

# Turkey Tips

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WEIGHT	SERVES	COOKING TIME
12-15 LBS.	10-12	3 - 3 1/4 HOURS
15-18 LBS.	14-16	3 - 3 1/2 HOURS
18-22 LBS.	20-22	3 1/2 - 4 HOURS

## Best price

Shop around to see which store has the best price on turkeys. I paid \$.99/pound for mine this year (Aldi), but I saw a few stores offering them for much lower if you spent a certain amount on other food (\$30-50).

Frozen turkeys are cheaper than fresh.

## Thawing tips for frozen turkeys

The general rule is that for thawing you need 1 day for every 4 pounds. (So a 12 pound bird needs 3 days, a 16 pound bird needs 4 days, and a 20 pound bird needs 5 days.)

The safest way to thaw it is in the refrigerator. If you follow the formula above, it should be thawed and ready the morning you need it!

If for some reason you didn't get it into the fridge soon enough, you can help it finish thawing by placing it in the kitchen sink and running cool water over it until thawed.

## The basics

Take the chill off your turkey by setting it on the counter 1-2 hours before cooking. (This allows it to cook much more evenly.)

Remove the turkey from its bag. Remove neck and giblets from inside cavity.

Rinse (inside and out) and pat dry with paper towels. (This allows the skin to get crispy while roasting.)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Make sure your thermometer is calibrated. Place the probe end in a pot of boiling water to see if it is accurate. It should read 212 degrees. If not, make a mental note of how far it's off. (Mine was at 192 when I checked!) This step could make the difference between a dry turkey and a moist one! (On a similar note, if you don't have an oven thermometer, that wouldn't be a bad idea either! Sometimes ovens get less accurate the older they are, so a thermometer that's inside can tell you if it's at the temperature you set it to!)

## Add flavor

Rub the inside of the bird's cavity with half of a lemon and some sea salt. (The lemon doesn't make it taste like lemon... it just adds moisture!)

Rub the outside of the bird with sea salt and pepper.

Loosen the skin from the breast and rub the breast meat with an herb butter. (See my recipe below.)

Rub remaining herb butter on skin all over.

Stuff the turkey with the lemon half, an onion (quartered), some celery tops, and a handful of fresh parsley.

## **Prepare to roast**

Truss the bird with baker's twine to hold the wings against the breast and to keep the legs together. (See my photo above.)

Place a large loop of twine in the roasting pan with the ends hanging over the side of the pan.

Place the bird breast side down on a rack in the roasting pan. (This keeps the breast from drying out!)

## **Roasting method**

Roast at 400 degrees for 20 minutes.

Turn heat down to 325 degrees for 2 hours.

Turn down heat to 225 degrees for remaining time cooking.

If desired, you can flip the bird over (using the loops of twine and good potholders) at this point so that the breast gets browned. This is not necessary. (The only benefit is a pretty presentation if you'll be serving it uncarved or taking photos!)

## **Finishing**

To check the turkey's doneness, insert meat thermometer into the thigh meat. It should read 180 degrees. (It will rise to 185 after you take it out.)

If you check the breast meat, it should read 160 degrees (rising to 165 degrees while resting).

For approximate cooking times for various weights of turkeys, see the chart on the previous page!

## **Work Backwards**

If your meal is at 4PM, plan on your turkey being ready much earlier than that, like 1PM. Count backwards from the goal to see when you need to start the process!

I hope these tips are helpful to you as you plan for Thanksgiving! If you're not hosting this year, it's still not a bad idea to pick up a turkey while it's on sale and cook it later! You can use the meat any way you'd use cooked chicken... in casseroles, soup, enchiladas, etc.!

## **Herb butter recipe**

1/4 cup salted butter, softened

2 Tbsp. fresh rosemary, chopped

2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

1 Tbsp. fresh thyme, chopped

Combine softened butter with herbs.

# HAPPY TURKEY COOKING!