

Cooking the Perfect Thanksgiving Turkey



Here's our super basic, super simple and easy tutorial for roasting a fantastic turkey for this Thanksgiving. Now I know many of you may have your own tried and true ways of cooking your turkey, but we are keeping things simple. There are plenty of opportunities to add spice, flavor, and personal frill along the way so feel free to take this recipe and run with it.

Preparation:

This method will work with any fresh turkey, any size, brined or not brined, free-range, whatever. When purchasing a turkey, you figure about a pound per person. First and foremost, be sure your turkey is completely thawed before cooking. About an hour to half hour before roasting, take your turkey out of the fridge. Remove any packaging and be sure to check in the body cavity and neck for the bag of giblets. If you choose not to brine your turkey (which is perfectly okay), be sure to rub it down with salt and pepper. Here's where you can add some flair. Many people rub their turkey with a flavored butter or oil, rub minced herbs and spices into or beneath the skin, or even put a few cloves of garlic inside the cavity. We recommend leaving your turkey unstuffed because it allows the turkey to cook more evenly. In order to successfully cook a turkey, you need the right equipment. A roasting pan with some sort of rack to remove the turkey out of the pan is recommended. You will also need a baster or simply a spoon.

Cooking:

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Pour two cups of water or broth into the bottom of the roasting pan, place the turkey breast side up in the rack, and place the roasting pan with the turkey in the rack into the oven. The rule of thumb for cooking a turkey is about 13-15 minutes per pound. So a 16 pound turkey should take about 3 hours and 45 minutes. However, sometimes other factors come into play so it's important to begin checking the temperature of your turkey about halfway through the cooking time to gauge how fast it's cooking.

Be sure to baste your turkey about every 45 minutes to an hour and if at any time the skin is looking too brown or crispy, cover it with foil. As with any meat, the number one indicator to tell if it's done is temperature. We recommend checking the temperature of your turkey in three places: the breast, outside the thigh, and inside the thigh. Once these three places register 165 degrees on an instant read meat thermometer, your turkey is done. Remove it from the oven and this is important, let it rest. Transfer the rack to a cutting board and cover the turkey with aluminum foil for about 15-20 minutes. This gives the meat to firm up and re-absorb the juices.

Finally, you're ready to carve your turkey and enjoy! Happy Holidays from Chico Locker!