



Turkey for All Seasons

Buying and Storing Turkey

- When buying a whole turkey, allow 1 pound (500 g) per person. In general, the larger the turkey, the better the buy since the proportion of meat to bone is higher.
- When buying boneless turkey, allow 1/3 - 1/2 pound (150 - 250 g) per person.
- *Frozen* whole turkey can be stored in its original wrapping in a chest or upright freezer with temperatures below -18°C (0°F) for up to 1 year.
- *Fresh* whole turkey should be placed on a tray and stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator. If the label indicates a best-before date, the turkey must be cooked before this date. If there is not a best-before date on the wrapping, the turkey must be cooked within 2 days of purchase. The freezing of fresh whole turkey is not recommended as there is a concern for both food safety and quality.

Thawing Turkey

- Do not thaw turkey at room temperature. To thaw turkey safely, use one of the following methods:

Refrigerator Method

Leave turkey in original wrapping. Place turkey on a tray; refrigerate. Allow a minimum of 5 hours per pound (10 hours per kg) for thawing.

Cold Water Method

Leave turkey in original wrapping. Place turkey in a large container filled with cold water. As turkey will float, cover top surface with a clean damp tea towel. Change water frequently to ensure it remains cold. Allow a minimum of 1 hour per pound (2 hours per kg) for thawing.

Do not leave turkey in cold water overnight. If necessary to continue thawing turkey overnight, remove from cold water and place turkey on a tray; refrigerate.

- Do not refreeze thawed raw turkey.
- Cook thawed turkey within 24 hours. If using giblets and neck for stock or gravy, cook within 24 hours.

For information on cooking a turkey on a natural gas barbecue or brining a turkey, visit the ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen website at ATCOblueflamekitchen.com.

Turkey Safety

All equipment used for thawing, storing, preparing and serving turkey must be clean. Keep the following in mind when handling raw turkey:

- Wash hands thoroughly with hot soapy water for 20 seconds before, during and after handling and preparing raw turkey.
- Discard all wrappings that have been used to store raw turkey.
- Cutting boards used for preparing turkey must be in good condition. Cracks and crevices can harbour bacteria.
- Thoroughly wash all equipment, work surfaces and sink with hot soapy water after preparing raw turkey. Cutting boards should be scrubbed with a stiff brush. Follow by rinsing all equipment, work surfaces and sink with a solution of 1 tbsp chlorine bleach per quart (litre) of water. Air-dry to prevent recontamination of equipment, work surfaces and sink.
- Launder dishcloths and towels with hot water, detergent and chlorine bleach after handling raw turkey.
- Use a clean plate for serving cooked turkey.

Roasting Turkey

- **Whole Turkey**

Remove wrapping from turkey. Remove giblets and neck from cavities; reserve for making stock or gravy, or discard.

Sprinkle large cavity of turkey with salt and pepper. If desired, place a celery stalk, a few lettuce leaves, quartered onions and desired seasonings in cavity for extra moisture and flavour. Skewer neck skin to back. Secure wings with metal skewers and tie legs together with butcher's twine. Place turkey on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Rub skin with oil or butter, if desired. Cover turkey with a loose tent of foil. Roast following the guidelines in the **Roasting Timetable**. Remove foil during last hour of cooking and baste turkey with pan drippings.

- **Turkey Halves**

When cooking half a turkey, season cavity as for whole turkey. Place turkey, cut side down, on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Rub skin with oil or butter, if desired. Cover turkey with a loose tent of foil. Roast following the guidelines in the **Roasting Timetable**. Remove foil during last 30 - 40 minutes of cooking and baste turkey with pan drippings.

Did you know?

If cooking a turkey in a foil roasting pan, the foil pan with the turkey should be placed on a rimmed baking sheet for more stability.

- **How to Cook Stuffing**

It is recommended that stuffing be cooked separately from the turkey. Follow recipe directions or use the following general method. Place prepared stuffing in a greased casserole dish or foil package. Bake, covered, at 325°F (160°C) for 1 - 1 1/2 hours. If desired, turkey drippings, chicken broth or chicken stock may be sprinkled over stuffing for extra moisture and flavour.

Guidelines for Roasting Turkey

- Follow recipe directions for roasting a turkey or use the following general method. Roast turkey at 425°F (220°C) for the first 30 minutes, then reduce temperature to 325°F (160°C) for remainder of the cooking time. Do not roast turkeys at a temperature lower than 325°F (160°C).
- Do not interrupt roasting time or partially cook at one time to complete later. Cooking times below are approximate and are for *unstuffed* thawed or fresh whole turkeys and turkey halves.

Roasting Timetable

Whole Turkey (Thawed)	Total Cooking Time
10 lb (4.5 kg)	2 3/4 - 3 hours
15 lb (7.0 kg)	3 - 3 1/2 hours
20 lb (9.0 kg)	4 - 4 1/2 hours
26 lb (12.0 kg)	4 1/2 - 5 hours
Whole Turkey (Fresh)	Add 3 minutes/lb (5 minutes/kg) to above times.
Turkey Halves	
4 lb (1.8 kg)	2 - 2 1/2 hours
8 lb (3.5 kg)	3 1/2 - 4 hours
12 lb (5.5 kg)	4 - 4 1/2 hours

Roast turkey breast at 325°F (160°C) for entire cooking time.

Turkey Breast	
5 lb (2.3 kg) bone-in	2 1/2 – 3 hours
5 lb (2.3 kg) boneless	3 – 3 1/2 hours

Many factors affect the cooking times for turkey. Keep the following in mind when roasting a turkey:

- The cooking time will be increased if the turkey is not completely thawed.
- The cooking time will be increased if the roasting pan is too small or too deep. The roasting pan should be large enough to allow heat to circulate freely around the turkey.
- The cooking time will be increased or decreased if the oven temperature is inaccurate.
- The cooking time will be increased if the oven is overcrowded since the heat cannot circulate freely around each item.
- The cooking time will depend on the shape of the turkey; for example, a long skinny turkey will cook faster than a short fat one.

When is the Turkey Done?

- Turkey should be completely cooked. Start checking for doneness of turkey about 30 minutes before the end of estimated cooking time. Using a meat thermometer is the most accurate method to judge when turkey is done. Insert meat thermometer into the middle of thick thigh muscle parallel to bone and next to body or into thickest muscle of breast. Be sure thermometer does not touch bone.
- Remove turkey from oven when a meat thermometer inserted into thigh registers 175°F (80°C). Transfer turkey to a platter and cover loosely with foil. Let stand for 15 - 30 minutes to allow juices to set before carving. The internal temperature of the turkey will continue to rise several degrees during standing. The final reading on a meat thermometer should be 180 - 185°F (82 - 85°C) in the thigh and 170 - 175°F (77 - 80°C) in the breast.
- If a meat thermometer is not available, pinch thick muscle of drumstick or breast between cloth- or paper towel-protected fingers; meat should feel soft. Leg will move easily when twisted. Another check is to run a long-tined fork into thick muscle; meat should feel tender and juice should show no pink tinge.

Making Turkey Gravy

- When making turkey gravy, allow about 1/4 cup per serving.
- Follow recipe directions for making gravy or use the following chart for proportions of fat, flour and liquid needed to prepare the different amounts of gravy.
- Once turkey is cooked, transfer to a platter and cover loosely with foil. Pour drippings from roasting pan into a bowl, leaving browned bits in bottom of pan. Let fat rise to top of drippings. Skim off fat and reserve to use in gravy. Reserve drippings to use as part of liquid in gravy. Measure the amount of fat needed for gravy and return to pan. Place pan over low heat. Whisk flour into fat in pan until blended and cook, stirring, for 1 minute or until slightly browned and bubbly. Gradually whisk in liquid, including reserved drippings. Bring to a boil over medium heat, scraping to loosen browned bits. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring frequently, until gravy is thickened. Simmer gently for 5 - 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Proportions for Making Turkey Gravy

Amount of Gravy	Fat	Flour	Liquid
2 cups	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	2 cups
4 cups	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	4 cups
6 cups	3/4 cup	3/4 cup	6 cups

*Water, stock or broth may be used for the liquid in turkey gravy.
To prepare giblet stock, see instructions below.*

Giblet Stock Place giblets (except liver) and neck in a large saucepan. Add 4 cups water, 1 chopped onion, 2 sprigs parsley, a few celery leaves and 3/4 tsp salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 1 - 2 hours or until giblets and neck are tender. Remove giblets and neck; strain stock through a sieve. Discard solids. Reserve giblet stock for the liquid when making gravy.

Storing Cooked Turkey, Stuffing and Gravy

- *Turkey meat* should be removed from the carcass as soon as possible. Cover and refrigerate meat for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months.
- The *turkey carcass* may be used for making soup within 24 hours or frozen for up to 1 month.
- *Turkey stuffing* that has been cooked separately from the turkey may be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month. Reheat stuffing from the frozen state and serve immediately.
- *Turkey gravy* may be refrigerated for up to 2 days or frozen for up to 1 month.

Smoked Turkey

Ready-to-serve (fully cooked) smoked turkey has a flavour very similar to ham and can be served either hot or cold. To serve hot, place smoked turkey on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Cover loosely with foil. Bake at 325°F (160°C) for 15 minutes per pound (500 g). Use smoked turkey in any of the ways ham is used: on a cold meat platter, in casserole dishes, as a sandwich filling or as an hors d'oeuvre.