

The best turkey ever

Getting the bird ready doesn't need to be stressful. Follow these steps and your biggest task will be fending off the hungry hordes while it rests. **by Victoria Walsh | photographs by John Cullen**

PREP 25 MIN
ROAST 4½ HOURS
COOK 35 MIN
SERVES 8 TO 10

12-lb (6-kg) turkey
12 cups (3 L) stuffing
1 tbsp (15 mL) butter, at room temperature, or olive oil
Pinches of poultry or Italian seasoning, salt and pepper



Preheat oven to 325F (160C). Remove neck and bag of giblets (heart, liver and gizzard) from turkey. Rinse turkey inside and out under cold running water. Pat dry with paper towels. Lightly pack neck cavity with stuffing. (It expands as it heats.) Bring neck skin up over back. Fasten with skewers. For easy filling of body cavity, place bird in a large bowl with the opening and legs facing up. Stuff turkey. Tuck legs under skin flap (if there is one). Fasten with skewers. Or cover opening with a piece of foil so basting juices won't seep in and make stuffing soggy. Smear butter over skin. Sprinkle with seasonings.



Place bird on a rack in the roasting pan, breast side down. Tuck wing tips in. Tent with 2 large pieces of foil. Seal foil tightly to pan edges. Roast in centre of oven for 3 hours.



Remove foil. Turn turkey breast side up. Baste with pan juices. Keep in mind: Basting penetrates only about ½ in. (1 cm) into the turkey and softens the skin.



Continue to roast, uncovered and basting occasionally, until drumstick moves easily at joint and a meat thermometer inserted into thigh reads 180F (80C). This will take about 1½ more hours, depending on turkey's size. If one area is browning too much, cover just that area with foil.



Foolproof gravy

Place giblets in a pan with 4 cups (1 L) water, 1 chopped onion and a bay leaf. Bring to a boil, then simmer, uncovered, 30 min. Strain and save only the liquid. Or skip this step and use 3 cups (750 mL) chicken broth. After removing turkey from pan, skim fat from pan juices. Place pan over 2 burners on medium heat or pour pan juices into a saucepan. When it comes to a boil, sift in ¼ cup (50 mL) flour, while whisking constantly. Then gradually whisk in ½ cup (125 mL) white wine or sherry and the broth. Simmer, stirring often until thickened, 5 to 10 min. Taste and add salt, if needed. Makes 3 cups (750 mL).

5 Remove bird to a cutting board. Loosely cover with foil. Let stand at least 15 min before carving.

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Watch our associate food editor, Victoria Walsh, make this turkey step by step.



FOOD STYLING: ETTIE SHUKEN; PROP STYLING: MARTINE BLACKHURST