SOLUTIONS

tips for making a foolproof roasted holiday turkey

WITH
STACEY HAWKINS




TIPS FOR MAKING A FOOLPROOF ROASTED HOLIDAY TURKEY

Whether you're cooking for 2 or 20, Stacey's put together her foolproof tips for making the easiest, juiciest turkey this Thanksgiving. This quick guide will help you choose, season and cook the perfect bird, with rave results!

WHAT SIZE BIRD DO I CHOOSE? Figure on 1 lb. raw weight per person. This will give you some leftovers. If you want to ensure ample leftovers, choose 1½ lbs per person.

FRESH OR FROZEN? Ah, the age old question... It's purely a matter of budget and taste. Commercially prepared frozen turkeys are good, but can be awkward to deal with (thawing!) you also need to make sure NOT to buy a turkey that's been "seasoned" or injected with solutions (unless you enjoy paying for salt water...) Fresh, local birds are delicious (if you can find them) and are easier to deal with as there is no thawing time involved. Be cautious with handling, however, as a fresh bird will only hold 2 days in the fridge if not cryo-vacuumed. Whichever turkey you choose, be sure to follow proper sanitation techniques to avoid contamination. (Check out this resource for properly handling poultry: <http://www.nationalchickencouncil.org/important-food-safety-tips-for-poultry/>)

STORING: A fresh bird will last 2 days in the fridge. If it is cryo-vacuumed, you can store it for 3-4 days. Frozen birds can last up to 2 months in the freezer (if not more) but it is NOT recommended to keep them longer as the delicate flesh can succumb to the elements of the freezing temperatures.



THAWING: Obviously, if you have a fresh bird, you don't need to worry about this. If you have a frozen one, there are 2 techniques you can use. Note that **NEITHER** involve the microwave!

STANDARD METHOD: Leave the bird in its original wrapper and put it on a cookie sheet or tray in the refrigerator. Allow 5 hours per pound or 3-4 days for a 14-19 pound turkey to defrost.

"QUICK" THAWING: Place turkey in its original wrapping in sink and cover with cool water. Change the water every 1/2-hour, religiously. Allow 1/2 hour per pound to defrost the turkey.


TURKEY THAWING TIME IN THE REFRIGERATOR (40 DEGREES F): APPROXIMATELY 24 HOURS PER 5 POUNDS

WHOLE TURKEY WEIGHT	THAWING TIME
8 to 12 lbs	1 to 2 days
12 to 16 lbs	2 to 3 days
16 to 20 lbs	3 to 4 days
20 to 24 lbs	4 to 5 days

Turkey Thawing Time in Cold Water: Approximately 30 minutes per pound. Change water every 1/2 hour.

WHOLE TURKEY WEIGHT	THAWING TIME
8 to 12 lbs	4 to 6 hours
12 to 16 lbs	6 to 8 hours
16 to 20 lbs	8 to 10 hours
20 to 24 lbs	10 to 12 hours

Yes... Days of thawing to be safe. Plan ahead!



TO STUFF OR NOT TO STUFF? That is the question... Ok, here's my take. Stuffed turkey just TASTES better, but, you have to handle stuffing properly. More importantly, make sure you have enough if you DO decide to stuff. You're never going to fit all the stuffing in the bird that you're going to need, so make a lot and but only stuff a little. Put the rest in a separate baking dish and bake it according to the recipe directions.

When you DO stuff your bird, make sure to pack it LIGHTLY so the air can move around and the stuffing cook thoroughly. If you don't you can have bacterial problems. Along those same lines, make sure that if you are going to stuff your turkey, stuff it RIGHT BEFORE you're going to put it in the oven, never before. Again, bacteria can have a field day in stuffing and the last thing you want is a Thanksgiving to remember for the WRONG reasons...

Many ask, how much stuffing should I make? Rule of thumb is $\frac{1}{2}$ C per pound of turkey for stuffing inside the bird and then 1C per pound for what's going in the dish. So, if you have a 10 lb turkey, make 10 cups of stuffing, but only put 5 cups in the bird. (That's a cooked measurement by the way, if you made 10 cups of uncooked stuffing, well, you'd wind up with a LOT! Pay attention to yields on recipes and do the math accurately. Or, just plan on a lot of stuffing & gravy for weeks to come... D)

ROASTING THE BIRD... There are a zillion ways you can cook the turkey- this is what I believe is the easiest method- slowly at 325 degrees F. and cook until the turkey reads 165 degrees with a REAL meat thermometer inserted between the breast and thigh of the whole bird. My recipe and technique follow on the next page.

USDA TIMETABLE FOR TURKEY ROASTED AT 325 DEGREES F.

NOTE: These times are approximate and should always be used in conjunction with a properly placed thermometer. Be sure to check the thermometer about 3/4th of the way through the time indicated so as not to overcook.

UNSTUFFED WEIGHT

8 to 12 lbs
12 to 14 lbs
14 to 18 lbs
18 to 20 lbs
20 to 24 lbs

ROASTING TIME

2-3/4 to 3 hours
3 to 3-3/4 hours
3-3/4 to 4-1/4 hours
4-1/4 to 4-1/2 hours
4-1/2 to 5 hours

STUFFED WEIGHT

8 to 12 lbs
12 to 14 lbs
14 to 18 lbs
18 to 20 lbs
20 to 24 lbs

ROASTING TIME

3 to 3-1/2 hours
3-1/2 to 4 hours
4 to 4-1/4 hours
4-1/4 to 4-3/4 hours
4-3/4 to 5-3/4 hours

OK, SO YOU HAVE THE STATS... NOW WHAT? Here's the step-by step plan:

1. Thaw the turkey. Again, plan ahead- this could take days...
2. Remove the giblets (in my house, they're yummy dog treats after they're cooked, what you do with them is up to you!)
3. Rinse the bird in and out, pat dry with a paper towel.
4. Remove any excess fat lumps.
5. Prepare the roaster pan and season the bird (see my signature Rosemary & Roasted Garlic Rub Recipe included).
6. Cover the breast meat with a tinfoil tent. Insert thermometer.
7. Roast at 325 until it reaches an internal temp of 165. Let rest and temp should rise to 175-180 before serving.
8. Take it out, remove stuffing & let it rest 20 minutes before serving.
9. Make gravy.
10. Carve & place meat on a heated platter.
11. Serve with your favorite sides, take a bow and enjoy!



ROASTING TIPS:

- Keep the bird breast up
- Place it in the center of the oven
- Use a heavy pan- those inexpensive aluminum ones will fail & your turkey will hit the floor. If it's all you have, put a cookie sheet UNDER it for support.
- Use a good meat thermometer, inserted between breast & thigh.
- DO NOT rely on pop-up timers!!
- Cover the breast meat with an aluminum foil tent, remove the last 45 minutes of baking so the skin crisps.

SEASONING!

My favorite seasoning for turkey is classic. This is enough for a 10-15 lb turkey. Double the recipe for a larger turkey.

¼ C Time Savor Gourmet Rosemary Versatility Seasoning

¼ C Time Savor Gourmet Roasted Garlic Oil

1 tsp Sassy Sea Salt, coarsely ground

1/2 tsp fresh ground Time Savor Gourmet Tricolore Peppercorns

Combine together in a small bowl. Rub lovingly over the inside and outside of the turkey (make sure to give it positive reinforcement and tell it how yummy it's going to be!) Roast as above.

NOTES:

