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SP401-H Take the Guesswork Out of Roasting a Turkey

Janie Burney

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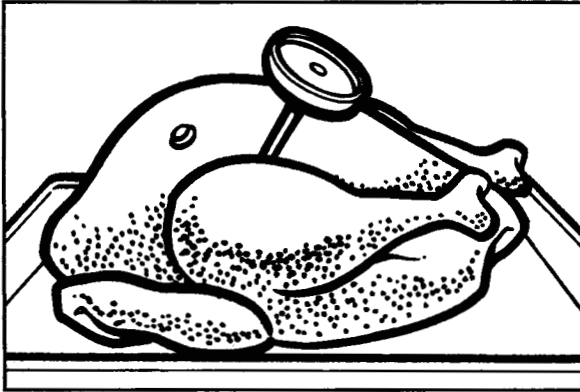
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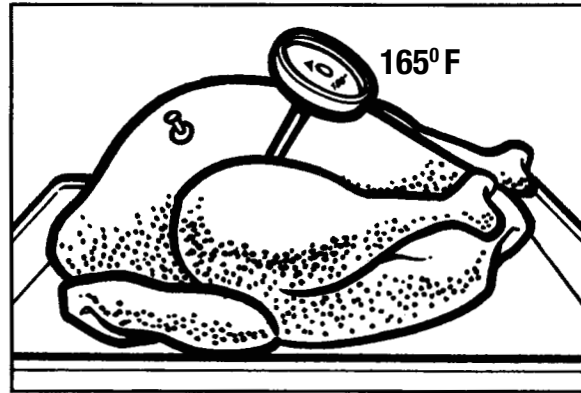
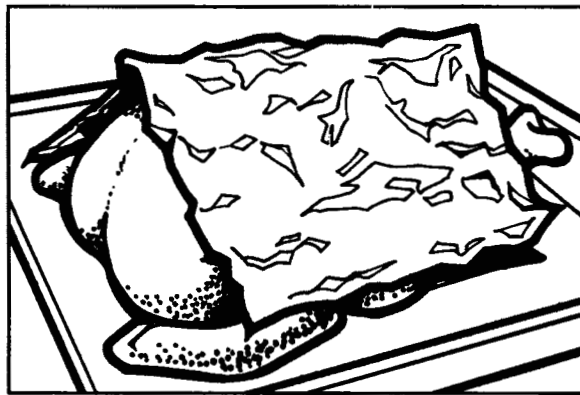
Additional Roasting Hints

These are optional.

1. Tuck wing tips back under shoulders of bird, called "akimbo."
2. Add ½ cup of water to the bottom of the pan to keep turkey moist.



3. A tent of aluminum foil may be placed over the turkey for the first 1 to 1½ hours of roasting time and then removed for browning.
4. Or a tent of foil may be placed over the turkey after it has reached a golden brown.



5. An ovenproof thermometer may be placed in the thigh of the turkey so you can check the internal temperature at intervals during roasting.
6. Or an instant-read thermometer may be used periodically to check the internal temperature during cooking. After each use, wash the stem section of the thermometer thoroughly in hot soapy water.

For more information about food safety, call your local Extension office or call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline:

1-888-674-6854

1-888-MPHotline

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern time

Monday through Friday

Or send e-mail to mpholine.fsis@usda.gov

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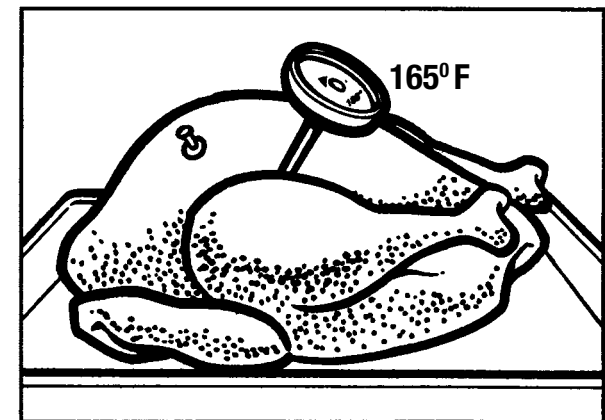
Released by Janie Burney, Professor
Family and Consumer Sciences

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Take the Guesswork out of Roasting a Turkey



Buying a Turkey

■ Frozen

Allow 1 pound per person. Buy anytime but keep frozen until ready to thaw. (See thawing)

■ Fresh

Allow 1 pound per person. Buy 1 to 2 days before cooking. Do not buy fresh pre-stuffed turkeys. Purchase only frozen pre-stuffed turkeys with the USDA or state marks of inspection.

Thawing a Turkey

Thawing time in the refrigerator (40 F)

Approximately 24 hours per 5 pounds (whole turkey)

4 to 12 pounds 1 to 3 days
12 to 16 pounds 3 to 4 days
16 to 20 pounds 4 to 5 days
20 to 24 pounds 5 to 6 days

Thawing time in cold water

Approximately 30 minutes per pound (Whole turkey)

4 to 12 pounds 2 to 6 hours
12 to 16 pounds 6 to 8 hours
16 to 20 pounds 8 to 10 hours
20 to 24 pounds 10 to 12 hours
(Change water every 30 minutes)

After thawing, remove neck and giblets from both neck and body cavities. Wash turkey inside and out with cold water; drain well. Thawed turkey should be cooked immediately.

Thawing in the microwave

Check manufacturer's instructions for the size turkey that will fit into your oven, the minutes per pound and the power level to use for thawing. Remove all outside wrapping and place on a microwave-safe dish. Cook immediately after thawing.

Roasting a Turkey

Timetable for fresh or thawed turkey at 325 F

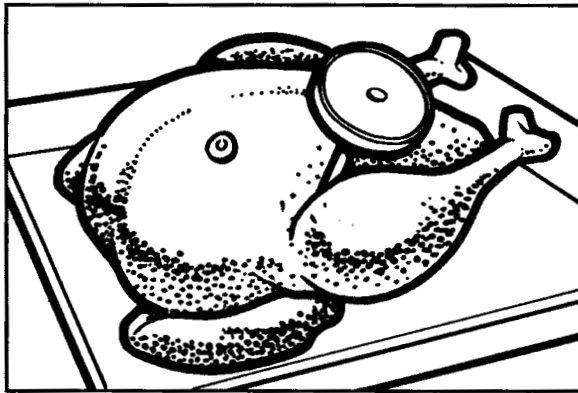
These times are approximate and should always be used in conjunction with a properly placed thermometer.

Unstuffed

4 to 8 pounds (breast) 1½ to 3¼ hours
8 to 12 pounds 2¾ to 3 hours
12 to 14 pounds 3 to 3¾ hours
14 to 18 pounds 3¾ to 4¼ hours
18 to 20 pounds 4¼ to 4½ hours
20 to 24 pounds 4½ to 5 hours

Stuffed

4 to 6 pounds (breast) not usually applicable
6 to 8 pounds (breast) 2½ to 3½ hours
8 to 12 pounds 3 to 3½ hours
12 to 14 pounds 3½ hours to 4 hours
14 to 18 pounds 4 to 4¼ hours
18 to 20 pounds 4¼ to 4¾ hours
20 to 24 pounds 4¾ to 5¼ hours

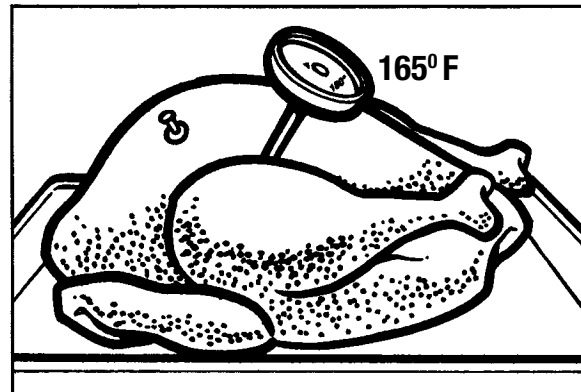


Roasting instructions

1. Set the oven temperature no lower than 325 F.
2. Place turkey breast-side-up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan.

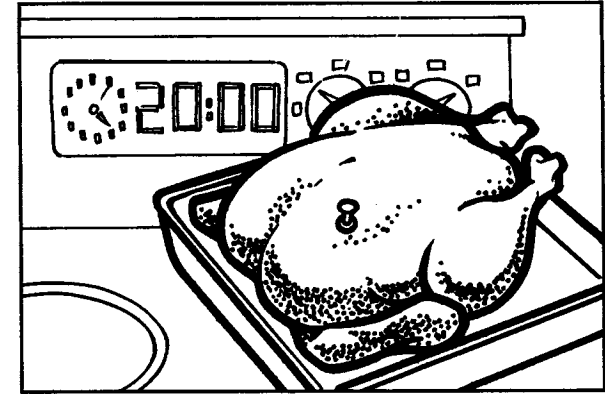


3. For optimum safety, it is recommended to cook stuffing outside the bird. If stuffed, stuff loosely and cook immediately.



4. For safety and doneness, the internal temperature, as registered on a meat thermometer, must reach a minimum of 165 F in the thigh before removing from the oven. The center of the stuffing should reach 165 F after stand time. For reasons of personal preferences, consumers may choose to cook turkey to higher temperatures.

Wash hands, utensils, sink and anything else that has contacted raw turkey with hot, soapy water.



5. Let the turkey stand 20 minutes before removing stuffing and carving.

Storing Leftovers

Debone turkey and refrigerate all leftovers in shallow containers within 2 hours of cooking. Use leftover turkey stuffing and gravy within 3 to 4 days. If freezing leftovers, use within two to six months for best quality.

Reheating Your Turkey

Cooked turkey may be eaten cold or reheated. Reheat turkey, stuffing and gravy thoroughly to an internal temperature of 165F.