

## 'Tis the season for Turkey Dinners.

Whether perfecting a longstanding family recipe or taking on the turkey task for the first time, there's one ingredient that no chef can be without: safety.

From grocery store straight through to the last of the leftovers, safe food handling practices are key to preventing the spread of harmful bacteria, and keeping your feast free of foodborne illness.

Sound like a lot to digest? With these essential Turkey Tips, we're making it easy, serving up safety one step at a time.



# Turkey Tips: Safety at Every Step

## Always:

- Keep raw turkey and its juices away from other food.
- Wash your hands carefully with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw or partially cooked turkey, or coming into contact with its juices.
- Clean and disinfect all kitchen surfaces, dishes and utensils that come into contact with raw or partially cooked turkey or its juices.
- Use separate dishes and utensils for raw turkey, for partially cooked turkey, and for cooked turkey.

## At the Grocery Store:

When buying your turkey:

- Double check the "best before" date on turkey, to ensure expiration date has not passed.
- Prevent the turkey or turkey juices from contaminating your other groceries.
  - Place the raw turkey at the bottom of the cart, separated from other food.
  - Ask for the turkey to be bagged separately from all other food.
  - Keep the turkey bag separate from other bags when transporting from store to home.

## Pre-Cooking Storage: *To fridge or to freeze*

Your turkey must be refrigerated or frozen immediately upon arriving home from the grocery store.

- Not sure whether to freeze or refrigerate your raw turkey?
  - Freeze immediately if you will be cooking your raw turkey **MORE** than three days after you bring it home from the grocery store.
  - Refrigerate immediately if you will be cooking your raw turkey **LESS** than three days after you bring it home from the grocery store.
- Prevent raw turkey or turkey juices from contaminating other items in your fridge or freezer.
  - Place turkey in a clean plastic container or plastic bag that will hold any leaking juices.
  - It's a good idea to place bagged turkey on a platter, to ensure any juices that could leak, are caught.
  - Place the turkey on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator or at bottom of freezer.

## Pre-Cooking Prep: *Thaw Safely*

Frozen raw turkey should be thawed immediately before cooking.

To safely thaw your frozen turkey:

- In the Fridge
  - Place the frozen turkey in a clean plastic container or on a clean platter (that will hold any leaking juices).
  - Place the container/platter on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator.
- In Cold Water
  - Keep the frozen turkey in its original wrapping.
  - Ensure the turkey surface remains cold:
    - fully immerse the frozen turkey in cold water and change the water every 30 minutes or
    - thaw under cold running water in the sink.
- Cook the turkey immediately after it has thawed.
- Do **not** thaw your turkey at room temperature. Thawing at room temperature is not safe, as it can lead to the growth of dangerous bacteria.
- It is not necessary to rinse raw turkey before cooking; however, it's important that you always wash your hands carefully with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw or partially cooked turkey.

## Cooking Turkey

- Turkey must be cooked thoroughly, in the oven, until the meat reaches a minimum internal temperature known to be safe for human consumption.
- The minimum safe internal temperature for turkey is 85° C (185°F).
- Always use a meat thermometer to ensure the turkey is cooked to safe internal temperature (of at least 85° C/185° F):
  - Insert the thermometer into the fleshiest part of the bird's thigh
  - Ensure the thermometer is not touching any bones.
  - Follow any additional manufacturer's directions to ensure you are properly using your food thermometer.

- Wash food thermometer and other utensils used on raw or partially cooked turkey, before using them to check foods again.
- Never rely on the meat color to determine turkey doneness.
- Never slowcook a turkey.
- Prepare and cook stuffing separately from the turkey.

## Serving Turkey

- Serve the cooked bird within 30 minutes of removing it from the oven.
- Keep hot food hot: hot foods should be kept at a temperature of at least 60°C (140°F).
- Keep cold food cold: cold foods should be kept at a temperature of 4°C (40°F) or lower
- Do not serve food that has been sitting at room temperature for more than two hours.

## Turkey Leftovers

- Refrigerate leftovers within two hours of serving.
- Leftover turkey meat, stuffing, gravy and other cooked dishes should be eaten within two to three days of cooking.
- If you will not consume all leftovers within two to three days of cooking, freeze immediately after cooking.

