

Talking Turkey

Safely Thaw, Prepare, Stuff and Roast Turkey

Whether you're a seasoned chef or a novice preparing your first holiday meal, make sure you know the safest ways to thaw, prepare, stuff and roast your turkey.

Here are simple tips that all cooks in the kitchen can follow this holiday season for cooking a delicious and safely prepared turkey.

Safe Thawing

Turkeys must be kept at a safe temperature when thawing. The "danger zone" is between 40° and 140°F—the temperature range where foodborne bacteria multiply rapidly. While frozen, a turkey is safe indefinitely, but as soon as it begins to thaw, bacteria that may have been present before freezing can begin to grow again, if it is in the "danger zone."

There are three safe methods to thaw a frozen turkey: in the refrigerator, in cold water and in a microwave oven.



Refrigerator Thawing:

- Plan ahead: allow approximately 24 hours for each 4 to 5 pounds in a refrigerator set at 40°F or below.
- Place the turkey in a container to prevent the juices from dripping on other foods.

Approximate time for refrigerator thawing of a whole turkey:

- 4 to 12 pounds – 1 to 3 days
- 12 to 16 pounds – 3 to 4 days
- 16 to 20 pounds – 4 to 5 days
- 20 to 24 pounds – 5 to 6 days

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did you know...

- ▶ In this country, the average person eats almost 19 pounds of turkey each year.
- ▶ Male turkeys are called toms. Female turkeys are called hens.
- ▶ Only male turkeys make gobbling sounds.
- ▶ Wild turkeys eat seeds, acorns and insects.
- ▶ Wild turkeys can run and are good fliers. Domesticated turkeys cannot fly.
- ▶ In China, pertussis is known as the "100 day cough."
- ▶ Worldwide there are an estimated 16 million cases of pertussis and about 195,000 deaths per year.

Sources: educationworld.com, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Quotable Quotes

“Thanksgiving dinners take eighteen hours to prepare. They are consumed in twelve minutes. Half-times take twelve minutes. This is not a coincidence.

– Erma Bombeck

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Talking Turkey

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A turkey thawed in the refrigerator can remain in the refrigerator for 1 or 2 days before cooking. A turkey thawed in the refrigerator can be refrozen without cooking but there may be some loss of quality.

Cold Water Thawing:

- Allow about 30 minutes per pound.
- Be sure the turkey is in a leak-proof plastic bag to prevent cross-contamination.
- Submerge the wrapped turkey in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes until the turkey is thawed. Cook the turkey immediately after it is thawed.

Approximate time for cold water thawing of a whole turkey:

- 4 to 12 pounds – 2 to 6 hours
- 12 to 16 pounds – 6 to 8 hours
- 16 to 20 pounds – 8 to 10 hours
- 20 to 24 pounds – 10 to 12 hours

A turkey thawed by the cold water method should be cooked immediately. After cooking, meat from the turkey can be refrozen.

Microwave Thawing:

Follow the microwave oven manufacturer's instruction when defrosting a turkey. Plan to cook it immediately after thawing because some areas of the food may become warm and begin to cook during microwaving. Holding partially cooked food is not recommended because any bacteria present will not be destroyed.

A turkey thawed in the microwave must be cooked immediately.

Safe Preparation

Bacteria present on raw poultry can contaminate your hands, utensils and work surfaces as you prepare the turkey. If these areas are not cleaned thoroughly before working with other foods, bacteria from the raw poultry can then be transferred to other foods. After working with raw poultry, always wash your hands, utensils and work surfaces with soap and water before they touch other foods.

Safe Stuffing

For optimal safety and uniform doneness, cook the stuffing outside the turkey in a casserole dish. However, if you place

stuffing inside the turkey, do so just before cooking, and use a food thermometer. Make sure the center of the stuffing reaches a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Bacteria can survive in stuffing that has not reached 165°F, possibly resulting in foodborne illness.

Safe Cooking

Set the oven temperature at 325°F or higher and be sure the turkey is completely thawed. Place turkey breast-side up on a flat wire rack in a shallow roasting pan 2 to 2½ inches deep. Cooking times will vary.

Approximate Cooking Times (325°F oven temperature)

Unstuffed (time in hours)

- 8 to 12 lbs. – 2¾ to 3 hours
- 12 to 14 lbs. – 3 to 3¾ hours
- 14 to 18 lbs. – 3¾ to 4¼ hours
- 18 to 20 lbs. – 4¼ to 4½ hours
- 20 to 24 lbs. – 4½ to 5 hours

Stuffed (time in hours)

- 8 to 12 lbs. – 3 to 3½ hours
- 12 to 14 lbs. – 3½ to 4 hours
- 14 to 18 lbs. – 4 to 4¼ hours
- 18 to 20 lbs. – 4¼ to 4¾ hours
- 20 to 24 lbs. – 4¾ to 5¼ hours

Always use an accurate food thermometer to guarantee that foods are cooked to a safe-to-eat temperature. Check the internal temperature at the center of the stuffing and meaty portion of the breast, thigh and leg joint. The food must reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Let the turkey stand 20 minutes before removing all stuffing from the cavity and carving the meat.

Did You Know?

Clostridium perfringens is the second most common bacterial cause of food poisoning.

- Outbreaks occur most often in November and December.
- Meat and poultry accounted for 92% of outbreaks from an identified single food source.

— Adapted from: USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service and Center for Disease Control and Prevention

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Updates

Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory disease. It is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. These bacteria attach to the cilia (tiny, hair-like extensions) that line part of the upper respiratory system. The bacteria release toxins, which damage the cilia and cause inflammation (swelling).

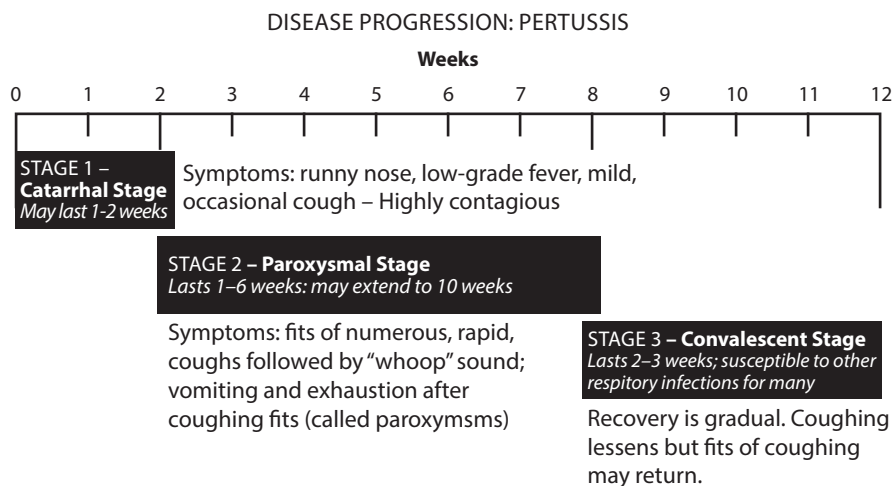
People with pertussis start out with symptoms that resemble the common cold with a mild cough which increases in severity. The cough then becomes uncontrollable, violent coughing attacks, which often make it hard to breathe. During a coughing episode someone with pertussis often needs to take deep breaths which may result in a “whooping” sound. Coughing may be so severe it induces gagging and vomiting. Coughing fits occur mostly at night and the characteristic “whoop” may or may not be heard. Although people are often exhausted after a coughing fit, they usually appear fairly well in-between.

Pertussis is found only in humans and is spread from person to person by breathing in the bacteria through coughing or sneezing while in close contact with an infected person. Coughing and sneezing sends tiny droplets of mucus into the air which can be inhaled. People are most infectious when they are having “cold-like” symptoms and up to 3 weeks after the onset of severe coughing.

Practicing good hygiene is always recommended to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Pertussis symptoms usually appear 7–10 days after exposure to an infected person but can appear up to 6 weeks after. Symptoms, especially the coughing, will last 1–3 months and sometimes longer.

Pertussis most commonly affects infants and young children. Infants too young for vaccination are at greatest risk for life-threatening cases of pertussis. About half of infants younger than 1 year of age who get the disease are hospitalized. The best way to protect against pertussis is immunization. Pertussis in children is usually preventable with complete immunization. The recommended schedule for pertussis vaccine is at 2, 4 and 6 months and again at 15 to 18 months with another booster dose at 4-6 years. It also protects against tetanus and diphtheria (DTaP). Booster doses are needed throughout life because protection wears off over time. All pregnant women should be immunized with a Tdap booster during every pregnancy between 27 and 36 weeks gestation to optimize antibody transfer to their infants. Other adults who will be in contact with the newborn including older siblings, grandparents and care givers should also be up to date with their Tdap booster vaccine. Even fully immunized individuals can contract this disease but the infection is usually less severe.



Recovery from pertussis may be slow. The cough becomes less severe and less frequent. However, coughing fits can return with other respiratory infections for many months after pertussis started. Persons with pertussis need to take antibiotics.

— Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Day After Thanksgiving Turkey Bolognese Sauce

Olive oil.....	¼ cup	Marinara sauce.....	3 cups
Onion, chopped.....	1	Basil leaves, fresh, chopped.....	1 Tbsp
Garlic cloves, minced.....	4	Salt and freshly ground black pepper.....	to taste
Carrot, peeled and finely chopped.....	1	Whole wheat pasta.....	8 ounces
Celery stalk, finely chopped.....	1	Parmesan cheese, grated.....	to taste
Turkey, dark meat, cooked, shredded.....	1 pound		

1. Heat the oil in a heavy large frying pan over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the carrot and celery and sauté until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the turkey and sauté 1 minute. Add the marinara sauce. Decrease the heat to medium-low and simmer gently for 15 minutes to allow the flavors to blend, stirring often.
3. Stir in the basil. Season the sauce, to taste, with salt and pepper. Meanwhile, cook the spaghetti in a large pot of boiling salted water according to package directions. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Add the pasta to the sauce and toss to coat, adding enough reserved cooking liquid to moisten as needed. Serve with the Parmesan.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for grains/breads and protein/meat alternate

— Giada De Laurentiis

Apple Cranberry Salad Toss

Lettuce, dark green, leafy.....	1 head
Apples, thinly sliced.....	2
Walnuts, chopped.....	½ cup
Dried cranberries.....	1 cup
Green onion, sliced.....	½ cup
Vinaigrette dressing.....	¾ cup

1. Rinse, dry and tear lettuce into a large bowl. Mix in apples, walnuts, cranberries and onions
2. Add dressing; toss to coat. Serve immediately.

Yield: 12 servings

Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable

— Adapted from www.usda.gov/whatscooking

Activity Corner

SWEET POTATO MASH

This simple, delicious recipe is a fun Thanksgiving cooking activity to do with youngsters. Children can help with all areas of preparation except handling the hot sweet potatoes.*

1. Rub 4 medium sweet potatoes with a brush, under water.
2. Pierce sweet potatoes with a fork in several different spots.
3. Place whole sweet potatoes in the microwave and cook on high for 10 minutes. *Rotate and flip over half way through the baking time. Let sit 10 minutes.
4. *When potatoes are cool enough to handle slice in half and scoop centers into a sturdy bowl or pot.
5. Add 2 tablespoon butter, ¼ cup milk, ¼ cup brown sugar and a sprinkle of cinnamon.
6. Have all children take a turn mashing the sweet potatoes with a potato masher.

Dish this up as part of a warm and healthy meal or snack.

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Food Funny Q: How does a turkey eat his food?
A: He gobbles it!