

Fresh Turkey Preparation & Roasting Tips

You've picked up your All Natural Turkey, now where to begin? Here's some expert advice from our very own chefs to help make sure your meal is memorable.

I thought my turkey was fresh. Why does it feel frozen?
Our All Natural Turkeys arrive fresh, and are never frozen. Fresh turkeys will sometimes feel hard on the outside because they are chilled to 28°F for safe shipping. Only the outer part of the turkey should feel hard, not the entire turkey. By contrast, frozen turkeys are stored at 0°F and will be frozen hard throughout.

If you've gotten a headstart on your shopping you may have frozen your turkey and will need to thaw it out. Either way, here are helpful tips for safe thawing.

Thaw your turkey 1 to 3 days in advance of cooking.

- Thaw the turkey in its original wrapper in the refrigerator or under cold, running water, allowing roughly 24 hours for every 5lbs, or until it feels soft.
- Once turkey is thawed, store on lowest shelf in your refrigerator in the original packaging for up to 48 hours prior to cooking.
- NEVER let the turkey reach room temperature, it's just not safe.
- NEVER THAW IN MICROWAVE.

Roasting Basics

- Place your turkey breast side up, on a rack in a roasting pan.
- Brush or rub skin with oil or butter and season lightly with salt and pepper.
- Place in an oven pre-heated to 325°F
- Once the skin is light gold in color, shield the breast with a tent of foil to prevent over browning. You may choose to tent the highest part of the legs as well.
- Don't forget to baste! We like a mixture of chicken broth and melted butter.
- The turkey will be done when the meat thermometer reaches the following temperatures:
 - 180-185°F deep in the thigh. Juices should run clear, not pink, when the thigh is pierced.
 - 170-175°F in the thickest part of the breast, just above the rib bones.
 - 165°F in the center of the stuffing, if stuffed.
- Let the turkey rest for at least 15-20 minutes before carving to allow the juices to set. This will keep your turkey moist and make it much easier to carve.

Thawing Times for Fresh, Hard Turkey

Turkey Size	Refrigerator	Cold Water
8-16 lbs	up to 1 days	1-2 hrs
12-16 lbs	1-2 days	1-4 hrs
25+ lbs	up to 2 days	2-4 hrs

Thawing Times for Frozen Turkey

Turkey Size	Refrigerator	Cold Water
8-12 lbs	1-2 days	4-6 hrs
12-16 lbs	2-3 days	6-8 hrs
16-20 lbs	3-4 days	8-10 hrs
20+ lbs	4-5 days	10-12 hrs

Note, bag thickness may increase thawing time. Cold Water thawing should be used if this occurs.

Roasting Times for Your Turkey

Turkey Size	Unstuffed	Stuffed
8-12 lbs	2¾ - 3 hrs	3 - 3½ hrs
12-14 lbs	3 - 3¾ hrs	3½ - 4 hrs
14-18 lbs	3¾ - 4¼ hrs	4 - 4½ hrs
18-20 lbs	4¼ - 4½ hrs	4¼ - 4¾ hrs
20-24 lbs	4½ - 5 hrs	4¾ - 5¼ hrs

Stuffing Safety

Food safety experts recommend that you cook stuffing separately, but if you have a hard time letting go of time honored traditions, follow these simple tips for a safe holiday meal:

- Make sure that both neck and body cavities are stuffed completely.
- A stuffed turkey should be placed immediately in a pre-heated oven set no lower than 325°F.
- After the turkey itself has reached the proper internal temp of 180°F, it is essential the stuffing reaches its own correct temperature of 165°F for food safety.