

Alternate Routes to Get Your Turkey to the Table



Conventional ovens are not the only way to cook a turkey this Thanksgiving. Get creative! The following are methods suggested by the United States Department of Agriculture for cooking your bird, safely, big or small.

Electric Roaster Oven

This tabletop appliance serves as an extra oven for cooking a turkey. Generally, the cooking time and oven temperature setting are the same as a conventional oven. Preheat the oven to at least 325 degrees, place on the roaster oven rack so the turkey is raised out of the juices, and leave the lid on throughout cooking, removing it as little as possible to avoid slowing the cooking process. Use a food thermometer to be certain the temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast reaches the safe minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees fahrenheit.

Covered Gas Grill

Gas grills have become very popular in the last few years. If your gas grill has only one large burner, place a pan of water under the grate to create indirect heat. Place the turkey in a roasting pan and place on top of the grill.

If the grill has two or three burners, the turkey should be placed away from the flame. This can be done by turning off one of the burners and placing the turkey in that area. When using a gas grill, always follow manufacturer's directions for cooking times.

Smoking a Turkey

Smokers use either electricity, gas, or charcoal for heat. For gas or electric smokers, follow manufacturer's instructions. Charcoal smokers have two pans—one for charcoal and one for liquid. Smokers require a liquid to create the moist, hot smoke needed for cooking.

When using a charcoal smoker, fill the liquid pan with water, wine, apple juice, or the liquid you desire. Fill the charcoal pan with charcoal. When the smoker reaches an internal temperature of 225 to 300 degrees, quickly place the turkey on the smoker rack and replace the cover.

Add charcoal every 1 to 2 hours to maintain the correct temperature and replenish the liquid as necessary. Heat and liquid are critical to maintaining the smoke that cooks the turkey. Cooking times will vary. Estimate 20 to 30 minutes per pound.

Deep Frying a Turkey

A whole turkey can be successfully cooked by the deep frying method provided the turkey is not stuffed and has been completely thawed. The turkey should be 12 pounds or less in size. Select a cooking vessel large enough to completely submerge the turkey in oil without it spilling over.

Select a safe location outdoors for deep frying your turkey. Heat the cooking oil to 350 degrees. Never leave the hot oil unattended during cooking and monitor the temperature with a thermometer.

Allow approximately 3 to 5 minutes per pound cooking time. Remove turkey from the oil and drain oil from the cavity. Place it on a paper towel lined tray and let it rest about 20 minutes before carving.

Microwaving a Turkey

Turkeys can be successfully cooked in a microwave oven—whole or in parts. Turkey parts can be cooked in a dish with a lid or covered in plastic wrap with holes for venting. A 12 to 14 pound turkey is the maximum size most microwaves can accommodate. Microwaves sometimes cook a whole turkey unevenly, so microwaving it in an oven cooking bag aids in even heat distribution.

Allow 3 inches oven clearance on top and 2 to 3 inches of space around the bird.

The time for cooking a turkey in the microwave is 9 to 10 minutes per pound on medium power.

Remember These Tips For Safe Holiday Cooking



The kitchen is the heart of the home. Sadly, it's also where two out of every five home fires start.

Many home fires occur during what's supposed to be the happiest time of the year – the holidays. Thanksgiving, Christmas and Christmas Eve hold a tradition of cooking, and safety should always be considered in the kitchen.

As we embark on the holiday season, [insert co-op/PPD/PUD name] and the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) urge you to use these simple safety tips to identify and correct potential kitchen hazards:

- Never leave cooking equipment unattended, and always remember to turn off burners if you have to leave the room

- Supervise the little ones closely in the kitchen; make sure children stay *at least* three feet away from all cooking appliances
- Prevent potential fires by making sure your stovetop and oven are clean and free of grease, dust and spilled food
- Remember to clean the exhaust hood and duct over your stove on a regular basis
- Keep the cooking area around the stove and oven clear of combustibles, such as towels, napkins and potholders
- Always wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking; loose clothing can catch fire
- To protect from spills and burns, use the back burners and turn the pot handles in, away from reaching hands
- Locate all appliances away from the sink
- Plug countertop appliances into ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets
- Keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the range or toaster
- Unplug the toaster and other countertop appliances when not in use
- Be sure to turn off all appliances when cooking is completed

For more important safety tips to keep you and your family safe this holiday season and throughout the year, visit esfi.org. ■

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated exclusively to promoting electrical safety in the home, school, and workplace. ESFI proudly engages in public education campaigns throughout the year to prevent electrical fires, injuries and fatalities.