

# Turkey tips given for preparing holiday dinners

NEWARK, Del. — It's getting to be that time of year again — a time of frosty mornings, warm clothing and family dinners. And traditionally, the family dinner means a roast turkey with all the trimmings.

In order to insure a safe holiday dinner, one should handle and store your turkey properly, says Christine Baver, student assistant to Delaware extension home economist Sue Schaeffer. When thawing the turkey, one should remember that most food spoilage organisms grow rapidly between 40 and 140 degrees F. Temperatures between 60 and 120 degrees F. are in the

danger zone, allowing very rapid bacteria growth. If food is in this temperature range for three to four hours, enough bacteria could grow and survive to cause illness.

Here are three safe methods for thawing a turkey:

1. Thaw the turkey in refrigerator in the original wrap. Place on a tray or platter to catch the drippings. Turkeys under 18 pounds take about one to two days to thaw; birds 18 pounds and over take about two to three days.

2. Thaw in cold water. Place the frozen turkey in its water-tight wrap in cold water. Change the water

frequently to hasten thawing. Small birds take about an hour to become pliable; large turkeys take up to six to eight hours.

A combination of methods one and two may be used. Partly thaw the turkey in the refrigerator and then complete in cold water.

3. Thaw the turkey in paper bags. Leave the bird in its original plastic wrap. Place in a double thickness of heavy paper bags and close the end; or wrap the bird well in newspapers and set in a corrugated box.

Place the covered turkey in the coolest room available. A 12 to 16 pound turkey requires 12 to 14 hours to

thaw; a 20 to 24 pound turkey takes from 16 to 18 hours.

In all cases, one should cook the turkey as soon as it's thawed, says Ms. Baver. Whole turkeys frozen without giblets, or frozen poultry parts, can be roasted, fried, braised or stewed without thawing. A cook should allow at least one-and-a-half times the usual recommended cooking time for unfrozen or thawed turkey of the same shape and weight.

One should never thaw commercially frozen stuffed turkey before cooking. Such birds must be cooked from the frozen state. A person should be sure to follow the directions on the label.

It's dangerous to partially roast a turkey one day and finish cooking it the next. Bacteria have an added chance to grow with such a cooking method. Turkey flesh would tend to be in the danger zone (60-120 degrees F.) for more than four hours.

If staphylococci are present, they produce a toxin which causes a type of food poisoning. The delayed cooking method would contribute to the danger. So one should complete your roasting all at one time.

Roasting a turkey at a low temperature all night is another dangerous practice, says Ms. Baver. Such low cooking temperatures would not entirely destroy harmful bacteria and might well result in increased growth of microorganisms.

Another unsafe practice is to stuff the turkey the night before, then roast the bird in

the morning. The refrigerated stuffed turkey would be a potential hazard, possibly harboring food spoilage bacteria. If one makes stuffing ahead, it should be stored separately in the refrigerator.

After the big meal, one should remove every bit of stuffing from the bird as soon as possible after serving, cool it quickly, and refrigerate and use it within one to two days.

A person should remove the meat from the bones as soon as possible after serving and cool quickly. The meat should be stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator and used within one to two days.

Turkey meat can be frozen. Covered with broth or gravy, cooked turkey slices or pieces may be held for six months; meat without gravy may be held one month.

What can a person do with the leftover turkey?

Curries, casseroles, croquettes, salads, soups, and sandwiches all can use turkey meat.

## TURKEY CHOWDER


- 2 slices bacon, Chopped
- ¼ c. chopped onion
- 1 c. diced celery
- 2 c. cubed potatoes
- 1 c. diced cooked turkey
- 2 c. turkey broth
- 1 c. whole kernel corn
- 2 T. chopped parsley
- 2 T. flour
- 1 c. milk
- salt & pepper

Place bacon in fry pan over low heat. When part of the fat has cooked out, add the onion. Continue cooking until onion is soft and bacon is brown.

Meanwhile, cook celery, potatoes and turkey in broth until the vegetables are tender. Add corn, cooked bacon, onion, and parsley.

Blend flour with milk and stir into cooking mixture. Cook about 15 minutes more, stirring occasionally. Season to taste.

Makes six servings.



**Kendy's Kollumn**  
by Kendace Borry

As I settled down into the driver's seat of the three-quarter ton pickup, I felt like I had come home. Happily gripping the steering wheel, for a moment I just enjoyed the truck around me

I have always had a special fondness for the farmer's friend on four wheels, maybe because I first learned to drive in one. Not trusting me to the family car, my first experience behind the steering wheel was out in the pasture in an old beatup pickup, when my father spent most of the time screaming, "Use the clutch, turn now, watch where you're going, look out for that tree, not so fast, shift, slow down, get out of second gear, etc."

After that my mother took me driving for awhile. But I still like driving the farm styled pickups, and nine times out of ten, if I have a choice between using the truck or the car, I'll take the truck.

Now, taking the truck does not simply involve going out, hopping into it, and zooming off. Nosirree! There is a definite plan of procedure that must be followed.

First of all, if I'm gonna play 'farmer in the truck', I have to look the part. Now that usually isn't too hard, because my friends all know that when I'm on the farm, 90 per cent of the time I look like something the cat dragged in. Nevertheless, I always have to have my old clothes on or I feel uncomfortable in the truck.

Then there is the matter of the German Shepherd. As far as she is concerned, trucks have one purpose in life—to be ridden in. One is not allowed to drive off without first installing her in the back of the pickup. And even though she is now 13 years old, and that means half lifting her in, you just couldn't think of leaving her behind.

Finally there are the supplies to be taken. One can just never go somewhere in the truck without taking something along, unless it is to pick something up. As a result usually one throws a haybale in the back, or a cowboy hat in the front, or carries a footlong list to the farm supply store.

Then comes the moment that I've been waiting for. I jump into the cab, turn the key, and shift into gear. Off we roar, whether it's me and ten sheep, me and the dog, or me and friends, or even just me and the truck. Somehow, in the truck, adventure always seems just around the corner.

I guess that that is what the expression-- Keep on truckin'--is really all about.



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