

## Turkey Roasting Times from the National Turkey Federation

The National Turkey Federation recommends roasting a turkey in a 325 degree F oven until a meat thermometer indicates the internal temperature registers 180 degrees F in the thigh and 165-170 degrees F in the breast. Pop-up timers are helpful as a preliminary step in judging the correct temperature, but a meat thermometer is the best final authority to determine doneness.

A shallow roasting pan should be used so oven air can flow completely around the turkey. Pans with sides higher than 1 inch will shield the thickest part of the turkey thighs from the heat, and the thighs will not cook evenly. For easier clean-up, add 1/2 cup of water to the bottom of the pan.

If you stuff the bird, stuff it immediately before you place it in the oven. The center of the stuffing must register 165 degrees F. If the turkey is done before the stuffing, remove the turkey from the oven and finishing cooking it outside the turkey until it reaches the required temperature. If you do not stuff the turkey, the addition of 2 cups of coarsely chopped celery, onion and carrots to the cavity will enhance the fragrance and add to the flavor of the pan juices.

The roasting times shown on the chart below reflect the shorter cooking times of the turkeys produced by today's turkey industry. Turkeys today take less time to cook than in the past because new turkey breeds produce a higher proportion of white meat. Since white meat cooks faster than dark meat, care should be taken to follow these guidelines to ensure a moist turkey. Use roasting times as a planning guide only; use a thermometer to determine actual doneness.

There are many factors that affect the roasting time.

These factors result in longer cooking times.

- A partially frozen bird requires longer cooking.
- The depth and size of roasting pans can alter heat circulation around the bird. A turkey or the roasting pan may be too large for the oven and could block heat circulation. Be sure to allow at least 2-inches of space around the oven walls so heat can circulate around the turkey.
- The use of an aluminum foil tent for the entire roasting time will slow down cooking.
- A stuffed turkey takes longer to cook.

These cooking procedures result in shorter cooking times.

- Dark roasting pans result in faster cook times than shiny metal roasting pans.
- If the turkey is covered with the roasting pan lid, the cook time will be shorter.
- An oven cooking bag can accelerate cook time.

Oven factors often require special attention.

- Some ovens may heat unevenly and many ovens have "hot spots". The roasting pan should be turned to prevent one area of the turkey from cooking too quickly.
- The rack position can have an affect on even cooking and heat circulation. Place the turkey on a lower rack so the top of the turkey is in the middle of the oven

"Open Pan Method" NTF Roasting Guidelines for a Fresh or Thawed Turkey  
Roast in a 325 degrees F Conventional Oven on the Lowest Oven Rack

Weight	Unstuffed Turkey	Stuffed Turkey
8 to 12 pounds	2 3/4 to 3 hours	3 to 3 1/2 hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 to 3 3/4 hours	3 1/2 to 4 hours
14 to 18 pounds	3 3/4 to 4 1/4 hours	4 to 4 1/4 hours
18 to 20 pounds	4 1/4 to 4 1/2 hours	4 1/4 to 4 3/4 hours
20 to 24 pounds	4 1/2 to 5 hours	4 3/4 to 5 1/4 hours
24 to 30 pounds	5 to 5 1/4 hours	5 1/4 to 6 1/4 hours

## Turkey Storage Advice from the National Turkey Federation

Following proper storage procedures is important for food safety and to maintain the best quality of the turkey.

When you return from the grocery with raw turkey, place it in the original wrapper in the refrigerator; a hard-chilled turkey should not be placed in the freezer. If the turkey is frozen and the thawing process does not need to begin, store in the freezer.

Storage of Raw Turkey		
	Refrigerated Storage at 35-40 degrees F.	Freezer Storage at 0 degrees F or Below
Whole Turkey	1 to 2 days	12 months
Turkey Breasts	1 to 2 days	3 months

Care must be taken to properly store leftover cooked turkey. The leftover turkey should be carved from the bone and the stuffing removed. All leftovers should be stored in shallow containers and refrigerated or frozen within two hours of cooking. NTF recommends that cooked, sliced turkey reach 40 degrees F within two hours or less. When reheating, be sure the turkey reaches a temperature of 165 degrees F. Turkey gravy should be used within 1 to 2 days, be sure to bring the gravy to a boil before serving.

Storage of Leftover Cooked Turkey		
	Refrigerated Storage at 35-40 degrees F.	Freezer Storage at 0 degrees F or Below
Leftover Turkey	3 to 4 days	3 to 4 months