

Play it safe when preparing turkey

In the Kitchen Monica Beaumont



The cavity of a turkey is an ideal place for bacterial growth; play it safe this Christmas and follow these tips when preparing, cooking and storing your Christmas turkey.

Thaw turkey in the refrigerator or in cold water. Allow 10 hours per kilogram (five hours per pound) to thaw the bird in the refrigerator or two hours per kg (one hour per lb.) in cold water.

If you must thaw your turkey at room temperature, place the bird in its original wrap in a heavy brown paper bag, a covered cooler or wrap turkey in a towel; this will keep the surface cold while the interior thaws — reducing the chances of bacterial growth. Allow three hours per kg (1-1/2 hours per lb.). Once thawed, refrigerate and cook within 24 hours.

Never leave the thawed turkey sitting at room temperature.

Always stuff your turkey just before cooking and never roast your turkey at a temperature lower than 150 degrees Celsius (300 degrees Fahrenheit).



Use a meat thermometer to check if the turkey is done. The thermometer should register 70 degrees C (160 degrees F) in the stuffing and 85 degrees C (185 degrees F) in the thigh of an unstuffed turkey.

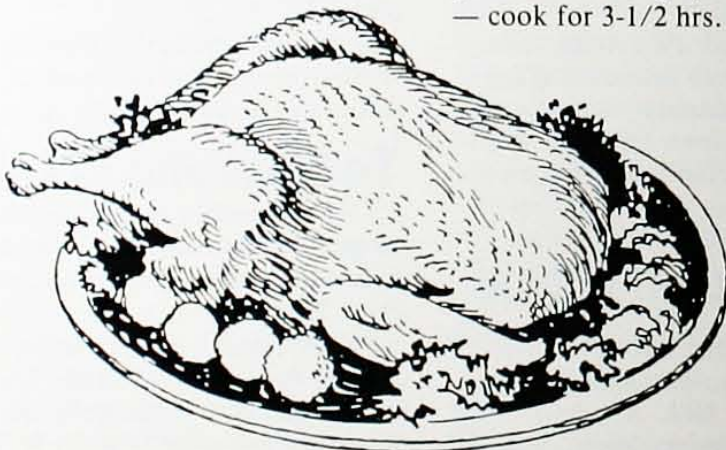
If a meat thermometer is unavailable, use the following chart as a guideline: three kg. (seven lb.) turkey — cook for 3-1/2 hrs. to 4-1/4 hrs.;

four kg. (nine lb.) turkey — cook for four hrs. to 4-3/4 hrs.; five kg (11 lb.) turkey — cook for 4-1/2 hrs. to 5-1/4 hrs.; seven kg (15 lb.) turkey — cook for 5-1/4 hrs. to six hrs.; nine kg. (20 lb.) turkey — cook for 5-3/4 hrs. to 6-1/2 hrs.; 11 kg. (24 lb.) turkey — cook for 6-1/4 hrs. to seven hrs.

The turkey is done when the juices run clear and the drumstick moves easily.

Never partially cook a turkey one day and complete cooking the next because this will encourage bacterial growth.

After serving, always remove the stuffing from the turkey and the cooked meat from the bones. Refrigerate for three to four days or freeze for up to one month.



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