



## Food & Fitness



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

This year the Nebraska Department of Agriculture – Poultry and Egg Division is again offering a user-friendly, consumer-oriented brochure to ensure a safe and delicious turkey dinner. To request **Take the Guesswork Out of Roasting a Turkey**, and for free recipes and ideas on how to utilize turkey leftovers, contact Mary Torell by e-mail at [mtorell2@unl.edu](mailto:mtorell2@unl.edu) or call 472-0752. Each contact will receive a \$2 off coupon for their choice of a smoked or regular turkey from NORBEST, a Nebraska grown product.

Here's a simple and delicious recipe using leftover turkey.

### Rice-N-Turkey Casserole

(Serves 6)

**2 cups cooked long-grain rice, white or brown**  
**2 cups cubed cooked turkey**  
**2 zucchinis, medium size, cut into 1/4-inch rounds**  
**3/4 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese**  
**1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chilies, drained**  
**2 tomatoes, medium size, halved lengthwise, then sliced crosswise**

#### TOPPING

Combine 1 cup sour cream, 1/3 cup chopped onion, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano and black pepper to taste.

Prepare topping. Spread rice in a greased 2-quart baking dish. Layer turkey, zucchini, cheese, chilies and tomatoes over rice. Spread topping over casserole. Sprinkle with cheese and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes.

*Approximate Nutrient Content Per Serving: 523 calories; 27 gm protein; 20 gm fat; 59 gm carbohydrates; 679 mg sodium; 76 mg cholesterol*

## Holiday Indulging Without Bulging

Alice Henneman, MS, RD  
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Add pleasure, not pounds over the holidays by following these seven guidelines for "indulging without bulging."

### 1: Put Less on Your Plate

"Less" can mean smaller amounts. "Less" also can mean fewer foods. The latter is sometimes a more successful strategy.

For example, if you make

only two dips for a party, you'll probably do less sampling during preparation and at the party. At a restaurant, if you order just the entree without the rolls, salad, etc., there will be fewer foods to "just taste." And if you bake holiday cookies, the more types you bake, the more cookies you'll likely eat!

### 2: Take a Bite — Count to 8

It takes about 20 minutes after food enters your mouth before the brain starts perceiving  
*see INDULGING on page 11*

### Web Resources for the Holidays

- What's the correct way to thaw a turkey?
- How can you prepare food ahead of time for the holidays?

Find the answers to these questions and MORE on the "Food Safety Links for Home Cooking" section.

Keep up-to-date on new tips, resources and recipe ideas by signing up for our monthly Cook It Quick e-mail messages.

[lancaster.unl.edu/food](http://lancaster.unl.edu/food)

Rated "Among the Best"



## Thanksgiving Turkey Tips

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Thanksgiving — a time honored American tradition based on thankfulness and the bounty of our land. Here are some tips to ensure a perfect Thanksgiving turkey at that special holiday meal.

### Time and Temperature Equals Taste

To make sure you have the perfect turkey this Thanksgiving, check to make sure the turkey reaches a temperature of 170°F in the breast and 180°F in the thigh. The true indicator a turkey is ready to eat is to measure the bird's temperature with a food thermometer. Accurate temperatures, both in the oven and the turkey, are important for quality safety and taste.

Since most consumers spend little time in the kitchen during the year, it's important to check the oven thermostat and oven temperature to verify the oven setting

### Thermometer Use

A recent survey taken by the National Turkey Federation (NTF), found less than 50 percent of home chefs use a thermometer to determine if their turkey and/or stuffing are thoroughly cooked. This could mean many consumers are overcooking or undercooking their turkey — leading to a disappointing outcome.

NTF wants to make a food thermometer a cook's best friend by providing guidelines to ensure proper use.

### TURKEY ROASTING TIMES

(Approximate Timetable for Roasting a Turkey at 325°F)

**NOTE: It's recommended you roast your turkey unstuffed for best safety and quality. If you do stuff your turkey, the only way to determine your stuffing is safely cooked is to use a thermometer to assure the stuffing is cooked to a safe temperature of 165°F. If you choose to stuff your turkey, make sure it is stuffed loosely.**

Weight	Unstuffed	Stuffed
8 to 12 pounds	2¾ to 3 hours	3 to 3½ hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 to 3¾ hours	3½ to 4 hours
14 to 18 pounds	3¾ to 4¼ hours	4 to 4¼ hours
18 to 20 pounds	4¼ to 4½ hours	4¼ to 4¾ hours
20 to 24 pounds	4½ to 5 hours	4¾ to 5¼ hours

### Time Measurement

Time is a measurement that helps ensure a turkey is done. The turkeys purchased today yield a higher proportion of white meat, which cooks faster than dark meat and shortens the time it takes to prepare the turkey.

### Food Thermometers

Food thermometers are more high-tech and easier to use than ever before. There are pop-up, digital, instant-read and disposable. Proper placement is the key for an accurate read. Insert the thermometer 2-1/2 inches in the deepest portion of the turkey breast or into the inner thigh near the breast. Make sure the thermometer does not touch the bone. When inserting the thermometer in the turkey breast, insert it from the side, which make it easier to read and more accurate than inserting from the top.

### Shorter Cooking Times

Only 8 percent of respondents in a recent NTF study were aware of the new shorter cooking times released in 1995. The new cooking timetable, developed by University of Georgia, indicated it is possible

to shorten recommended cooking times for whole turkeys and still ensure a safe and delicious product.

### Year Round Appeal

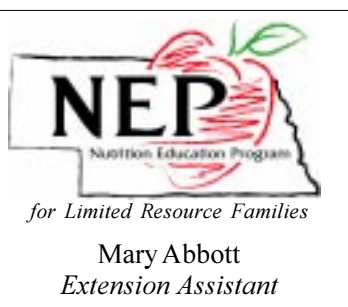
More than 90 percent of Americans will eat turkey on Thanksgiving, consuming about 45 million birds.

However, turkey is not just for Thanksgiving anymore. Consumption patterns have changed as more and more American's are realizing turkey is not only nutritious, but tastes good too.

In the last 25 years, per capita consumption has almost doubled to 18 pounds of turkey a year. More of it is being consumed outside the holiday season. Only 32 percent of consumption occurs during the winter holidays, compared to 50 percent in 1975.

The variety of turkey cuts and products available today makes it easy to enjoy turkey all year long. Turkey products can be found in the form of a burger, tenderloin, cutlet, sausage and deli meat, just to name a few. As a product adaptable to all cooking methods — microwave, oven and grill — turkey is a tasty treat to be enjoyed at any meal, any time of the year.

## Food Safety Habits



### Food Safety Quiz

Take the following quiz and evaluate your food safety habits.

1. Is meat selected at the beginning of your shopping trip?  Yes  No
2. Do you drive directly home from the grocery store?  Yes  No
3. Are perishable foods put in the refrigerator as soon as you arrive home?  Yes  No
4. Do you keep your raw meat in the refrigerator until it is

time for cooking?

Yes  No

5. Is food eaten as soon as it is cooked?  Yes  No

6. Are you distracted by television while eating meals?  Yes  No

7. Do you relax after eating and then clean up leftover food?  Yes  No

8. Do you reheat leftovers and eat them immediately?  Yes  No

9. Have the leftover foods in your refrigerator been there for more than two days?  Yes  No

10. Do you clean and sanitize your cutting board between uses?  Yes  No

*Correct answers are "Yes" for numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10; and "No" for numbers 1, 6, 7, 9.*

*Incorrect answers suggest the food you are eating may not be as safe as possible.*

### Food Safety Tips

Follow these suggestions to maintain good food safety habits:

- Perishable food should not be out of the refrigerator for more than two hours. Warm temperatures allow bacteria to grow and increase to numbers that may cause illness.

- Keep the food in your house safe from harmful bacteria by selecting perishable foods at the end of your shopping trip. Drive directly home from the store and immediately put meat, dairy foods and eggs in the refrigerator.

- Eat food as soon as it is cooked and put any leftovers directly in the refrigerator.

- Eat reheated food immediately.

- Discard leftovers after two days.

- Clean and sanitize cutting boards after each use.