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Turkey Tips

How to season and bake/roast a whole turkey:

Once defrosted, take the turkey neck and look for the other parts (usually in a bag), which are usually in the cavity or in the front where the neck was located. You can use all these parts if you like, for some ideas check out our recipe for Turkey Broth!

You may encounter a piece of plastic or skin keeping the legs together allowing the turkey to keep its shape, make sure to open it to be able to season and/or season it with ease.

Although the flavor is mostly enhanced by herbs and spices, roasted poultry is often only lightly seasoned with salt and pepper. Whole birds may be soaked in a light brine for 2-8 hours before roasting to retain moisture and tenderize the meat. Poultry should not be seasoned with herbs on its surface when roasted at high temperatures because of the risk of them burning. If herbs or additional spices are used, they should be stuffed onto the cavity.

If you opt for a wet marinade, season the whole turkey, the skin, cavity, and the space between the meat and the skin with salt and seasonings of your choice for a few hours or the night before. Before you use the injector, strain the marinade to make sure there are no pieces of vegetables that may get stuck in the injector. Focus the injections on the meaty thigh areas and top part of the wing rather than the top area which is boney. When you flip the turkey, it will be breast up tuck the legs back into the skin to keep its shape while cooking. Inject the breast area with the marinade multiple times, as well as any other meaty parts you can find.

Check out our website for a Latino inspired turkey seasoning! But below you can find a simple way to roast the turkey below.

Be careful if you are planning to stuff the turkey! It is not recommended for larger birds since it is harder to control the temperature inside of them which can lead to a food-borne illness if undercooked or dry and tough meat if overcooked. If you do stuff the turkey, do it as close to the cooking time as possible and do not over stuff since it will expand. Once finished, the temperature must read 165F or 74C, and after it is cooked remove the stuffing quickly allowing it to cool down.

There are 4 main methods to knowing when the turkey is done, it is best to use a combination of the following:

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- Temperature: The thermometer should be inserted in the turkey's thigh which is the last part to be fully cooked, but make sure it isn't touching any bone. The thermometer should read between 165-170F or 74-77C.
- Looseness of the joints: The turkey is done when the thighs and legs begin to move freely in their sockets.
- Color of juices: This method cannot be used if the turkey is stuffed. Use a fork to tilt the turkey allowing the juices from the cavity to run out. If the juice is clear, it's considered done but if the juices are cloudy or pink it is undercooked. Check out our recipe for Gravy that uses these juices!
- Time: Out of the 4 methods this alone is considered the least reliable due to the many variables, but it is recommended that large turkeys are cooked at 325F or 160C for 12-20 minutes **per pound**.

Steps to roasting a turkey:

1. Season, bard, stuff and/or truss the turkey as desired.
2. Place the turkey in a roasting pan, it can be placed on a rack or a bed of vegetables to prevent burning and promote even cooking.
3. Roast uncovered, basting from every 15 minutes to every hour depending on the size of the turkey.
4. Allow the turkey to rest before carving to allow the juices to distribute evenly.

Source: Chef Carolina, Share Your Foodways
On Cooking by Sarah Labensky, Alan Hause & Priscilla Martel