

## **2020 Turkey Help Lines and Websites**

### **Food Safety Inspection Service**

Preferred choice, especially for cooking temperatures and consumer food safety information:

[Countdown to the Thanksgiving Holiday](#)

[Roasting Those "Other" Holiday Meats](#)

[Food Safety Fact Sheets](#)

### **Call the [USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline](#):**

1-888-MPHotline

1-888-674-6854

A food safety specialist is available to speak to you — in English or Spanish — from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time on weekday's year round. (The Hotline is closed on Federal government holidays, with the exception of Thanksgiving Day. Hours of operation on Thanksgiving are 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Eastern Time). There is also an extensive menu of recorded food safety messages that may be heard 24 hours a day.

**Or send Email to:** [MPHotline.fsis@usda.gov](mailto:MPHotline.fsis@usda.gov)

### ***Butterball***<sup>®</sup>

<http://www.butterball.com> (English and Spanish)

[Media/Call/Text/Chat/](#)

*Turkey Talk-Line*<sup>®</sup> 1-800-BUTTERBALL (1-800-288-8372)

Additional features for information are mobile tools, text messages, social network site, email newsletter, and podcasts.

And if for any reason you need even more information on turkeys:

### ***National Turkey Federation***

<http://www.eatturkey.org>

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## **Roasting a Turkey Safely: *The latest recommendations***

### **How do I roast a turkey?**

For roasting a turkey, the oven should be set at a temperature of 325°F or higher. Place the turkey on a rack in a roasting pan and into the center of the oven. Whole poultry is safe when cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F as measured with a food thermometer. Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast.

If the turkey is stuffed it must reach a minimum temperature of 165°F in the innermost part of the thigh and breast, and the stuffing must also be 165°F in all parts. Use a calibrated food thermometer to check the turkey for doneness. For reasons of personal preference, it is still best to cook turkey to higher temperatures such as 180°F to remove pink appearance and rubbery texture. Even if the turkey comes equipped with a “pop-up” temperature indicator, it is important to use an accurate food thermometer to ensure its safety and not just rely on the pop-up. After taking the turkey out of the oven, let it stand 20 minutes before carving for best quality.

### **Should I stuff the turkey?**

It is recommended that you cook stuffing separately from the turkey. The stuffing needs to reach an internal temperature of 165°F in order to be safe. When the stuffing is inside of the turkey it takes much longer for it to reach a safe temperature. Often, by the time the stuffing reaches 165°F, the turkey has overcooked and may be dry. By cooking the stuffing and the turkey separately, you can better control the temperature that each one reaches. If you decide to go ahead and stuff the turkey, do so just before cooking. Make sure that the stuffing is moist and loosely stuffed in the turkey. Take the internal temperature of the stuffing during cooking using a calibrated food thermometer. Keep in mind that a stuffed turkey takes longer to cook than an un-stuffed one.

### **Approximate Cooking Times**

#### **Unstuffed:**

8-12 lbs. – 2-3/4 to 3 hours  
12-14 lbs. – 3 to 3-3/4 hours  
14-18 lbs. – 3-3/4 to 4-1/4 hours  
18-20 lbs. – 4-1/4 to 4-1/2 hours  
20-24 lbs. – 4-1/2 to 5 hours

#### **Stuffed:**

8-12 lbs. – 3 to 3½ hours  
12-14 lbs. – 3½ to 4 hours  
14-18 lbs. – 4 to 4½ hours  
18-20 lbs. – 4-1/4 to 4-3/4 hours  
20-24 lbs. – 4-3/4 to 5-1/4 hours

\*\*\*\*These times are approximations for turkeys that are fully thawed and held in a refrigerator that is at or below 40°F. Always use a calibrated food thermometer to determine the doneness of the turkey; do not just go by time in the oven.

## **A Clean and Safe Kitchen for the Holidays**

Keeping your kitchen clean for food preparation this holiday season will help prevent the spread of bacteria. Dangerous bacteria can lurk around countertops, surface areas of your kitchen, and on both large and small appliances. These bacteria can contaminate your food and cause serious illness. You cannot always see where germs are hiding and they may be on a surface even though it does not appear to be dirty.

When it comes to your kitchen, there is a difference between cleaning and sanitizing. Cleaning involves soap and water, removes visible dirt, and removes most of the germs. Sanitizers provide extra safety because they contain stronger solutions that destroy more disease-causing bacteria. When getting ready to prepare food and after, first clean kitchen surfaces with soap and water. After cleaning and rinsing, sanitize the surface with a sanitizer. A good sanitizer can be made by mixing 1 teaspoon of unscented household chlorine bleach per quart of cool, clean water. Allow the surface to air dry. Wash your hands after the surface is cleaned or sanitized.

Paper towels are ideal to use for cleaning because they can be used once and thrown away. This prevents bacteria from multiplying and being spread throughout the kitchen on reused cloth towels. If you use dishcloths, they should be changed and laundered often. Sponges are not recommended because they have lots of nooks and crannies where germs can hide and be spread from one surface to another. To prevent chemical contamination of your foods, never reuse cleaning product containers and keep chemicals away from foods.

Keeping your appliances clean is important because they will last longer and it prevents the spread of bacteria. You should clean the appliances depending on how often they are used. Large appliances such as refrigerators, freezers, and ovens should be cleaned at least on a monthly basis since they are used often and spills can occur more frequently. Use soap and water to wash the outside of the refrigerator. Do not use abrasive cleanser or scouring pads because they can damage the surface. Greasy build-up may require the use of a heavy-duty cleaner or grease cutter, and a soft cleaning pad.

Dishwashers are self-cleaning, but check to see if large particles of food are lodged in the strainer. Ovens are often self-cleaning and are helpful in making spills easier to clean. After the oven has cooled from the cleaning process, simply wipe away the ash residue that is left. Be sure to ventilate the kitchen during oven cleaning in case the oven gives off fumes or smoke. Unplug small appliances before cleaning and NEVER immerse in water unless directions say it is permissible.

Be confident that your kitchen is clean and safe from bacteria. Conduct a kitchen cleanup now in advance of the hectic food preparation days during the holiday season. It will make your work load lighter and more enjoyable when the festivities are in full swing!