



Turkey Talk: Tips on taking care of your Beacon Turkey

Keep it frozen!

Turkeys should remain in a freezer until the thawing process takes place.

How to thaw a turkey

In the refrigerator: Thawing a turkey in the refrigerator is the recommended process. On average it takes 1 day of thawing per 4-5 pounds of turkey. So, if you have a 12-14 pound turkey and you would like to serve it on Thanksgiving Day, you should remove from the freezer and place it in the refrigerator on the Saturday (Nov. 17) before Thanksgiving. It will thaw for 4 days and can remain in the refrigerator for 2 additional days.

Other ways to thaw a turkey:

1. You can thaw a turkey in the microwave if you are going to put it directly into the oven. It takes approximately 6 minutes per pound. Be sure to check your microwave model's instructions since times can vary based on the size of your microwave.
2. You can thaw the turkey in a sink of cold water; leave the bird in its plastic bag while thawing. You'll need to change the water every 30 minutes. A 12-14 pound turkey will take about 6-7 hours to thaw in water and should go immediately to the oven.

Preparation and cooking tips:

1. Raw turkey contains harmful bacteria that can spread to everything it touches. It's not recommended that you wash or rinse your turkey. Remember to wash your hands and countertops with warm water and soap or a bleach solution after handling raw meat such as turkey.
2. Cooking your stuffing separately from your turkey is recommended. However, if you do stuff your turkey, stuff it just before cooking. Use a meat thermometer to make sure the stuffing reaches 165 degrees to kill all bacteria.
3. The recommended minimum cooking temperature for a turkey is 325 degrees. A 12-14 pound turkey will take about 3 – 3¾ hours. A temperature of 165 degrees should be reached and maintained to ensure food safety.

For more information on food safety, please visit www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/

Have a happy, healthy and awesome Thanksgiving.