

TURKEY FARMERS OF CANADA

WHOLE TURKEY 101



How to Buy Your Turkey

What size do I need?

Is it your turn to host the family gathering? The most common sizes of whole turkeys you will find at a store will range between 6 lb to 25 lb. Use our [Whole Bird Calculator](#) to estimate how large a turkey you will need, how long it may take to thaw, and how much time it will take to cook.

For more information on how to select your whole turkey, watch our [Turkey 101 How to Buy Video](#).



How and When to Thaw

The safest way to thaw frozen turkey is either in the refrigerator or in cold water.

Never thaw your turkey at room temperature!

Some products are meant to be cooked from frozen; always read your product label carefully. For more information, watch our **Turkey 101 How to Thaw Video**.

REFRIGERATOR METHOD:

This method of thawing a turkey is the safest, as it keeps the meat cold until it is completely defrosted.

- Place turkey on a tray on a bottom shelf in refrigerator.
- Allow 5 hours of thawing time per pound (10 hours/kg).



COLD WATER METHOD:

- Keep the turkey in its original wrapping.
- In a large container, cover the turkey completely with cold water.
- Change the water at least every hour.
- Allow 1 hour of thawing time per pound (2 hours/kg).

Once thawed, keep your turkey refrigerated and cook within 48 hours.



How to Brine

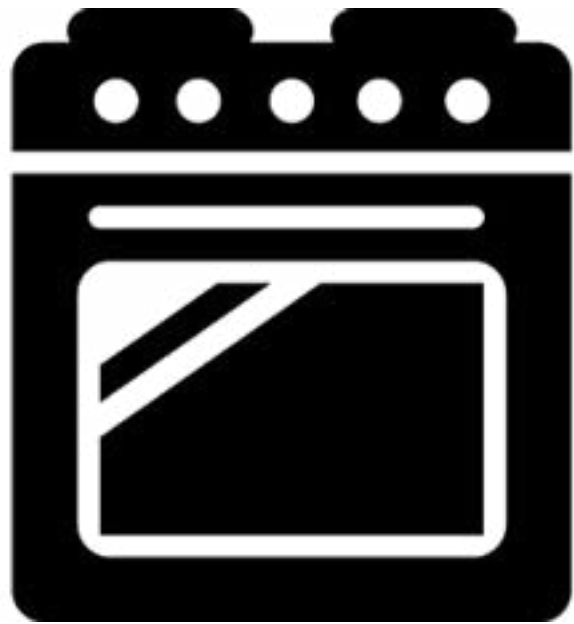
Brining adds flavour and moisture to your turkey meat. The brining process – soaking a whole bird in water saturated with salt – is believed by many to be a favourable way to prepare turkey. The brining process requires a 6-24 hour soaking period, and ideally should be done the day before roasting. The length of the soaking period will depend on the turkey, water and your own personal experience and tastes, so experiment a few times to see what works best for you.

You will need a brining bag, available in many kitchen supply stores, which is designed especially to brine poultry. Or if not available, you will need a large enough container (food-safe plastic container or non-corrosive covered pot) to hold the turkey while submerged in brine. There needs to be sufficient room to fit it in your refrigerator.

Remember, the addition of the salt in the brining procedure will yield a salty flavour to the turkey so it is wise to omit salt as an ingredient in the turkey stock.



Scrumptious Stuffings for a Contemporary Thanksgiving



Cherry-Orange Stuffed Turkey Breast

Recipe and photo by Charmian Christie of
www.themessybaker.com



Lightly Spiced Indian-Style Turkey Stuffing

Recipe and photo by Michelle Peters-Jones of
www.thetiffinbox.ca



How to Roast your Whole Turkey or Turkey Breast

Turkey Farmers of Canada recommends cooking a whole turkey to an internal temperature of 170°F (77°C) in the breast and 180°F (82°C) in the thigh.

When roasting, any stuffing placed in the cavity of the bird should reach an internal temperature of at least 165°F (74°C).

Let the bird stand for 20 minutes before carving.

For more information on how to roast your turkey, watch our [Turkey 101 Roasting Video](#).

APPROXIMATE TIMETABLE FOR ROASTING A TURKEY AT 325°F (160°C) OR BARBEQUING AT MEDIUM HEAT

Weight	Roasting Times		Barbeque Times Medium Heat
	Stuffed	Unstuffed	Unstuffed
6 – 8 lbs (3.0 – 3.5 kg)	3 – 3 ¼ hours	2 ½ – 2 ¾ hours	1 – 1 ¾ hours
8 – 10 lbs (3.5 – 4.5 kg)	3 ¼ – 3 ½ hours	2 ¾ – 3 hours	1 ¼ – 2 hours
10 – 12 lbs (4.5 – 5.5 kg)	3 ½ – 3 ¾ hours	3 – 3 ¼ hours	1 ½ – 2 ¼ hours
12 – 16 lbs (5.5 – 7.0 kg)	3 ¾ – 4 hours	3 ¼ – 3 ½ hours	2 – 2 ¾ hours
16 – 20 lbs (7.0 – 9.0 kg)	4 ¼ – 4 ¾ hours	3 ¾ – 4 ½ hours	2 ½ – 3 ¼ hours
20 – 24 lbs (9.0 – 10.9 kg)	4 ¾ – 5 ½ hours	4 – 5 hours	3 ¾ – 4 ½ hours

Cooking times may vary depending on: the temperature of the bird going into the oven, the accuracy of the oven's thermostat, how many times the oven door is opened during roasting, the type and size of the roasting pan used, and the size of the turkey in relation to the size of the oven.

More Satisfying Stuffings to Feed Your Family



Apricot & Pecan Stuffing

Recipe and photo by Renee Kohlman of www.sweetsugarbean.com



Sourdough Blueberry Turkey Sausage Stuffing

Recipe and photo by Colleen Milne of www.thefoodblog.net

Making Gravy & Carving Your Turkey

Visit www.tastyturkey.ca for our [Step-by-step Carving Guideline](#) and handy [Turkey 101 How to Carve Video](#).

Great Gravy!

1/4 cup (50 mL) turkey drippings

1/4 cup (50 mL) all-purpose flour

2 cups (500 mL) liquid (reserved drippings with vegetable and/or poultry broth)

1. When the turkey is done, pour drippings into a bowl, leaving all brown particles in the pan. Let fat rise to the top and skim off. Set drippings to the side.
2. Measure the drippings back into roasting pan and place over low heat. Blend in 1/4 cup (50 mL) flour and cook until slightly brown and bubbly.
3. Stir in 2 cups (500 mL) liquid (a combination of reserved drippings, vegetable and/or poultry broth, or water if additional liquid is needed) until smooth.
4. Scrape brown particles from bottom of pan, and cook, stirring until mixture is thick. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
5. Be sure to bring the gravy to a boil before serving. Serve hot. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers.

Note: Use turkey gravy within two days.

For easy instructions on making homemade gravy, watch our **Turkey 101 Making Gravy Video!**



Leftovers

There are so many ways to use your turkey leftovers...there's no reason to ever get bored! Check out our 50+ leftover recipes at www.tastyturkey.ca/recipe-category/leftovers.



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