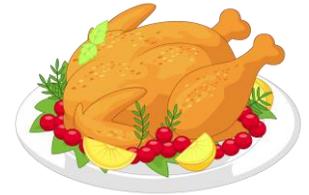


Food for Thought

November 2020

Turkey Tips

Safely storing, cooking, and serving your Thanksgiving turkey, will make your holiday celebration not only enjoyable, but safe for you and your family.



- Be sure to give your turkey enough time to thaw.** Turkeys can be safely thawed in two ways: in the refrigerator or in cold water. A 12-pound turkey can take at least three days in the refrigerator to thaw. Bigger turkeys will take longer. **Never thaw a turkey at room temperature.** You may also thaw a turkey by putting the plastic wrapped bird in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes to make sure the water stays cold. Thawed turkey can remain in the refrigerator for one to two days.

Size of Turkey	Thawing Time in Refrigerator (40°F) <i>Approximately 24 hours per 5 pounds (whole turkey)</i>	Thawing Time in Cold Water <i>Approximately 30 minutes per pound (whole turkey)</i> (Change water every ½ hour)
8-12 pounds	2-3 days	4-6 hours
12-16 pounds	3-4 days	6-8 hours
16-20 pounds	4-5 days	8-10 hours
20-24 pounds	5-6 days	10-12 hours

- It is not recommended** to rinse your turkey as it can spread harmful bacteria in your kitchen due to the splatter. If you choose to rinse, clean your sink and the surrounding countertop with cleanser and sanitizer. Remember to remove the bag of giblets before cooking.

- Roast!** Place your turkey in a shallow roasting pan. Add one inch of water to the pan and cover with aluminum foil. Roast in 325°F oven. Add more water if needed while cooking.

- How long should I cook the turkey?**

Size of turkey	Cooking Time
8-12 pounds	2 ¾ - 3 hours
12-14 pounds	3 - 3 ¾ hours
14-18 pounds	3 ¾ - 4 ¼ hours
18-20 pounds	4 ¼ - 4 ½ hours
20-24 pounds	4 ½ - 5 hours

Call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline: 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) or chat live at <https://ask.usda.gov/>.
E-mail: mpholine.fsis@usda.gov



Note: These cooking times are for an unstuffed turkey. For best results and food safety, cook the turkey and stuffing separately.

- Never partially cook a turkey** and then refrigerate to finish cooking later. Bacteria can grow on the turkey and cause foodborne illness.
- Use a thermometer.** The temperature should reach a minimum of 165°F in the thigh before removing from the oven.
- Storing leftovers.** De-bone turkey and refrigerate all leftovers in shallow containers within two hours of cooking. Use leftover turkey and stuffing within three to four days, gravy within one to two days, or freeze food in dated containers. For best quality, use frozen stuffing, turkey or gravy within four months. Thoroughly reheat refrigerated or frozen leftovers to a temperature of 165°F. Bones can be refrigerated or frozen and used to make broth for soup.

Thanksgiving Leftover Ideas

Turkey Leftovers

- Add to salads as a source of protein
- Make sandwiches; use the meat plain or make a turkey salad with low-fat mayo
- Incorporate into omelets
- Try turkey tacos
- Homemade turkey soup (you can also make your own broth with the bones!)
- Use turkey instead of chicken in pot pie
- Turkey chili

Mashed Potato Leftovers

- Use as a casserole topping
- Make potato cakes
- Make homemade whole-wheat potato bread
- Make homemade gnocchi
- Use as a replacement for half of the fat in baked good recipes to reduce the fat and increase the fiber, while still keeping it moist!



Sweet Potatoes Leftovers

- Substitute sweet potato instead of pumpkin in pumpkin bread
- Make sweet potato pancakes
- Use mashed sweet potato with black beans as a meatless filling for quesadillas or enchiladas
- Puree into macaroni and cheese sauce (this also works well with butternut squash!)

Cooked Vegetable Leftovers

- Use to top salads
- Incorporate into egg dishes such as quiche
- Add to homemade soup

Source: <https://extension.unh.edu/blog/love-your-leftovers-0> retrieved 10/26/2020

Eat Smart Idaho offers FREE classes that can help you learn how to eat well for less. For information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone Counties
208-292-2525



North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, & Nez Perce Counties
208-883-2267

To contact the Eat Smart Idaho Coordinator: Kali Gardiner, RD, LD
Phone: 208-292-2525
E-mail – kalig@uidaho.edu
Web: www.eatsmartidaho.org

This work and material is supported and funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA and University of Idaho are equal opportunity providers.