

Differences in the shape and tenderness of individual birds, as well as the temperature of the bird when put into the oven, may require increasing or decreasing the cooking time slightly. For best results, use a roasting thermometer, which will read 175-180 degrees when your bird is properly cooked.

## How to Prepare a Turkey



The principal feature of a Christmas dinner is usually the turkey. I have seen young housewives as ignorant about the preparation of a fowl for the table as if she had never eaten one. Hence we will give in detail the different processes through which the Christmas turkey goes before he finds himself under the carver's knife.

## To Prepare a Live Turkey

There is a right and wrong way to kill a turkey. The proper way is to tie the turkey up by the feet to a nail in the wall. Hang a weight, a small flat iron will do, around the head of the fowl, and just before the weight is let down, pierce the artery in the neck with a small sharp knife. This allows the fowl to bleed without getting the blood over the feathers and body. When the turkey is dressed and cleaned immediately for family use this, of course, is not so particular.

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## To Dress a Turkey

Pluck the feathers. When the turkey is very young, the skin is often so tender that it is severely broken during the plucking process. This detracts from the appearance of the fowl, so it usually is better to scald the fowl in boiling water. Then the feathers can be easily plucked. The fowl must be merely dipped in the water and removed almost immediately.



To properly and safely thaw a turkey, the refrigerator method is recommended. If time is limited, although not recommended, the cold water method is preferred over the temptation of thawing the turkey at room temperature. Thawing turkey at room temperature or in warm water promotes the rapid growth of bacteria.

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The hair and down are removed by singeing. This is done by holding the turkey over a flame (burning paper does nicely), and constantly changing its position until all parts have been exposed to the flame. Cut off the head and pull out the pin feathers by means of a small pointed knife. Cut through the skin around the leg one and one-half inches below the leg joint, care being taken to not cut the tendons; place the leg at this cut over the edge of the table, press downward to snap the bone, then take foot in right hand, holding bird firmly in left hand and pull off the foot, and with it the tendons.

In old birds, the tendons must be drawn separately, which is best accomplished by using a steel skewer. This may not be very easy but the tendons are very tough and sinewy and make the drumstick not so pleasant eating as when they are removed.

Next make an incision through the skin below the breast bone at one side of the vent. Cut around the vent and if care has been taken, the hand can be inserted and the whole contents, entrails, gizzard, heart and liver, can be withdrawn without breaking the sack which contains them. The gizzard, heart and liver constitute the giblets.

The gall bladder lies under the liver and great care must be taken that it be not broken, as a small quantity of the bile which it contains would impart a bitter taste to the parts with which it comes in contact.

Enclosed by the ribs on either side of the backbone may be found the lungs of soft consistency and red color. Every part of them must be removed. The kidneys lie in the hollows near the end of the backbone, and must also be removed. Place two fingers under the skin at the neck and pull out the windpipe. Also, the crop (which should be empty) will be found adhering to the skin close to the breast.

Drawn down the skin and cut off the neck close to the body, leaving the skin much longer to turn back under the body. Remove the oil bag on the top of the tail, and wash the fowl but do not allow it to soak in water. Wipe inside and out, looking carefully to see that everything has been withdrawn.

Separate the gall bladder from the liver, cutting off all parts that have a greenish tinge. Remove the arteries, veins, and clotted blood from the heart. Cut the fat and membranes from the gizzard. Make a gash through the thickest part of the gizzard and cut as far as the inner lining, being careful not to pierce it. Remove and discard the inner sack. Wash giblets and cook until tender with the neck and tips of wings, putting them in cold water and bringing water to a boil that some of the flavor may be drawn out into the stock which is to be used for making gravy.

### **To Stuff a Turkey**

Put stuffing by spoonfuls in neck end, using enough to make the bird look plump when served. Allowance must be made for the swelling of crackers; otherwise the skin may burst during the cooking. Stuff the body and sew up the skin.

### **To Truss a Turkey**

Draw thighs close to body and hold by inserting a steel skewer under middle joint, running it through the body, coming out under middle joint on the other side. Fasten the legs together at the ends and tie securely with a long string to the tail. Place

wings close to the body and hold them by inserting a second skewer through the wing, body and the wing on the other side. Draw the skin under the back and fasten with a small wood skewer.

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This trussing makes a bird look plump and fat.

### To Roast a Turkey

Place on its back on a rack in a dripping pan. Rub entire surface with salt, and spread breast and legs with three tablespoons of butter mixed with two tablespoons of flour. Dredge the bottom of the pan with flour. Place in a hot oven, and when the flour is browned reduce the heat, and baste. Add two cups hot water. Baste every ten minutes until the fowl is done, which will be about three hours.

During the cooking, turn the turkey often that it may brown evenly. Before serving, remove strings and skewers. Garnish with parsley or celery tips. Do not neglect this last as it greatly increases the appearance of the bird and appearance goes a long way toward enticing the appetite.

### Giblet Gravy

Pour off the liquid in the roasting pan. Return six tablespoons of fat to the pan and brown with six tablespoons of flour. Pour on very gradually three cups of liquor in which the giblets, etc., were cooked. Cook five minutes, season with salt and pepper; strain and add the finely chopped giblets.

### Stuffing

Remove the crust from a loaf of stale bread, crumb it thoroughly, add powdered sage or poultry dressing, salt and pepper. Pour over a half a cup of boiling water in which one half cup of butter has been melted.

### To Carve a Turkey

The bird should be placed on its back, with legs at right of platter for carving. Introduce carving fork across breastbone, hold firmly in left hand. With the carving knife, cut through skin between leg and body, close to body. With the knife pull back the leg and disjoint from the body. Then cut off the wings. Remove the leg and wing from the other side. Slice the meat from the breast in thin crosswise slices. Remove the fork and disjoint the legs and wings. Serve a slice of white meat with each piece of dark meat.

