

## Checking Points for Roasting and Keeping a Perfect Turkey

- Turkeys and other fowl must be cooked in one continuous cooking period or the meat will toughen.
- The turkey is roasted on its side so the juices will flow to the breast. The turkey could be turned breast side down after browning, but the bird will not be as beautiful. The skin becomes moist and is likely to break. The most delicious turkey is basted with butter by you—not self basting.
- Dipping a clean piece of cheesecloth into the pan juices or melted butter and laying it over the turkey is also very helpful in achieving a moist bird. When the cloth dries out, simply dip it again into the pan juices or butter, then lay it over the turkey, or use a basting bulb. Repeat this several times.
- A turkey roasted with stuffing will not keep as well as a turkey roasted without stuffing. (But stuffing seems to help ensure a more moist bird.) Removing the remaining stuffing after the turkey has been served does not help. Small particles of the dressing are left in the cavity, and they have a tendency to sour quickly. Do not keep a turkey that was cooked with stuffing over 2 to 3 days in the refrigerator. Freeze it whole or in slices of chunks.
- It is possible to roast a turkey in a tent of foil with plenty of air pockets, but any bird cooked in such a tight enclosure will have a steam-table flavor. Who wants that? To allow the turkey to cool in the foil is to court spoilage. Only use foil if the turkey is browning too quickly.
- Allow any fat or broth to cool before placing it in the refrigerator. Never, never cover warm fowl, broth, or gravy before it has cooled.

## How to Roast a Perfect Turkey

Our national harvest day, as every schoolchild knows, was first consecrated in the autumn of 1621 by the Pilgrim father at Plymouth, Massachusetts.

The Pilgrim historians did not leave us a menu of that first feast of Thanksgiving, but the writings indicate that the provisions were plentiful. “Turkey abounds,” wrote one naturalist. There was game of many sorts—venison, quail, partridge; foods from the sea in unimaginable quantities; but the turkey was crowned king of their bounty. It remains so to this day.

The bronze bird with chestnut tail bands is a native of our own North America. Thanksgiving is our day. It is a time set aside for rest, feasting, and fellowship. It belongs to all of us—north, south, east, and west. It is American Heritage Day.

### Ingredients

1 fresh turkey hen, 12 to 14 pounds  
½ lemon  
¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature  
2 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. freshly ground white pepper

## **Method**

1. Preheat the oven to 425° F.
2. Rinse and clean the turkey well. Dry with paper towels and rub the entire cavity with the lemon.
3. Blend 6 tbsps. of the butter with the salt and pepper. Rub the outside of the turkey thoroughly with butter.
4. Place the turkey, breast side up, on a rack in a fairly shallow flameproof roasting pan. Place it on the oven and roast until golden brown, 30 to 35 minutes. Baste the turkey again with the pan juices and rub on 2 tbsps. of butter.
5. Turn the turkey gently onto one side. Brush again with butter. Lower the heat to 325 ° F. Continue to cook the turkey for 1 hours, basting I thoroughly again with the pan juices and butter after 30 minutes.
6. When the one side of the turkey has browned, turn it gently onto the other side and brush with butter. Continue to cook, basting it thoroughly after 30 minutes, until golden brown, 1 hour.
7. When the second side has browned, turn the turkey onto its back, breast side up. The turkey will have cooked 2 ½ hours and should be tested for doneness. If a quick-reading meat thermometer registers 180° F when inserted in the fleshy part of the leg, the turkey is done. You can also test for doneness by inserting a skewer into the leg. If the juices run clear, the bird should be cooked. To make sure, twist one of the turkey legs. If it moves easily in its socket, the turkey is done. If the turkey isn't fully cooked, continue roasting and basting breast side up and check again in 20 minutes.