

Thanksgiving Turkey Tips

As Thanksgiving approaches, planning and preparing for the holiday dinner can result in anxiety and questions. What kind of turkey should you buy? Should you buy a frozen or fresh turkey? How do you store a turkey? Follow these tips for a successful and safe holiday meal.

Plan ahead. Cut down on holiday anxiety and stress by planning ahead. Plan the menu two to three weeks before the holiday. Shopping early for your Thanksgiving meal will ease the countdown tension.

Fresh or Frozen? That is one of the Thanksgiving turkey questions. There is no difference in quality between a fresh or frozen turkey. You can buy a frozen turkey in advance and take advantage of special sales. Fresh turkeys provide convenience because they don't require thawing, but they have shorter shelf lives. Before buying, make sure there is enough space in the refrigerator or freezer.

When to buy the bird. A whole frozen turkey takes about 24 hours per four to five pounds to thaw in the refrigerator. Purchase a frozen turkey as far in advance as necessary to safely thaw it in the refrigerator. If buying fresh, purchase it only one to two days before the meal and keep it refrigerated.

How do you know when it's done? A whole turkey is safe when cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) throughout, as measured with a food thermometer. Insert a food thermometer into the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast, not touching bone to measure the temperature.

Carving and food safety. Worried about food safety when carving and serving turkey? It's best to let the turkey rest for 20 minutes before carving to allow juices to set, and it will carve easier. Use a clean cutting board that has a well to catch juices. Make sure the knife is sharp before you start carving.

Storing leftovers. It's important to store leftover turkey (cut into smaller pieces) in shallow containers and put them in the refrigerator or freezer within two hours of cooking. Use refrigerated leftover turkey, stuffing and gravy within three to four days. If freezing leftovers, use within 2 to 6 months for best quality. Reheat leftovers thoroughly to 165 °F.

Peanut Butter Power Up!

If you or your children get hungry and dinner is still hours away try offering a snack that includes peanut butter! As long as your child doesn't have a peanut allergy it is considered a nutritionally dense "superfood" because it is packed with vitamins and minerals

If you are worried about the fat.....it contains unsaturated fats, which is the type of fat we should eat more often.

Spread it on whole grain crackers

Make a dip for fruits and veggies

Make celery sticks and peanut butter

Pretzels dipped into peanut butter

Peanut Butter Fun Fact:

The average child will eat 1,500 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches before he/she graduates high school.