



Alice Henneman, RD, Extension Educator

Serving turkey over the holidays is a way to enjoy low-fat meat that is high in protein, yet low in calories and cholesterol, and tantalizes everyone's taste buds. Depending on the side dishes that accompany it, or how it is stuffed or glazed, turkey is as different as each person who prepares it. Because turkey is a naturally mild meat, it blends beautifully with an assortment of herbs, spices and other seasonings. As a result, it's a virtual canvas for culinary creativity.

The Poultry & Egg Division of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture has information about preparing turkey (see right) and recipes (see below) to assist in preparing a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

They are also offering two free brochures, available upon request. New this year, is a brochure on carving a whole turkey which also includes recipes for cooking turkey leftovers. *Take the Guesswork Out of Roasting a Turkey* helps ensure a safe and delicious turkey dinner. To request these brochures, contact Mary Torell, Public Information Officer, at 472-0752 or mtorell2@unl.edu. Each contact will receive *either* a \$2 off coupon for a regular turkey or a \$2 off coupon for a smoked turkey from NORBEST (a Nebraska grown product).

For additional information on turkey, such as other cooking methods, nutrition, food safety and additional recipes, go to www.agr.state.ne.us and click on "Poultry & Egg."

WINTER FRUIT GLAZE

(Makes 1/2 cup)

1/4 cup red currant jelly
2 tablespoons orange marmalade

- In a 1-cup microwave-safe glass measure, combine jelly and marmalade. Cook in microwave at HIGH (100% power) 30 to 45 seconds or until melted.
- Brush glaze over turkey during the last 20 minutes of roasting time.



Approximate nutrient content per tablespoon: 34 calories; 1 gm protein; 8 gm carbohydrate; 4 mg sodium.

GREEN ONION AND CORN BREAD STUFFING

(Serves 12)

1 can (10.5 oz) condensed French onion soup
1 soup can of water
1/4 cup margarine
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup thinly sliced green onion
1/2 to 1 teaspoon dried poultry seasoning
2 packages (8 oz each) corn bread stuffing mix
Vegetable cooking spray

- In a 5-quart saucepan combine soup, water, margarine, celery, onion and poultry seasoning. Bring to a boil and remove from heat.
- Stir in corn bread stuffing mix. Bake mixture in a 1.5-quart casserole dish coated with nonstick vegetable cooking spray. Cover and bake at 350° F for 45 minutes or until set.

Approximate nutrient content per serving: 200 calories; 5 gm protein; 6 gm fat; 32 gm carbohydrate; 683 mg sodium; 0 mg cholesterol.

Simple Tip to Avoid Scratches When Storing Nonstick Skillets

Using nylon or wooden utensils is recommended for nonstick skillets, fry pans and sauté pans to avoid scratching them. What precautions can you take to avoid chips and scratches when stacking them in your cupboard?

The simplest solution is to place inexpensive paper plates between them. In fact, the least expensive paper plates — which are flexible — work better than the more expensive rigid plates.

Tips on Turkey Preparation

Mary Torell
Public Information Officer,
Nebraska Dept. of Agriculture -
Poultry & Egg Division

Purchasing Pointers

Turkey is an economical meat and to enjoy an even greater savings purchase a larger turkey. A larger size turkey yields more meat in proportion to bone. You should allow one pound of turkey for each adult guest at your dinner. For example, if you are serving 12 people, purchase a 12-pound turkey. This allows for everyone to enjoy a generous serving of turkey and guarantees enough extra turkey for additional meals.

Thawing Tips

Never let your turkey sit out on a table or counter to thaw. Harmful bacteria multiply rapidly at room temperature.

• **Refrigerator method** — the *best* way to thaw turkey is to place the wrapped turkey on a tray in the refrigerator for three to four days, depending on the size, and allow five hours per pound of turkey to completely thaw.

• **Cold water method** — the *fastest* way to thaw turkey is to place the wrapped turkey in the sink and cover it with cold water. Allow about

1/2 hour per pound of turkey to completely thaw. Change water every 30 minutes. Refrigerate or cook turkey when it is thawed.

Stuffing Tips

For best results, prepare stuffing separately. Place it in a covered casserole dish and cook it with the turkey during the last hour of roasting time. For those who prefer stuffing cooked in the turkey, stuff the turkey just prior to roasting by spooning prepared dressing loosely in the body and neck cavities of the bird. To be sufficiently cooked, the stuffing should reach an internal temperature of 165° F. Remove stuffing from the turkey immediately after roasting.

Cooking a Turkey

The turkey is done when a meat thermometer in the thigh (not touching any bone) registers 180° F. The temperature of the breast should reach 170° F. The pop-up thermometer device also indicates the turkey has

reached the final temperature for safety and doneness.

Cooking Times

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

Carving Tips

Let the turkey stand 20 minutes before removing stuffing and carving. This allows the juices to set and makes the carving easier and the meat will be moister.

Storage Recommendations

Refrigerate turkey and all other foods promptly after the holiday meal, or within two hours of cooking. Cut all turkey meat from the bones and store in shallow, covered containers. When refrigerated at 40° F or below, cooked turkey will keep up to two days and up to four months in the freezer when frozen at 0° F or below.



Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA

"It's Safe to Bite When the Temperature is Right"

How to Cook a Turkey the Day Before Serving It

Alice Henneman
UNL Lancaster County Extension
& Joyce Jensen
Lincoln-Lancaster County
Health Department

Sometimes it may be easier to prepare your turkey the day before you plan to serve it. If you do, follow these guidelines:

1. Wait about 20 minutes after removing turkey from the oven to allow the juices to distribute.

2. Slice breast meat; legs and wings may be left whole. Place turkey in metal containers; limit depth to less than 2 inches. Metal containers cool faster than glass-type pans. NOTE: Wash your hands with soap and warm water for about 20 seconds before you begin slicing your turkey.

3. Pour broth over turkey to prevent drying. Then refrigerate, loosely covered. You can place

loosely covered foods in the refrigerator while still warm; cover tightly when food is completely cooled.

4. On the day of your meal, cover pan with an oven-proof lid or foil and reheat thoroughly in a 350° F oven until hot and steaming throughout (165° F). NOTE: If you're planning to travel and bring the turkey, it's safest and easiest to travel with it pre-cooked and cold. Carry it in an insulated cooler with lots of ice or frozen gel-packs to keep the cooler temperature under 40° F. Then reheat the turkey at your final destination.

5. Either freeze leftover turkey or plan to eat cooked turkey within 3 to 4 days of the day it was originally prepared. Once removed from the oven, turkey shouldn't set at room temperature longer than 2 hours TOTAL time. For best safety and quality, avoid reheating and cooling turkey multiple times.

6. If you make your gravy the day before, refrigerate it in a shallow container. Bring gravy to a rolling boil when reheating it. Eat gravy within 1 to 2 days of original preparation date.

TIP #1: If using a DIAL instant-read thermometer, insert it at an angle 2 to 2-1/2 inches deep through several slices of turkey. If using a DIGITAL instant-read thermometer, insert it at least 1-inch deep so it measures the center of a layer of slices.

TIP #2: If heating your turkey in a glass-type container, it's safest to transfer the turkey to the container just before heating. For some glass-type baking dishes, you run the risk of the glass breaking if you put the cold dish from the refrigerator directly into the oven. It's not safe to let your turkey warm at room temperature before reheating it.

Cooking Tools Class Oct. 26

Explore the world of affordable, easy-to-use cooking tools at a one-night class "Cooking Tools for Guys and Gals" on Oct. 26 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Southeast Community College (SCC) Continuing Education Center, 301 S. 68th St. Place, Lincoln. Cost is \$6. Call 437-2700 to register.

The class is geared for those who want a tasty, affordable meal without much fuss and mess — perfect for those just starting out, singles, college students and those on a budget. Class will include sampling, demonstration and discussion. Dessert will be served.

The class is co-sponsored by SCC and UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, and presented by Extension Educator Alice Henneman, RD.

