

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TURKEY



Can I cook a frozen turkey?

Turkeys can be cooked without thawing. Keep in mind that it will take about 50% longer to cook a frozen bird than a fresh one. It may be difficult to remove the giblets while the turkey is still frozen. Try removing them once the turkey has been in the oven long enough to sufficiently defrost. Do not cook a frozen turkey in the microwave because it will cook unevenly and may not reach a safe temperature, and don't deep fry a frozen turkey either.

Is pink turkey meat safe to eat?

The only way to accurately test a turkey for doneness is with a calibrated food thermometer. The color of the turkey meat can remain pink even when cooked to safe temperatures. Smoked turkey meat always remains pink. As long as the turkey has reached a safe internal temperature of 165° F. at the innermost part of the thigh and wing, and the thickest part of the breast, you don't need to worry about it being pink.

What are hock locks?

A hock lock is a device that secures together the legs of a turkey. Many turkeys that you purchase in the grocery store will come with the legs tied together using a hock lock. The hock locks are most often made of heat resistant materials and can be left on during the cooking process. However, leaving the hock lock on during cooking can make it much more difficult to cook the bird evenly.

What do I do if I left the paper- or plastic-wrapped giblets in the turkey during cooking?

If you mistakenly left the giblets in the turkey during cooking, remove them from the cooked turkey and carefully examine them. If they were wrapped in paper, then there is no concern about the safety of the turkey. If they were wrapped in plastic, examine the plastic to see if it has melted or been altered in any way. If there is evidence that the heat has altered the state of the plastic, do not eat the giblets or the turkey. If the plastic bag remained unaltered, the giblets and the turkey should be safe to eat.

What do I do if I cooked the plastic pad and absorbent paper that is packaged under the turkey?

If you accidentally cooked the plastic pad and absorbent paper, check to see if it has been altered by the cooking process. If it has, you must not eat the turkey, otherwise the turkey should be safe to eat.

How do I know what size turkey I need to buy? If you buy a whole turkey allow 1 pound per person, a boneless breast of turkey allow ½ pound per person, a breast of turkey allow ¾ pound per person, and a pre-stuffed frozen turkey allow 1¼ pound per person.

How long will it take the turkey to cook, and how do I know when it is done? For roasting a turkey the oven should be set at 325° F. or higher. To determine doneness the internal temperature at the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast should be at least 165° F.

Approximate cooking times at 325°F are:

Unstuffed turkey:

8-12 lbs. - 2 3/4 to 3 hours

12-14 lbs. - 3 to 3 3/4 hours

14-18 lbs. - 3 3/4 to 4 1/4 hours

18-20 lbs. - 4 1/4 to 4 1/2 hours

20-24 lbs. - 4 1/2 to 5 hours

Stuffed:

8-12 lbs. - 3 to 3 1/2 hours

12-14 lbs. - 3 1/2 to 4 hours

14-18 lbs. - 4 to 4 1/4 hours

18-20 lbs. - 4 1/4 to 4 3/4 hours

20-24 lbs. - 4 3/4 to 5 1/4 hours

For more information on safe food preparation, call 1-800-ASK-UGA1.

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