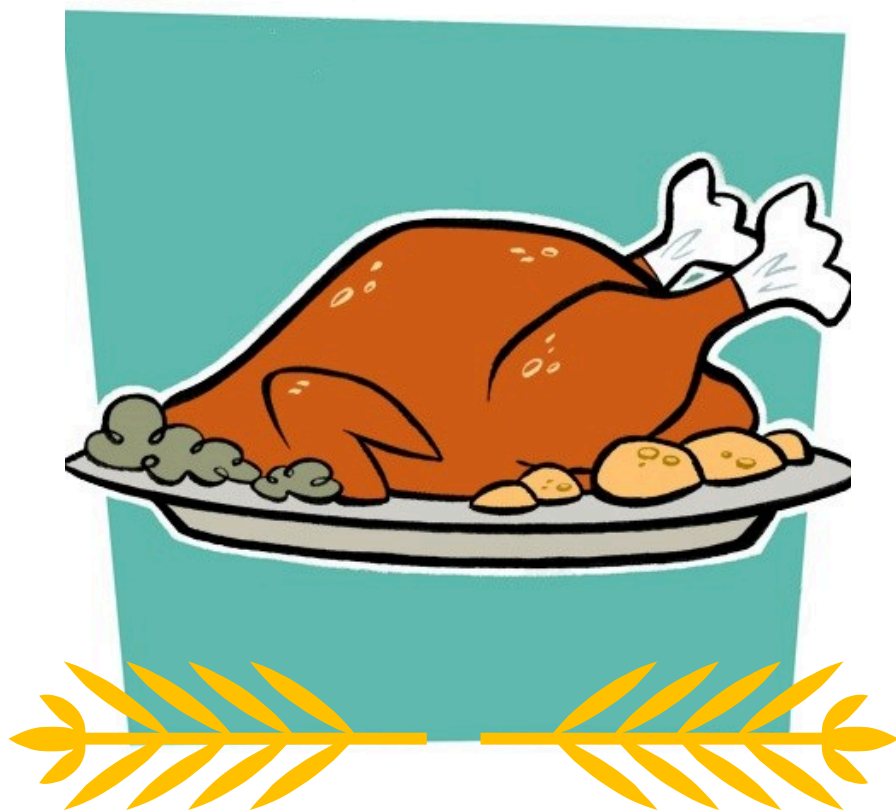


Let's Talk
TURKEY



Chef Alli

Let's Get You Cookin'



IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN...

Time for family gatherings, holiday cheer, and the Thanksgiving Feast! That means **TURKEY**, but if the idea of roasting that great big bird gives you the flu, never fear. Your kitchen Crusader is here! In this little guide I'll share some of my favorite Turkey Tips to help you tame that turkey terror and give you the confidence to make some beautiful (and tasty) Thanksgiving memories!

Le'ts Get You Cookin'!

Chef Alli

When you have
more than you
need, build a
longer table, not a
higher fence.

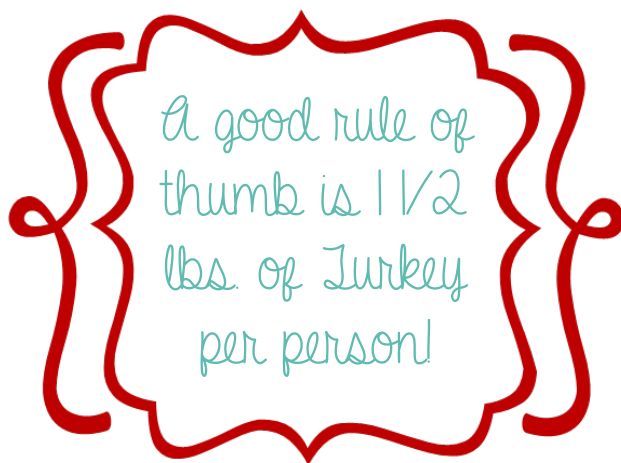


1. How Much Turkey Should I Purchase?

If you want to have some nice leftovers following your holiday meal, it's good to figure about **1 ½ lbs. of purchased turkey per person**. This will also help ensure you have enough turkey to cover the appetites of your biggest eaters. So, let's say you've got 15 people coming for dinner. At 1 ½ lbs. per person, that would mean that the Tom Turkey you need should weigh in at 22.5 lbs.

Instead of trying to purchase a JUMBO size turkey for a large gathering, I recommend purchasing **2 smaller turkeys** and here's why: It's fun to have your turkey masterpiece poised on your holiday table when Grace is said (this ensures that Norman Rockwell kind of thing is going on). But, on the other hand, who wants to hold up dinner while somebody carves that thing? (It makes me a nervous wreck when hungry people can't get to eatin') NOW is when your second turkey enters the picture and saves the day: He's already sliced and ready to go!

I really love that in a turkey.





2. How Much Thawing Time Should I Allow?

The rule of thumb is **24 hours of refrigeration for every 5 lbs. of turkey**. So, if you've got yourself a 15 lb. turkey, it's going to take **AT LEAST 3 full days** of refrigeration to get him thawed out. *However*, to be safe, I'd give yourself at least one more day since refrigerators (and turkeys) can vary. You want your turkey to be fully thawed so that when you unpackage him, you can get him all opened up to easily pull out the innards (oh, that's a scary word!) and then rinse him well, inside and out, before he hits the roasting pan.

As you're pulling out the innards (the turkey neck and the package of organs), promptly and deliberately pull out that red and white pop-up thermometer that's located right there in Tom Turkey's breast and throw it in the trash. Many a turkey has croaked in the oven, cooked to a dry sawdust death, while someone was waiting for that pop-up thermometer to do its job. Before the big day, go out and get **two (yes, two!) instant-read meat thermometers** so you don't have to GUESS when your turkey is done. I'll tell you why soon.





3. Should I Brine My Turkey?

I admit, I was skeptical about brining at first. However, after I jumped in and brined my bird, I've never looked back – it's a FANTASTIC technique that ensures succulent, juicy turkey, providing you don't overcook him. I now brine pork and poultry all the time and totally love the results. It is a step I can do the day before that packs in a lot of flavor leaving LESS work for me to do on The Big Day!

You'll make your brine on the stove, creating a salt/sugar mixture, then cool it down with water or broth, so you can submerge your turkey in it. I find that using a large cooler works just great for brining. That way you can add ice to keep everything cool while the brine works some magic on your bird.

Using a large cooler works great for brining!

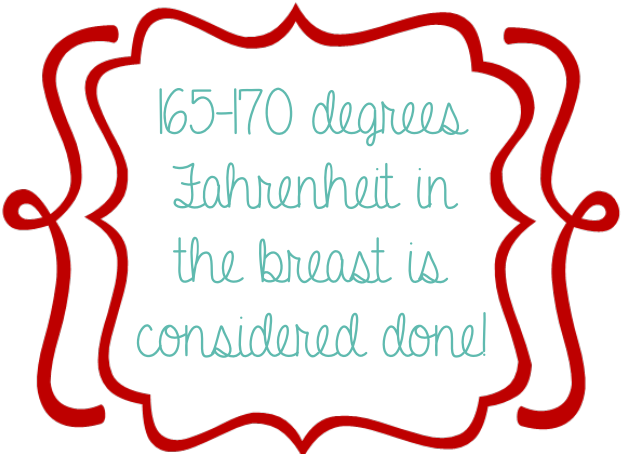
Depending on the size of my turkey, I usually brine my birds for 12-24 hours. You can find a great brine for turkey and poultry, plus other great recipes at my blog:

www.ChefAlli.com



4. How Do I Know When My Turkey is Done?

Now we're back to using those instant-read meat thermometers that were mentioned above (*see the Thawing section*). Get to your favorite culinary store or even Wally-World (Wal-Mart) and purchase not one, but TWO, inexpensive instant-read meat thermometers.



165-170 degrees
Fahrenheit in
the breast is
considered done!

Why two? I'm glad you asked – here's my theory: Sometimes cooking a turkey or a large hunk of meat is just flat overwhelming. **We want it to taste delicious because we're INVESTED in it** – our time, our money, and our energy is on the line. Also, most instant-read thermometers come with an internal temperature chart and this is helpful to keep right on the fridge so you can easily check it to see what temps equal which doneness, based on what it is you are temping. (Example: When temping a steak, 145 degrees F in the center is considered Medium Rare. When temping a turkey, 165-170 degrees F. in the breast is considered done.)

****Read on to see what temping your Turkey looks like!*



Here's How it Goes Down: (Temping Cont'd)

Step 1- You'll insert the thermometer into the cooked turkey and watch the dial move. When it stops, that's the actual internal temperature of the turkey.

Step 2- The doubt begins to creep in and you think "Oh, wow. Is that REALLY the correct internal temperature? Is that thing ok? What if he is under-cooked? What if I did it wrong? What if he's raw? Or cold? Or... WHAT IF I RUIN THANKSGIVING???!?"

Step 3- Soooo, that's when you pull out your SECOND thermometer (the backup guy) and insert him into that same vicinity of the turkey to see if he registers the same temperature when his dial stops. Chances are, he WILL and you'll have the moral support you need right then!

****Read on for some more helpful tips.*

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor".-Eccl. 4:9



5. A Few More Temping Tips

MEET MR. SENSOR: Locate the little nipple (sensor) on the stem of the thermometer. This guy needs to be fully covered whenever you are inserting it into a piece of meat to temp it. If it's not covered, you'll get a false reading. Some sensors are part way up the stem, some are right near the tip of the stem – they all vary by brand and it's up to you to locate that guy.

NO BONES ABOUT IT: Make sure that when you temp your turkey, you insert it into a meaty area where there's not a lot of bones. Touching a bone or even the

bottom of the pan when temping can also cause a false reading. Try to come in as much from the side (instead of downwards) as you can when temping – this helps get the best read on the thermometer.

Be sure the sensor of your thermometer is in the center of the meat!

**** Two more tips left and you're on your way to one happy holiday bird!*



Temping Tips (cont'd)

DON'T GIVE ME THE COLD SHOULDER: The best places to temp your turkey are in the thickest part of the thigh, and through the top or “shoulder” of the turkey, parallel to his roasting pan, towards the thickest part of the breast on each side.

FINISHING TOUCHES: Your final turkey temperature should be about 165 degrees F. for the breast meat and about 175-185 degrees F. for the thigh area. I usually remove my turkey from the oven when the breast registers 160 degree F. in the breast and 170 degrees F. in the thigh. THEN, I cover him with lots of foil and let him rest on the counter, in his roasting pan, while his internal temperature continues to rise from residual heat. This way, I’m guaranteed he’s not OVERCOOKED.

****Now that you’re armed with lots of Turkey Tips, it’s time to try your hand at the real thing! On the next pages I’ve included my BRINING recipe and my SIMPLE Roast Turkey Recipe.*





6. Turkey Brine Recipe

YOU'LL NEED:

- 6 cups apple cider
- 1 oz. fresh thyme
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed
- 1 Tbs. allspice berries
- 1 Tbs. peppercorns
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 cups water
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 oranges, each cut in half
- 1 1/2 cups kosher salt

Butter is sometimes rubbed on the Turkey but it burns! Oil is a better choice!

PREPARING THE BRINE:

Place all ingredients into a large saucepan and bring to a boil; whisk until sugar and salt are completely dissolved, then remove pan from heat and let cool.

BRINING YOUR TURKEY:

Place thawed, rinsed turkey into a large, chest cooler (cooler lid must close) and pour in brine, adding enough water to brine to completely submerge turkey. Add ice to water to keep it cold, then, to keep turkey submerged in the brine, place a large bag of ice on top of the turkey.

Let turkey rest in the brine for 12-16 hours, keeping it cool at all times, adding ice to the cooler as needed. If your bird is really big, say 22-28 lbs., let it brine even upwards of 24 hours. Remove turkey from the brine and rinse well, both inside and out.

****Note:** *If you are using the drippings from a brined bird for making gravy, be sure you taste the gravy before adding ANY seasonings – the drippings from a brined bird can sometimes be a bit salty.*



6. Perfect Turkey Recipe for Beginners

YOU'LL NEED:

- 1 yellow onion, halved
- 1 lemon, halved
- 1 orange, halved
- 1 head garlic, halved
- 2 bundles each fresh thyme, rosemary, and/or sage, divided use
- Vegetable or canola oil, for a pre-oven massage
- Kitchen string

PREPARING TO ROAST:

Move the oven rack to the lowest level and preheat the oven to 500°F.

Remove the turkey from the brine and rinse to remove any of the fresh herbs that may have stuck to the skin; pat dry with paper towels. Discard the brine and thoroughly wash the cooler.

OR – If you've chosen not to brine your turkey and you're going to cook him straight from the package (which is totally fine, by the way), pull out all the parts inside the turkey (there's usually a turkey neck and a bag of "parts") and rinse him off really well inside and out; pat the turkey dry with paper towels. Oh, and please, please pull out

the the pop-up thermometer and throw that sucker away as fast as you can. (These things can often be faulty, causing many a bird to be cooked into oblivion!)

Butter is sometimes rubbed on the Turkey but it burns! Oil is a better choice!

Now, using your fingertips, rub the turkey liberally with canola oil, taking care to get all the nooks and crannies around the wings and legs – everywhere you can reach!

Continued...



7. Perfect Turkey Recipe for Beginners (cont'd)


STUFFING THE AROMATICS:

Remove the wire that holds the turkey legs together at the back of the bird so that the cavity of the turkey is open and exposed. Push onion, lemon, orange and garlic halves into turkey cavity. Lastly, insert half of fresh herbs, letting them protrude a bit from turkey cavity. Using kitchen string (or if your turkey came with a reusable plastic ring), gently tie turkey legs together.

ROASTING THE TURKEY:

Set the prepared turkey onto a greased roasting rack, then into a greased roasting pan and place into the preheated oven. (Don't worry if you don't have a rack, it's fine to just set the turkey right onto the bottom of the roasting pan.) Roast at 500F for 20-25 minutes, or until turkey is nicely browned all over, turning bird around in oven, half way through. **Keep a close eye on your turkey at this point – at this temperature, it can brown very quickly!**

Once your turkey is nicely browned, remove him from the oven and reduce the oven temperature to 325 degrees F. Cover the turkey and roasting pan with a double layer of heavy duty aluminum foil. Roast turkey for an additional 2 – 2½ hours or until an instant-read meat thermometer registers 165 degrees when inserted deeply into the thigh area.



Always cook
your turkey by
temperature
not by time!

*****Please note: Always cook your turkey by TEMPERATURE. Not by time! Refer to your "Let's Talk Turkey Guide" for more temping tips and tricks.***

SERVING UP YOUR BIRD:

When your turkey is done, remove from the oven, keeping him tightly covered with aluminum foil, and allow to rest for 30 minutes before carving to allow the turkey to re-absorb it's juices. Once turkey has had it's rest, it's time to carve that sucker and EAT!!



THERE YOU HAVE IT!

I hope this guide was helpful for preparing and confidently serving your holiday turkey! You can follow along with me at www.ChefAllis.com as I stir up a love for farm fresh fresh cooking and share my love for farming, food, and family. Here's wishing you and your family a beautiful (and delicious) holiday season!

*May your stuffing be tasty,
May your turkey be plump,
May your potatoes and gravy
Have nary a lump.
May your yams be delicious
And your pies take the prize,
And may your Thanksgiving dinner
Stay off of your thighs!*

Let's Get You Cookin' Turkey!

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