

# Chapter 35

## Poultry

### Preparing a Whole Turkey

**Directions:** Read the following selection. Then answer the questions under *Thinking Critically*, and complete the activities as directed by your teacher.

A whole turkey can provide food for a large gathering and help you stock your freezer for future meals. Roasting a turkey is not as difficult as you might think. Here are the basics.

Following the correct steps for thawing a turkey is essential to preparing turkey that is safe to eat. Never thaw turkey (or any meat or poultry) at room temperature. Doing so promotes the growth of harmful bacteria and can result in foodborne illness. Instead, use one of the following three methods to thaw turkey safely.

- ◆ **Refrigerator method.** Thaw the turkey in its original wrapper on a tray in the refrigerator. Thawing time varies according to the weight of the turkey.

Weight	Time
8 to 12 lbs.	1½ to 2 days
12 to 20 lbs.	2 to 3 days

- ◆ **Cold-water method.** Thaw the turkey in its original wrapper in cold water. Be sure to keep the turkey completely under water. Change the water every 20 to 30 minutes to keep it cold. Thawing time varies according to the weight of the turkey.

Weight	Time
8 to 12 lbs.	4 to 6 hours
12 to 20 lbs.	6 to 8 hours

- ◆ **Microwave method.** Turkeys can also be thawed in the microwave oven. Check the manufacturer's instructions for the number of minutes per pound and the power level that you should use.

Once a turkey has been thawed, it should be cooked immediately. To prepare a turkey for cooking, remove the neck and giblets from the body cavity. Rinse the turkey thoroughly—inside and outside—in cold, running water. Drain well and pat dry with paper towels.

The tradition of serving turkey with stuffing is deeply rooted in American culture. Although health authorities today advise against stuffing a turkey, which risks cross-contamination, it is still possible to enjoy stuffing with a roasted bird. Bake the stuffing in a separate, lightly greased pan for about 45 minutes at the end of the turkey's roasting time. This will not only streamline preparation but will also save on cooking time.

To *truss* means to arrange the turkey for cooking so that it maintains its shape. Fold the neck skin over the opening, and tuck it under the turkey. Fasten the neck skin in place with skewers, trussing pins, string, or toothpicks. Twist the wing tips back to rest against the neck skin. To close the body cavity, tuck the ends of the legs under the skin at the tail or tie the legs together with string.

Place the turkey, breast-side up, on a rack in a roasting pan. Insert a meat thermometer deep into the thickest part of the thigh. It should not touch any bone. Brush the turkey lightly with oil, melted butter, or margarine to prevent the skin from drying out.

Moderate heat is recommended for roasting poultry. The cooking times in the chart below are based on a temperature of 325°F.

In order to prepare a moist, flavorful turkey, baste the bird with pan juices about every 30 to 40 minutes during cooking. If the turkey begins to brown too quickly, cover the top loosely with aluminum foil.

The turkey is done when the thermometer registers an internal temperature of 180°F. The drumsticks should move easily, and the turkey should feel tender when touched.

Weight	Cooking Time
8 to 12 lbs.	3 to 4 hours
12 to 16 lbs.	4 to 5 hours
16 to 20 lbs.	5 to 6 hours

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## Thinking Critically

1. What steps will you take to ensure poultry is handled safely during its preparation for cooking?

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2. What determines how much you pay for poultry? What is the best option for you or your family? Why?

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3. Brainstorm ideas for using leftover turkey or poultry. Compare your ideas with those of another classmate. Combine your ideas to make one list, and share your combined ideas with others.

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## For Further Study

- ◆ Prepare an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) fact sheet on preparing turkey or other poultry items. Include questions such as: Can I stuff my turkey the night before and refrigerate until morning? How often should I baste the turkey while cooking? How does a pop-up timer work? Is it safe to depend on the pop-up timer for doneness? Can I begin roasting my turkey overnight at a lower temperature? How much time is needed to roast an 18-pound turkey? Also, include any questions you may have about poultry preparation. Use Internet or print resources to research the answers to these questions. Then write the fact sheet and submit it to your teacher for approval before sharing it with others.
- ◆ You have a frozen 17-pound turkey that you need to roast on Saturday. It is now Thursday morning. How will you defrost the turkey? Why did you choose this method? Write a summary and submit it to your teacher.
- ◆ Suppose you are serving a turkey dinner for 10 people. You decide to buy a 16-pound turkey at \$.89 per pound. After dinner, you have 8 pounds of turkey left over. What was the average cost of turkey for each person served? Would you buy the same size turkey next time? Why or why not?
- ◆ Prepare a tri-fold brochure, and label it, "What to Do with Leftovers." Use your list of ideas from item 3 under *Thinking Critically* above, and include three to four interesting recipe suggestions.