



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Cook the bird safely

LAS VEGAS - Thanksgiving is nearly upon us and with it comes the excitement and energy of the holiday season. Whether the bird is big or small there are a few tips to help make the holiday healthy and happy.

Storage:

If you buy a fresh turkey, purchase it no more than two days in advance.

A frozen turkey should be defrosted in the refrigerator and allow 24 hours to defrost for every five pounds. Never defrost a turkey on the kitchen counter.

Keep the turkey in the original bag to prevent raw juices from contaminating other food in the fridge.

If you thaw the turkey in a sink, keep cool water (70° F) running over it and **cook it immediately**.

Cooking:

A turkey must reach a minimal internal temperature of 165°F or above to ensure safety. Use a meat thermometer in the thickest part of the turkey (the breast) to ensure the bird has reached the correct internal temperature.

Use the following guidelines or per cooking instructions:

<i>Size</i>	<i>Cooking Time</i>
8-12 pounds	2 ¾ -3 hours
12-14 pounds	3-3 ¾ hours
14-18 pounds	3 ¾ -4 ¼ hours
18-20 pounds	4 ¼ -4 ½ hours
20-24 pounds	4 ½ - 5 hours

If your holiday dinner will be deep fried, some additional safety tips include:

- Never leave the hot oil unattended and never allow children or pets near the cooking area.
- Allow the oil to cool completely before disposing or storing it.

Wash your hands, utensils, equipment and surfaces immediately after they have come into contact with raw turkey.

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Turkey tips – add one

Stuffed or not?

Because stuffing is such an important item, many cooks are not sure if they should cook the bird with the stuffing inside or separately. **The safest way to cook stuffing is to do so separately from the bird.**

If you decide to cook the stuffing inside the bird, the stuffing's temperature should be 165° F.

Leftovers

The best part of Thanksgiving is the leftovers. To store and enjoy them safely takes just a little preparation. Cut the leftovers into small pieces or slice them before storing them. Place leftovers in the refrigerator in shallow containers. Leftover turkey and stuffing should be used within four days (*right through the long weekend*) and reheated to an internal temperature of 165°F or above. If frozen, leftovers can be enjoyed past the holiday.

If you're planning to eschew traditional turkey for Thanksgiving, remember to cook poultry to 165°F ; hamburgers and all cuts of pork to 160°F; and beef, veal and lamb steaks, roasts and chops should be cooked to 145°F.

As with all foods, wash your hands and utensils, bowls and other cutlery. Use separate platters and utensils for raw and cooked meats and keep surfaces clean.

Most of all, enjoy. Happy Thanksgiving!

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