

Kenrick's Meats & Catering

Complete Turkey Guide



Choosing the Right Turkey

Ready-to-cook whole turkeys can range in size from 8 to 24lbs. How much should you buy? Allow about 1 lb. of uncooked whole turkey per person. That makes enough for a feast, as well as leftovers. Choose a turkey that is plump and meaty with smooth, cream-colored skin.

Thawing Your Turkey

There are three safe ways to thaw a frozen turkey. Thawing at room temperature is not recommended because it promotes bacterial growth.

1. **Gradual Thaw in Refrigerator (Preferred Method)** - Refrigerate frozen turkey (in original packaging) on a tray to collect liquids. Allow 24 hours per 5 lbs. of whole turkey. Please refer to timetable:



Approximate Weight (Pounds)	Thawing Time (In Refrigerator)
8 to 12	1 to 2 days
12 to 16	2 to 3 days
16 to 20	3 to 4 days
20 to 24	4 to 5 days

Once thawed, the turkey can be refrigerated up to 2 days before roasting.

2. **Gradual Thaw in Cold Water** - To thaw a turkey more quickly, use this method. Leave the turkey in its original packaging, free from tears or holes. Put in a sink or clean large container filled with cold water that you change often. Allow 30 minutes per pound for whole turkeys. An 8 to 12 lb. turkey will thaw in about 5 hours.
3. **Quick Thaw in Microwave** - To Thaw a turkey even faster, follow the microwave manufacturer's directions.

Preparing Your Turkey

Stuff the turkey just before cooking. This will prevent bacteria from contaminating the stuffing. Never prestuff a turkey and refrigerate or freeze it for later roasting.

1. Turn turkey breast down for easier filling of neck cavity. Fill neck cavity lightly with stuffing.
2. Fasten neck skin to back of turkey with skewer.
3. Turn turkey breast side up. Fold wings across back of turkey so tips are touching.
4. Fill body cavity lightly with stuffing.
5. Tuck legs under band of skin at tail (if present), or tie together with heavy string, then tie to tail if desired.
6. Insert ovenproof thermometer so tip is in thickest part of inside thigh and does not touch bone.

Roasting Your Turkey

For golden brown skin and moist, tender meat, roast your turkey at 325°F according to the Roasting Turkey Timetable. For an equally tender and delicious turkey, you can roast at 450°F according to the timetable for high-heat roasting.

1. Place turkey with breast side up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Brush with melted butter, margarine or oil. If using an ovenproof meat thermometer, place it so the tip is in the thickest part of the inside thigh and does not touch bone.
2. When two-thirds through the roasting time, cut the band of skin at the tail, or remove the tie or skewer holding the legs together to allow inside of thighs to cook through.
3. Begin checking turkey for doneness about 1 hour before end of recommended roasting time. Turkey is done when thermometer reads 180°F and legs move easily when lifted or twisted. Thermometer placed in center of stuffing will read 165°F when done. If the turkey has turned golden brown but is not done, place a tent of foil loosely over the turkey, if desired.
4. When the turkey is done, transfer it with breast side up to a carving board and let stand loosely covered with foil for 15 to 20 minutes. Turkey will cut easier with more uniform-size slices if turkey stands before carving.

Roasting Turkey Timetable

Follow this timetable for regular roasting or high-heat roasting. For prestuffed turkeys, follow package directions, **do not use** this timetable.

Whole Turkey (Stuffed)

Ready to Cook Weight (Pounds)	Approximate Roasting Time at 325°F (Hours)	High-Heat Roasting Time at 450°F (Hours)
8 to 12	3 to 3½	Not Recommended
12 to 14	3½ to 4	
14 to 18	4 to 4¼	
18 to 20	4¼ to 4¾	
20 to 24	4¾ to 5¼	

Whole Turkey (Not Stuffed)

Ready to Cook Weight (Pounds)	Approximate Roasting Time at 325°F (Hours)	High-Heat Roasting Time at 450°F (Hours)
8 to 12	2¾ to 3	45 mins. to 1¼
12 to 14	3 to 3¾	
14 to 18	3¾ to 4¼	1½ to 1¾
18 to 20	4¼ to 4½	
20 to 24	4½ to 5	2¾ to 3¼

Whole Turkey (Bone-In)

Ready to Cook Weight (Pounds)	Approximate Roasting Time at 325°F (Hours)	High-Heat Roasting Time at 450°F (Hours)
2 to 4	1½ to 2	Not Recommended
3 to 5	1½ to 2½	
	2 to 2½	



Carving Your Turkey

Place the turkey with breast side up and with its legs to your right if you're right-handed. Remove skewers or ties. Remove stuffing from the bird before carving and put it in a separate serving dish or container.

1. While gently pulling the leg away from the body, cut through the joint between leg and body. Separate the drumstick and thigh by cutting down through the connecting joint; serve the drumsticks and thighs whole or carve them. To carve, slice meat from drumstick at angle and slice thigh parallel to the bone.
2. Make a deep horizontal cut into the breast just above the wing.
3. Insert fork into the top of the breast. Starting halfway up the breast, carve thin slices down to the horizontal cut, working from outer edge of bird to the center. Repeat steps on the other side of the turkey.