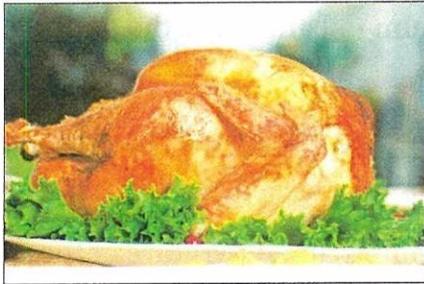


## Your Holiday Turkey



Many families serve a whole turkey at holiday meals. Read on to learn the proper way to thaw and cook a turkey and the safest way to store leftovers.

### Storing and Thawing an Uncooked Turkey

Place the turkey in the freezer or refrigerator as soon as you get home from the store. Never leave the uncooked turkey (fresh or frozen) at room temperature.

To thaw a frozen turkey, place it in a container on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. The container will catch any juices that drip as the turkey thaws.

Plan ahead and allow 24 hours of thawing time for every 5 pounds of turkey. If the turkey weighs 15 pounds, it will take about 3 days (72 hours) to thaw in the refrigerator. Do not thaw the turkey on the counter, in hot water, or in an oven on low heat.

Once thawed, the turkey must be cooked within 1 or 2 days.

### Cooking the Turkey

1. Preheat the oven to at least 325°F. (Lower temperatures are unsafe for cooking turkey.)
2. Take the thawed turkey out of the refrigerator. Remove the neck and giblets from inside the turkey. You can use them for stuffing, stock, or gravy, or throw them away.
3. Place the turkey breast-side up on a flat wire rack in a 2- to 2 ½-inch-deep roasting pan.
4. Coat the turkey with a thin layer of olive oil. The olive oil will cause the turkey to brown nicely as it cooks.

### Safety Tips

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after touching raw turkey.
- Thoroughly clean all kitchen tools and surfaces that come into contact with raw turkey or its juices before those tools or surfaces touch cooked turkey or any other foods.

## Leftovers

To be safe, store leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer within 2 hours of removing the turkey from the oven. Throw away any leftovers that have been sitting at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

To prepare leftovers for storage:

- Cut leftover turkey into 2- or 3-inch slices. Place a single layer of slices in a shallow container to cool. Seal or cover the container before placing it in the refrigerator.
- Place any leftover stuffing in a separate container. Seal or cover the container before placing it in the refrigerator.

You can safely store leftover turkey and stuffing in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days. You can also freeze the leftovers in freezer-safe containers.

### Safety Tip

Use a food thermometer when reheating leftovers. Make sure they reach an internal temperature of 165°F.

