

You Should Know

(NAPS)—If you have any questions about the new food labels, write: Food and Drug Administration, HFE-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857.

You can find many delightful horseradish sauce recipes, a horseradish usage chart and cooking tips in a booklet called From Roast to Remoulade—featuring Horseradish. It's free if you send a self-addressed, stamped business envelope to The Horseradish Information Council, P.O. Box 720299, Atlanta, GA 30358.

If you're interested in information on preventing and caring for dry skin, call the Curél Dry Skin Hotline at 1-800-3-DRY SKIN, for a free brochure, "The Dry Skin Answer Book."

Family Living Focus

By
Adams Co. Extension Agent
Nina Redding



Six Top Turkey Questions

Blame it on the dog! Last week as I was "digging" in the freezer in the basement, I found a turkey. I couldn't believe it. Right there before my eyes was a 20 pound bird. What's so significant about this turkey is that I bought it last Christmas but at the last minute decided I was hungry for roast beef for Christmas dinner. I never would have forgotten the turkey if

it hadn't been for a large bag of bones we just had to have for the dog. The bones were in a bag that sat on top and completely covered the turkey!

So the big questions are first is the turkey still good and if it is, do I tell Russell we are going to eat year old turkey for Thanksgiving? Surely there has to be others of you reading who've had a turkey in your freezer for a long time. When I was preparing to write this

article I was relieved to find out my turkey is fine and I'm not the only person with the same question. Here are the six most commonly asked turkey questions on USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline.

1. How long will turkey last in the freezer? Is it safe to use a turkey I've had frozen since last Thanksgiving?

Yes! a whole frozen turkey can be stored in your home freezer at 0°F for up to one year without appreciable loss of quality. To prevent freezer burn, wrap the turkey in heavy freezer paper.

2. Which tastes better fresh or frozen turkeys? If I choose a fresh turkey, how long will it keep in my refrigerator?

There is no significant difference in quality between a fresh turkey and a frozen one. But you can only keep a fresh turkey refrigerated 1-2 days before cooking.

3. How long should I thaw turkey? How can I quickly thaw a turkey when time has run out?

Thawing your turkey in the refrigerator is the preferred method. Allow one day for each five pounds. In a hurry? Thaw the turkey in a clean sink. Put it in a heavy freezer bag secured with a twist tie. Cover the bird with cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes to keep it cool. Allow 6 - 9 hours for a 12 to 16 pound turkey, 9 - 11 hours for a 16 to 20 pound bird. Turkey can be thawed in the microwave oven, if it will fit. Be ready to cook the bird as soon as it's thawed.

4. What's the safest way to stuff a turkey? Is it okay to stuff a large turkey?

You can stuff a turkey, but do it just before you put it in the

oven. To save time, chop up and refrigerate stuffing ingredients the night before. Combine everything the next morning just before roasting. Stuff the bird loosely.

5. What is the best way to cook a picture-perfect turkey?

There are several cooking methods which will provide a delicious, tender turkey. You can roast the bird uncovered in a 325°F oven. This will give you dryer meat but a great roasted flavor. Or you can put the turkey in an oven cooking bag for a more moist bird in a shorter time. Other cooking methods include the microwave, rotisserie or outdoor kettle grill.

6. Can I cook the turkey the day before Thanksgiving? How do I safely store it and then warm it up for dinner?

Cooking ahead requires special attention to safe food handling. First, cook the bird to an internal temperature of 180°F in an oven set not lower than 325°F. Bake stuffing separately.

When roasted, let the bird stand for 15 minutes. Carve the meat off, leaving legs, thighs and wings intact if you like. Refrigerate the turkey in small shallow containers. On Thanksgiving Day, reheat the meat in a 325°F oven or warm in the microwave. To keep the meat tender when using a conventional oven, cover it with gravy or the natural cooked juices. Serve the heated slices on a platter, with the whole pieces garnishing the edges.

If you have questions about food safety or your holiday turkey call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.

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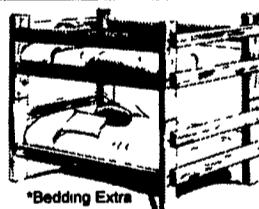
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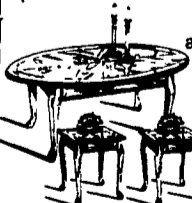


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