

Chef Salvatore's Turkey "Cheat-Sheet"

Here are Chef Michael Salvatore's instructions for thawing a turkey.

Turkey Thawing:

Frozen turkeys typically thaw at the rate of five pounds per day under refrigeration. Hence, if you don't start thawing your 20-pound bird by Saturday, it's pizza for Thanksgiving! Keeping them in the original cases will slow this process down dramatically.

If the turkey needs an additional "push", COLD RUNNING WATER is considered by Chef Michael as the ONLY method to use. Do not "leave them out" overnight or let them "float" in a sink full of water. A few gallons of running water are cheaper than a holiday weekend at the ER. On average, you will be able to feed one person (with leftovers) per pound of whole turkey.

Turkey Cooking:

- Remove the turkey from the refrigerator about thirty minutes before cooking. This gives the bird a chance to "temper" so that it is not ice-cold going into the heat. Season and truss as you desire but Chef Michael asks that you please **do not stuff** the turkey. In order to be safe, he says the stuffing must reach an internal temperature of 165°F for 15 seconds at which point the bird would be thoroughly dried out.
- Cook your stuffing on the side and use some extra gravy.
- Place the turkey on a rack in a roasting pan.
- Heat your oven to 350°F for at least fifteen minutes before you begin.
- At 350°F, a thawed, frozen turkey cooks at rate of one pound per fifteen minutes; fresh at one pound per twelve minutes. This is an approximate time only. For perfect timing, determine when dinner is to be served and multiply the weight of the turkey by the appropriate time per pound. Add an extra hour for the cooked bird to rest and that's the total time of preparation. E.g.: For dinner at 7:00 PM + 20-pound defrosted bird $\{(20*15)/60\} + 1 = 6$ hours=Start cooking at 1:00 PM. Test the internal temperature of the bird with a stem thermometer in the thickest part of the thigh. The critical limit is 165°F for 15 seconds.
- Your finished turkey MUST rest, loosely tented with aluminum foil for ONE HOUR before carving. Fear not, it will still be hot in the middle. The juices will reabsorb, and the carving will be much easier.

Still have questions? Try the Turkey Calculator:

<https://straighthealth.com/turkey-cook-time-calculator/>