

Roasting Turkey

Main Dishes D-10

Directions for Cooking Turkey— Whole, Parts, or Boneless Roasts

1. Thaw and clean frozen turkey according to “**Storing, Thawing, and Cleaning Poultry**” (see D-8), or follow label instructions. Frozen turkey can be cooked without thawing in the same way as thawed turkey.
2. For whole turkeys, fold neck skin over to the back and fasten with skewers or tie with a clean cord; tie legs together and fasten to tail; or, if there is a band of skin under tail, tuck legs under band.

DO NOT STUFF WHOLE TURKEY. BAKE STUFFING SEPARATELY.

3. Place whole turkeys in shallow roasting pans, breast side up.

Place boneless roasts and turkey parts in shallow roasting pans. Use separate pans for breast pieces and for legs (drumstick and thigh).

4. Insert a meat thermometer into the center of the meaty part of the inner side of the thigh (toward the body) in whole turkey, or into the center of a boneless turkey roast. Insert thermometer into the center of the thickest part of the breast or thigh piece. **BE SURE THERMOMETER DOES NOT TOUCH BONE.**

NOTE: Insert a meat thermometer in frozen turkeys part way through cooking.

5. Roast at 325 °F (slow oven) using the following timetable as a guide to cooking time. When turkey is half done, release legs to speed cooking.

Turkey is done when:

- Thermometer registers 180 to 185 °F in inner thigh of whole turkeys or 170 °F in turkey roasts.
- Juice from turkey is clear with no pink color.
- Drumstick meat when pressed between fingers is very soft and leg joint moves easily.

DO NOT PARTIALLY COOK ON ONE DAY AND FINISH COOKING ON THE NEXT.

Directions for Cooling Cooked Turkey

Cool cooked turkey 15 to 20 minutes. Slice and serve

OR

Cool cooked turkey on wire rack until cool enough to handle. Remove meat from bones. Spread pieces of meat in one layer to cool. As soon as cool, wrap meat and store in the refrigerator (35 to 40 °F).

USE WITHIN 2 DAYS AFTER ROASTING.

Timetable for Roasting Turkey at 325 °F (Slow Oven)

Form of Turkey and Approximate Weight	Approximate Cooking Time,* Hours
Whole:	
12 to 16 lb	3½ to 4½
16 to 21 lb	4½ to 6
21 to 26 lb	6 to 7½
Halves, 8 to 12 lb	2¼ to 4
Quarters, 3 to 8 lb	1½ to 3½
Pieces:	
Breast, 8 to 12 lb	3 to 4
Leg (drumstick and thigh), 3 to 8 lb	1¾ to 3
Boneless roasts, 8 to 12 lb .	3 to 5†

*Whole turkey frozen without giblets and other frozen forms of turkey may be roasted without thawing. Extra time will be needed.

†The diameter can affect the cooking time more than the weight. The greater the diameter, the longer the cooking time.