

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. For tips and guidelines the federal government's food safety site has turkey tips at <http://www.foodsafety.gov/> or [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Countdown\\_to\\_the\\_Holiday/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Countdown_to_the_Holiday/index.asp).

### 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 four to 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:

- 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 (a stuffed turkey would require longer cooking times).

Use the following guidelines or per cooking instructions or visit [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov):

<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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Cook the bird safely – 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 and the cooking time is longer. Visit [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Countdown\\_to\\_the\\_Holiday/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Countdown_to_the_Holiday/index.asp) for recommended cooking times.

### **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, follow cooking instructions and cook items to the appropriate temperatures. Visit

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Countdown\\_to\\_the\\_Holiday/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Countdown_to_the_Holiday/index.asp) for a list of recommendations, including:

- Ground beef, pork or other mixture should be cooked to at least 160°F
- Fresh beef, veal, lamb or other poultry should be cooked to 165°F
- Fresh pork or ham 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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