

How to Cook a Moist Turkey

Instructions

1. Purchase a fresh bird, or thaw your frozen bird at least 24 hrs before you plan to cook it. Wash it off with cold water and remove the innards.
2. Prepare a brine. Brine will seal in the flavors and juices of the bird. A simple brine recipe is 4 quarts of water, 1 cup of sugar and 1 ½ cups of Kosher salt. Adjust your brine mix to completely cover the turkey. To add salt, pepper, garlic or herbs to taste.
3. Put your turkey in a large pot and completely cover with the brine mixture. Return the turkey to the refrigerator and let it soak for 24 hrs. If you soak it any longer, it won't have any added affect.
4. Take the turkey outside of the brine mixture when you are ready to cook. Wash it off with cold water and set it on a roasting pan. Cover it with olive oil or melted butter. Rub the outside with an herb mixture. I generally use Rosemary, Thyme, garlic, salt and pepper. Adjust the rub to taste.
5. Stuff your bird. Because this recipe calls for low temperatures you cannot cook stuffing with this recipe, instead carrots, and leaves of Rosemary, cilantro and parsley and stuff the center of the turkey. Put a little bit of water in bottom of pan.
6. Preheat your oven to 500 degrees and put the turkey into the oven uncovered for about 15 minutes allowing to outside of bird. Lower the temperature to 200 degrees and cover the bird tightly with foil so no moisture can escape + sear.
7. Skip basting. Because you have already brined the bird, it will keep the juices intact. Normally when people baste it dries out because you are releasing moisture each time you raise the tin foil during cooking.
8. Take the turkey's temperature. The turkey is done once it reaches 180 degrees. Remove the turkey from oven and rest 20-30 minutes while you allow the juices to settle in the bird.

Tips & Warnings

- Don't cook stuffing in your turkey for this recipe as the temperature is not high enough to kill bacteria.

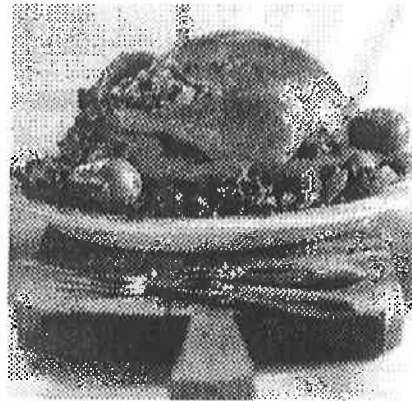
Turkey Roasting & Carving 101

From purchasing the right pan through to carving a roast turkey, you'll find great information and tips here.

Roasting Pan

Selecting a Roasting Pan

You may not use a roasting pan every day, but it's a valuable piece of kitchen equipment to have on hand for your holiday turkey. The proper pan ensures that your turkey cooks up moist and golden brown.

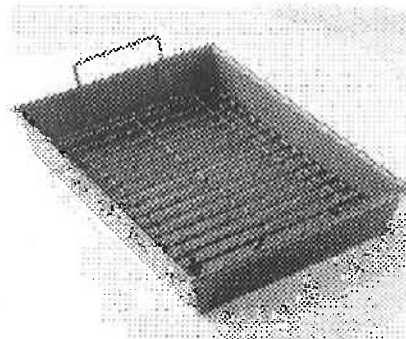


When buying a roasting pan, look for:

- Shallow depth
- Heavy weight
- Good heat-conducting qualities
- A rack or trivet to hold the bird out of the drippings and to allow the heat to reach the underside of the bird
- The right fit:

The pan should just hold the turkey with no part of the bird extending beyond the pan or the meat juices will drip into the oven. On the other hand, if the pan is too large for the turkey, the juices in the pan will burn.

- Handles – especially helpful when pulling the hot pan from the oven



If you aren't looking to invest in a roasting pan, you can use your broiler pan. Place a wire rack in the bottom of the broiler pan to keep the turkey out of the drippings.

Lightweight, disposable aluminum roasting pans should not be used for cooking turkey; those pans are simply not heavy enough to support the weight of the bird. It could spill or break, causing serious burns, when you try to remove it from the oven.

Roasting Tips

Roasting the Turkey

- Place oven rack in lowest position; preheat oven to 325 degrees.
- Place the turkey, breast side up, on a rack in a shallow roasting pan.
- To enhance browning, brush with cooking oil.
- Insert a meat thermometer into the center of an inside thigh muscle so the bulb doesn't touch bone.

A meat thermometer can be checked for accuracy by submerging at least 2 inches of the stem in boiling water. It should read 212 degrees F. If the thermometer registers above or below 212 degrees F., add or subtract the same number of degrees from the temperature specified in the recipe and cook to that temperature.

Instant-read thermometers, also known as rapid-response thermometers, measure a wide range of temperatures, typically from 0 to 220 degrees F. These thermometers are not designed to stay in food during cooking. Instant-read thermometers can also be checked for accuracy with the boiling water test.

- Cover the turkey loosely with foil, leaving space between the bird and the foil.
- Press the foil over the drumsticks and neck.
- Roast in a 325-degree oven using the timings below as a guide.
- When bird has been in the oven for two-thirds of the time listed on page 3, cut skin or string between drumsticks.
- Remove foil the last 30 to 45 minutes.

Is It Done Yet?

When the Turkey Is Done

- When it's done, the thigh meat should be 180 degrees F. and the stuffing should be at least 165 degrees F.
- Check with a meat thermometer.

If using an instant-read thermometer: Pull the food out of the oven, then insert the thermometer into the thickest portion of the food, not touching bone or the pan. The temperature should register in about 15 seconds.

- The temperature of the meat will rise about 5 degrees F. after the bird comes out of the oven.
- The drumsticks should move very easily in their sockets and their thickest parts should feel soft when pressed.
- The juices from the thigh should run clear when pierced deeply with a long-tined fork.
- Remove from the oven and cover loosely with foil.
- Let stand 20 minutes to facilitate carving.
- Release legs from leg clamp, if present. To avoid burns or splatters, do not remove clamp until bird has cooled slightly.
- Remove stuffing before carving.

Timing Guidelines for Stuffed Whole Turkeys*

- For 8- to 12-pound turkey, roast in 325-degree oven for 3 to 3 3/4 hours.
- For 12- to 14-pound turkey, roast in 325-degree oven for 3 1/4 to 4 1/2 hours.
- For 14- to 18-pound turkey, roast in 325-degree oven for 4 to 5 hours.

- For 18- to 20-pound turkey, roast in 325-degree oven for 4 1/2 to 5 1/4 hours.
- For 20- to 24-pound turkey, roast in 325-degree oven for 4 3/4 to 5 3/4 hours.

*Note: For unstuffed turkeys of the same weight, reduce the total cooking time by 15 to 45 minutes. If the turkey breast is cooking faster than the thighs and is beginning to overbrown, cover the breast of the turkey lightly with aluminum foil and continue roasting.

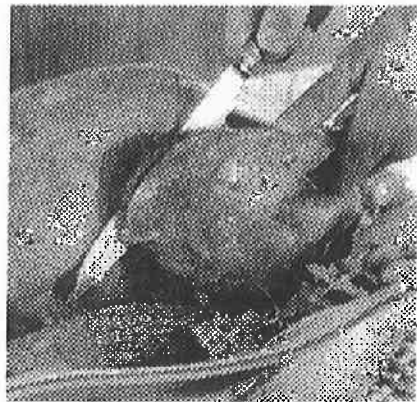
Carving a Turkey

There's more than one way to slice a bird. One way is referred to as the kitchen way. The other is more the "carving at the table" dining room show. See which one fits your style.

Both Methods

Before Carving

- After the turkey is removed from the oven, let it stand for 15 to 20 minutes before carving.
- This allows the flesh firm up so it's easier to slice and the slices stay together better.
- Cover the bird with foil to keep it warm.
- Use a sharp carving knife or an electric knife for slicing.
- Place bird on a carving board.
- Remove the stuffing.



Slice Off the Leg and Thigh

- Grasp the tip of one drumstick with your fingers and pull the leg away from the body. Cut through the skin and meat between the drumstick-thigh piece and body as shown. This exposes the joint where the thighbone and backbone connect. With the tip of a knife, disjoin the thighbone from the backbone by cutting through the joint. Repeat on other side.

Separate the Thigh and Drumstick

- Cut through the joint where the leg and thigh bones meet. Repeat on the other piece.

Cut the Drumstick into Slices

- Hold the drumstick vertically by the tip with the large end down. Slice meat parallel to the bone and under some tendons, turning the leg to get even slices.

Slice the Thigh Meat

- Cut slices parallel to the thigh bone. Repeat with the remaining drumstick and thigh.

Kitchen Style

This way differs from the table carving style only when it gets to how the breast is cut.

- Kitchen style slices the breast off the bone whole, as you would for chicken.
- The breast is then cut into slices by cutting across the grain the width of the breast.

Pluses

For the easiest, most visual explanation, see this video

The slices fit onto crowded plates more easily.

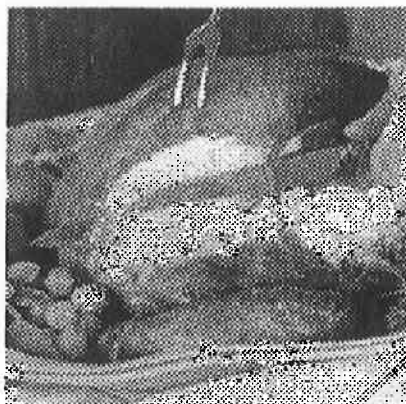
Since the meat is cut against the grain, the pieces tend to hold together better.

Theoretically, this results in more moist and tender meat.

Dining Room Style

This way differs from the kitchen carving style only when it gets to how the breast is cut.

- To carve the breast meat, make a deep horizontal cut into the breast above each wing. This cut will be the end point of the breast meat slices.
- Remove the wings by cutting through the joint where the wing bone and backbone meet.
- To continue carving the breast meat, beginning at the outer edge of one side of the breast, cut slices from the top of the breast down to the horizontal cut as shown. Make the slices thin and even. Final smaller slices can follow the curve of the breastbone. Repeat on the other side of the breast.



Pluses

- This method fits the classic concept of carving the roast bird at the dining room table.
- This method requires less room to carve since the breast is left on the bone.

FAQs

Can I stuff the turkey the night before I roast it?

It is unsafe to stuff the turkey ahead of time. The chilled stuffing in the turkey will not reach a safe temperature before the turkey is done. To be safe the turkey should reach a temperature of 180 degrees F. and the stuffing in the body cavity of the bird should reach 165 degrees F.

What is the best way to check for doneness?

Temperature should be your guide to doneness. To assure that the turkey and stuffing have reached a safe temperature, always use a thermometer when you roast turkey. Because there is no visual test for stuffing doneness, the USDA recommends that you not stuff a turkey if you don't have a thermometer.

I have lots of turkey and stuffing left over. What should I do with it?

Before carving your turkey, be sure to remove all stuffing. The leftover stuffing can be refrigerated for up to 2 days. Stuffing must be heated to at least 160 degrees F. After dinner remove all meat from the carcass (this should be done within 2 hours of the turkey's removal from oven). Leftover turkey can be refrigerated and used within 2 days, or frozen in small portions. Be sure to label and date the wrapped packages and use within 6 months. Leftover turkey can be used in any recipe calling for cooked chicken or turkey.

Do I need to baste a turkey while it's cooking?

Our Test Kitchen doesn't feel that basting today's turkeys is necessary. More importantly, basting tools, such as brushes and bulb basters, could actually be sources of bacteria contamination if dipped into uncooked or undercooked poultry juices, then allowed to sit at room temperature and used later for basting.

I've heard that roasting turkey in a paper grocery bag is really easy and delicious. Is it safe to roast turkey this way?

According to the United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service, the glue and ink on brown bags are not intended for use as cooking materials and may give off harmful fumes. In addition, brown bags are usually made from recycled materials and are not sanitary.

Can I roast a turkey overnight in an oven set at a low temperature?

No. Roasting a turkey at a temperature below 325 degrees F allows harmful bacteria to multiply. These are the bacteria that can cause food poisoning and may be present on the raw turkey. Fortunately, they are easily destroyed with proper cooking techniques. Roasting the turkey at 325 degrees F kills the bacteria yet produces meat that is moist and tender.

Roasted Turkey Roulade

Prep Time: 30 min **Level:** Intermediate **Serves:** 6 to 7 servings
Inactive Prep Time: 15 min
Cook Time: 2 hr 30 min

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup large-diced dried figs, stems removed
- 3/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup Calvados or brandy
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups diced onions (2 onions)
- 1 cup (1/2-inch-diced) celery (3 stalks)
- 3/4 pound pork sausage, casings removed (sweet and hot mixed)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- 3 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted
- 3 cups herb-seasoned stuffing mix (recommended: Pepperidge Farm)
- 1 1/2 cups chicken stock, preferably homemade
- 1 extra-large egg, beaten
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 whole (2 halves) turkey breast, boned and butterflied (5 pounds)
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Directions

Place the dried figs and cranberries in a small saucepan and pour in the Calvados and 1/2 cup water. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, then lower the heat and simmer for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large (12-inch) skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and celery and saute until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the sausage, crumbling it into small bits with a fork, and saute, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes, until cooked and browned. Add the figs and cranberries with the liquid, the chopped rosemary, and pine nuts, and cook for 2 more minutes. Scrape up the brown bits with a wooden spoon.

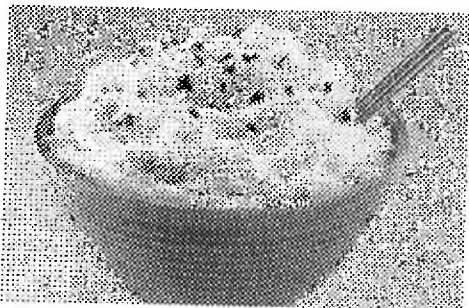
Place the stuffing mix in a large bowl. Add the sausage mixture, chicken stock, egg, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper and stir well. (The stuffing may be prepared ahead and stored in the refrigerator overnight.)

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Place a baking rack on a sheet pan.

Lay the butterflied turkey breast skin side down on a cutting board. Sprinkle the meat with 2 teaspoons salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Spread the stuffing in a 1/2-inch-thick layer over the meat, leaving a half-inch border on all sides. Don't mound the stuffing or the turkey will be difficult to roll. (Place the leftover stuffing in a buttered gratin dish and bake for the last 45 minutes of roasting alongside the turkey.) Starting at 1 end, roll the turkey like a jelly roll and tuck in any stuffing that tries to escape on the sides. Tie the roast firmly with kitchen twine every 2 inches to make a compact cylinder.

Place the stuffed turkey breast seam side down on the rack on the sheet pan. Brush with the melted butter, sprinkle generously with salt and pepper, and roast for 1 3/4 to 2 hours, until an instant-read thermometer registers 150 degrees F in the center. (I test in a few places.) Cover the turkey with aluminum foil and allow it to rest at room temperature for 15 minutes. Carve 1/2-inch-thick slices and serve warm with the extra stuffing.

What is the best recipe for mashed potatoes?



Simple - the recipe your mom made for you growing up.

Bottom line, there is no one **perfect** recipe! It's really depends on your personal taste preferences which most likely were developed by what you were served in your youth.

Mashed potatoes are one of the ultimate comfort foods and I imagine how you like your **spuds** mashed is highly influenced by the style of potatoes you were served as a kid.

Think about it. What comes to mind when you think of ways to describe mashed potatoes?

Some of the more positive descriptions might be **creamy**, smooth, rich, textured, flavorful, buttery, fluffy, light, potato tasting.

Or maybe you weren't so lucky and were served lumpy, bland, watery, dry, **gummy**, pasty, starchy, heavy, gloppy potatoes. Sound familiar, I'm sure there are many more way to describe mashed spuds, but this should do for now.

I personally like mine dense, smooth, buttery but where you can still taste the potato. I have friends who like them rich and creamy but with a little texture. Think about how you like your mashed potatoes.

HOW YOU GET TO YOUR DESIRED MASHED POTATOES IS GOING TO DEPEND ON FOUR SIMPLE FACTORS:

What type of potato you are using?

How you cook them?

How you mash them?

What you add to them?

THE TYPE OF POTATO - HIGH STARCH OR LOW STARCH

Potatoes are basically water and starch. High starch potatoes like russet and Yukon Gold are often used because the more starch, the fuller the actual cells of the potato resulting in a fluffier texture. Some say they tend to be creamier than other potatoes.

Low starch potatoes like round whites are more waxy and some chefs say better for mashed spuds because they absorb less water and hold up better when cooking. They also think they have more flavor and less "starchy" taste.

HOW YOU COOK THE POTATOES

Without going into the science of it, always start your potatoes in cold water with salt added to it. How much water? Just enough to cover the potatoes. Bring the water to a boil and cook the potatoes until they are tender when pierced with a knife. How long it takes depends on how many potatoes you are cooking.

When done, drain them immediately! Do not rinse, just drain and put them back in the pot and return the pot to the stove on low heat. This will make a huge difference because the low heat will allow some of the excess water to evaporate leaving you with less water and more potato resulting in more flavor.

HOW TO MASH THE POTATOES

How you mash your potatoes will greatly effect the texture and style. There are several tools and methods all having different results. For example, the most common masher in America is the Wire Masher. With it you can create either a smooth or textured mashed potato depending on how much you work.

If you are looking for really smooth mashed potatoes (the way I like them) you can try a Potato Ricer. Looks just like a giant garlic press and "rices" the potatoes that you then combine with your other ingredients for extremely smooth potatoes.

If you are looking for fluffy, airy potatoes, try an electric mixer. Often used in restaurants to stretch how far a potato can go, the mixer whips air into the potato giving them more volume and staying power.

WHAT TO ADD

As important as type of potato, how you cook them them & finally mashing technique is what you add to them. Makes sense if you add cream over milk the end result should be creamier flavor. Instead of butter, some chefs have told me they use olive oil or duck fat.

Then there are the fun extras given to me by visitors to my web site with some mentioned below. I'm talking about cream cheese, Worcestershire sauce, hot English mustard, turnips, parsnips and whatever else you may find in your family's secret mashed potato recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds of potatoes
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 cup of half and half (half milk & half cream)
- 6 tablespoons of butter
- Salt and pepper, to taste

PREP WORK

Peel and quarter the potatoes.

HOW TO MAKE AT HOME

1. Add the potatoes to a large pot with enough cold water to cover them by an inch or so. Add salt and bring the water to a boil. Cook until the potatoes are tender when pierced with a knife. (About 15 minutes)
3. Drain the potatoes return them to the pot and cook the drained potatoes over low heat for a couple of minutes to evaporate some of the water still in the potato.
4. Mash by your method of choice. (I prefer a potato ricer)
5. Blend in butter, half & half, and any other ingredients you prefer.
6. Season with salt and pepper.

Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes with Roasted Shallots

"Boiled Yukon Gold potatoes are whipped with evaporated skim milk and oven roasted shallots in this recipe from the American Diabetes Association."

INGREDIENTS:

6 tablespoons minced shallots	ground black pepper to taste
2 teaspoons olive oil	salt to taste
1/2 cup low fat, low sodium chicken broth	3 small Yukon Gold potatoes
2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme	1/2 cup evaporated skim milk <i>or regular milk</i>

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).
2. Place the shallots, oil, broth, thyme, pepper and salt in a small casserole dish. Cover and roast until the shallots are very soft and brown, about 45 minutes. Remove the casserole from the oven.
3. Cook the potatoes in a large pot of boiling water until soft, about 20 minutes. Drain and place the potatoes back in the pot over low heat to dry.
4. Heat the milk over medium low heat. Add it to the potatoes and beat with a mixer. Add the roasted shallots and beat again until potatoes are smooth.

Yummy Pesto Mashed Potatoes

Prep Time: 5
Minutes

Ready In: 30
Minutes

Cook Time: 25
Minutes

Servings: 4

"Simply by adding pesto to boiled potatoes then mashing, adds a delicious alternative with a hint of colour to the usual mash - and guess what - the kids just love it too! Try using different kinds of pesto. You could also add some sun-dried tomatoes and top with a little grated cheese and black pepper."

INGREDIENTS:

4 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed	1/4 cup milk, or as needed
1 tablespoon butter	1 tablespoon basil pesto

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place the potatoes into a saucepan with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, and cook until tender; about 10 minutes. Drain, and mash with butter and milk to your desired consistency. Mix in pesto, and serve.

Carrot-Sweet Potato Mash

Prep Time: 10 Minutes

Ready In: 30 Minutes

Cook Time: 20 Minutes

Servings: 6

"This sweet and chunky side dish reminds me of the fall and all of the flavors that I look forward to cooking with."

INGREDIENTS:

1 (16 ounce) package baby carrots	1/2 cup applesauce, or as needed
1 sweet potato, peeled and cubed	1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup butter	1/2 cup raisins

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place carrots and potatoes into a large pot and cover with salted water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain and allow to steam dry for a minute or two.
2. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat, then stir in the applesauce and brown sugar until dissolved. When the potatoes are ready, transfer to a serving bowl and mash until smooth. Then fold in the applesauce mixture.

Autumn Apple Tart

Prep Time: 25 Minutes

Ready In: 1 Hour 15
Minutes

Cook Time: 50
Minutes

Servings: 6

"The crumb topping gives this apple tart a delightfully sweet crunch in every bite. I like to make it year-round, but it's especially good in fall when fresh apples are at their best. -- Janet Briggs"

INGREDIENTS:

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

1/4-inch slices

1 teaspoon baking powder

TOPPING:

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/3 cup sugar

1 tablespoon sugar

4 1/2 teaspoons all-purpose flour

1/2 cup cold butter

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 egg, beaten

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

2 tablespoons milk

2 tablespoons cold butter

6 medium tart apples, peeled and cut into

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a medium bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, salt and sugar. Cut in butter until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Combine egg and milk; gradually add to flour mixture, tossing with a fork until dough forms a ball.
2. With lightly floured hands, press dough onto the bottom and up the sides of a 12-in. fluted tart pan with removable bottom. Arrange apple slices in a circular pattern over dough, starting at the outer edge and overlapping slices.
3. For topping, combine the sugar, flour and spices in a small bowl. Cut in butter until crumbly. Sprinkle over apples. Bake at 350 degrees F for 50-60 minutes or until apples are tender. Serve warm or cold.