

How to make a perfect turkey this Thanksgiving

Posted by [Joy Shrum-Reporter](#) On 11/17/2017

Hollywood, MD- Soon many of us will find ourselves in a “turkey” coma. But preparing that big bird can be intimidating for some, especially if they’ve never done it before. I know my first attempt at making turkey was a disaster! In fact, Butterball receives an average of 10,000 calls on Thanksgiving with cooks asking all sorts of questions.

One of the biggest myths is that cooking a turkey that is juicy and delicious is hard to achieve—but don’t fret—you can do it!

The easiest way to make sure your turkey is ready for the big day is to thaw it ahead of time! That’s one of the most common calls to Butterball on Thanksgiving Day. The typical rule of thumb is to thaw your turkey in the refrigerator for 24 hours for every five pounds. For example, a 15 pound turkey needs three days to thaw.

If you did forget or your turkey is still a bit frozen, just stick it in cold water and switch out the water every 30 minutes until thawed.

One of the simplest ways to prepare your bird on Thursday, is to have some basic ingredients on hand. Salt, pepper and butter.

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees, coat your bird with melted butter and season with salt and pepper. You’ll need to roast it for 15 minutes per pound for an unstuffed bird—18 minutes per pound if it’s stuffed. Every 30 minutes, baste the turkey with the juices in the roasting pan. If the bird starts to brown too much, you can cover the breast loosely with aluminum foil. Cook the turkey until the thickest part of the thigh reaches at least 165 degrees. Let it sit for about 15 minutes before slicing.

Now I’ll share my favorite recipe for cooking a turkey. I have used this method the past two years and will never go back to the old way again!

First, I dry-brine my bird the night before. This method is becoming more popular over the past few years and it results in a juicy and perfectly seasoned bird.

For dry brining, I unwrap my turkey and remove the neck and giblets. I rinse the turkey with cold water and pat dry. I then combine 1/3 cup of kosher salt, one tablespoon of sugar and a teaspoon of pepper. I take this mixture and rub it all over the outside AND inside of the bird. I leave it in the roasting pan in the fridge overnight. The next morning, I rinse it under cold water and pat dry.

Once that is done, I get to the good stuff. I mix two cups of softened butter with two tablespoons of parsley, one tablespoon of dried sage, and one tablespoon of thyme. Once mixed, I pull the skin back from the breast of the turkey. This takes some time and patience. Start at the neck and slowly work your hand down the back of the bird while making sure not to tear the skin. Once the skin is separated from the meat, I use 1 ½ cups of the butter mixture and rub it under the skin. I use two more tablespoons of the herbed butter mixture for the outside of the turkey while saving the rest for my gravy. Let the bird sit for 30 minutes before roasting.

I also stuff my bird with dressing and then tie the legs together. Again, I baste every 30 minutes and cover with foil if the skin gets too brown.

Whisk the reserved 2 tablespoons flavored butter into your gravy just before serving.

I promise, you won’t be disappointed with the flavoring of this bird!

Happy Thanksgiving!

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