



Tips for Cooking Your Turkey

Q: Do I have to remove the giblet package from inside the cavity of the turkey?

A: Yes, it is necessary to remove the giblet package before cooking your turkey. If you do not wish to use them in your recipes, you can dispose of them.

Q: What are giblets and how are they used in recipes?

A: Giblets are defined as the heart, liver and gizzard of a poultry carcass. Although often packaged with them, the neck of the bird is not a giblet. The package is typically wrapped in plastic or paper and reinserted into the turkey's body cavity. Traditionally, turkey giblets are cooked by simmering in water for use in flavoring soups, gravies or poultry stuffing.

Q: What is the best way to cook turkey stuffing?

A: For optimum safety and more even cooking, we recommend cooking stuffing separately in a casserole dish. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the stuffing. The center should reach the safe minimum internal temperature of 170°F.

Q: How do I cook a turkey in a conventional oven?

A: Below are tips for cooking your turkey and estimated cooking times for whole turkeys:

- Place turkey breast-side up on rack in shallow roasting pan
- Brush breast with vegetable oil or melted butter
- When breast is golden, cover with a loose tent of aluminum foil to prevent oven-browning
- To ensure doneness and food safety, the turkey is done when the internal temperature is 165°F in both the thickest part of the breast (without touching the bone) and in the thighs
- For easier slicing, let stand for 10 minutes

Whole turkey cooking times:

- 6 to 8 pounds – 2 1/4 to 2 3/4 hours
- 8 to 12 pounds – 2 3/4 to 3 hours
- 12 to 14 pounds – 3 to 3 3/4 hours
- 14 to 18 pounds – 3 3/4 to 4 1/4 hours
- 18 to 20 pounds – 4 1/4 to 4 1/2 hours
- 20 to 24 pounds – 4 1/2 to 5 hours
- 24 to 28 pounds – 5 to 5 1/2 hours

**Because each oven is different, cooking time will vary from oven to oven. For more information visit <https://www.honeysucklewhite.com/faq/#>.

Q: Can I cook my turkey in the microwave?

A: It is not recommended to microwave a turkey.

Q: Can I cook my turkey in an oven bag?

A: Yes! Oven bags are a great way to cook your turkey. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines on the oven bag package. We do not recommend using a brown paper bag to cook your turkey because they are not sanitary, but also may cause a fire and can emit toxic fumes when exposed to heat.

Q: Can I cook a turkey with the hock lock used to keep the turkey legs in place?

A: Yes, it is safe to roast a turkey with the hock lock on. The hock lock can easily be removed after roasting by sliding off the turkey legs. Prior to roasting, it can be removed with kitchen shears. If you are deep frying the turkey, you should remove it.



Q: Should I brine my turkey?

A: Brining your turkey can add moisture to the meat. The salt in many brine recipes can help cause the meat tissues to absorb water and flavorings. We do not recommend using a brine recipe if you have purchased a turkey containing a basting solution.

Q: Do I need to baste my turkey?

A: It is not necessary to baste a self-basting turkey or baste a non-basted turkey. Basting adds nice color and flavor to the skin, but it typically does not penetrate below the skin. Most turkeys are pre-basted with broth already deep inside the meat, making it moist and tender.

Q: When will I know that my turkey is ready to eat?

A: If the turkey has reached a safe minimum internal temperature of 165° F as measured with a meat thermometer in the thickest part of the breast, it should be safe to eat. When there is a pink color in safely cooked turkey, it is due to the hemoglobin in tissues which can form a heat-stable color. This can also happen when smoking, grilling or oven cooking a turkey.

Q: The meat thermometer says my turkey is done – Why is the meat still pink?

A: The color of cooked meat and poultry isn't always a good indicator of doneness.

- Using a meat thermometer is the only accurate way to determine the meat has reached a safe temperature
- Turkey can remain pink even after cooking temperatures of 165° F and higher
- Smoked turkey meat is always pink

Q: Can I partially cook my whole turkey the day before and complete it before the meal or roast it overnight on a low temperature?

A: For food safety reasons, it is not recommended to partially roast a turkey or cook your turkey at a temperature below 325° F, as these are both ideal conditions for harmful bacteria growth.

Q: Why are the turkey juices still bloody although the timer popped?

A: The color of the juices in the leg joints is sometimes pink even though it is cooked and safe to eat. Those joints may only have been heated to 175° F. A temperature of 165° F is required to be safe to eat, but the red color will not disappear until about 180° F. Our turkey timers in whole turkeys pop up when the breast is 170° F.

Q: Why did the pop-up timer fail?

A: The spring mechanism in the pop-up timer will sometimes fail. It is designed to “pop up” when steam causes the internal firing material to melt. If your timer failed to activate, we recommend that you use a meat thermometer in the thickest part of the breast to ensure the turkey has reached a safe minimum internal temperature of 165° F.

For more tips for cooking your turkey, visit www.honeysucklewhite.com/faq/#.