

Turkey

Is Pink Turkey Meat Safe? | [PDF](#)

The color of cooked meat and poultry is not always a sure sign of its degree of doneness. Only by using a food thermometer can you accurately determine that a meat has reached a safe temperature.

Let's Talk Turkey—A Consumer Guide to Safely Roasting a Turkey | [PDF](#) | [En Español](#) | [En Español PDF](#)

Every facet of getting a turkey from the store to the dinner table is included—buying fresh vs. frozen, safe thawing methods, stuffing, roasting, storing leftover turkey and reheating the leftovers.

Turkey: Alternate Routes to the Table | [PDF](#) | [En Español](#) | [En Español PDF](#)

The conventional oven -- although the appliance most often used to cook a whole turkey -- is not the only way to get the big bird done and beautiful. There are alternate routes for cooking a turkey safely.

Turkey Basics

- **Turkey Basics: Handling Cooked Dinners** | [PDF](#) | [En Español](#) | [En Español PDF](#)
Recommendations for take-out, deli-prepared, or convenience turkey dinners.
- **Turkey Basics: Safe Cooking** | [PDF](#) | [En Español](#) | [En Español PDF](#)
Roasting instructions and approximate cooking times.
- **Turkey Basics: Safe Thawing** | [PDF](#) | [En Español](#) | [En Español PDF](#)
A turkey must be kept at a safe temperature during thawing. Learn three safe methods.
- **Turkey Basics: Stuffing** | [PDF](#) | [En Español](#) | [En Español PDF](#)
For safety, prepare stuffing or dressing for the turkey according to these directions.

Turkey...from Farm to Freezer

Information about turkeys, from the time they are hatched on the farm until they make it home to the freezer.

Turkey...from Farm to Table

Safe storage, handling, cooking methods and approximate cooking times (traditional and microwave) for turkey products. Information about inspection and labeling is included.

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_111008_01/index.asp

USDA Offers Tips To Safely Handle And Prepare Stuffing This Thanksgiving Holiday

Contact: Diane Van (301) 344-4777

WASHINGTON, November 10, 2008 - Thanksgiving dinner often leaves consumers feeling "stuffed." For many, this traditional holiday meal includes stuffing either cooked inside a whole turkey, chicken or other bird, or cooked separately in a casserole.

Mishandled or improperly prepared stuffing can lead to foodborne illness - not a satisfying ending to a Thanksgiving meal. Following the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) **Be Food Safe** recommendations ensures that dinner guests can enjoy safely cooked stuffing and other food dishes.

"Thanksgiving dinner is a time to enjoy friends, family and good food," said Elizabeth Johnson, Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety. "When preparing stuffing and other food dishes, following USDA's **Be Food Safe** tips of clean, separate, cook and chill will ensure that you have a happy and safe

holiday."

As you prepare your holiday meal, FSIS encourages consumers to put these four easy to remember tips - Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill - into practice in order to be food safe during the holiday:

- **Clean: When preparing stuffing, wash hands and surfaces often.** Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and contaminate hands, cutting boards, knives and countertops. Frequent cleaning can keep that from happening. Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling ingredients for stuffing such as sausage, giblets, shellfish, vegetables, bread, rice, pasta and fruits.
- **Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.** Stuffing should not be prepared ahead. The dry and wet ingredients for stuffing can be prepared separately ahead of time and chilled, but do not mix wet and dry ingredients until it will be cooked. The stuffing should be moist - not dry - because heat destroys bacteria more rapidly in a moist environment.

It is only safe to prepare stuffing ahead of time if you cook it immediately and refrigerate it in shallow containers. Do not stuff whole poultry with cooked stuffing.

- **Cook: Cook stuffing to a safe minimum internal temperature.** For optimal safety, cook stuffing separately.

If you are cooking the stuffing inside of the bird, it is essential to use a food thermometer to determine the internal temperature of the bird and stuffing. Immediately place the stuffed, raw bird in a preheated oven set to 325 °F or higher. Even if the turkey itself has reached the safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F (as measured in the innermost part of the thigh, the wing and the thickest part of the breast), the stuffing may not have reached a temperature high enough to destroy bacteria that may be present. Bacteria can survive in stuffing that has not reached 165 °F, which may cause foodborne illness.

Use a food thermometer to be sure stuffed poultry or stuffing cooked separately in a casserole are safely cooked and have reached a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F. Even for experienced cooks, the improper heating and preparation of food means bacteria can survive.

- **Chill: Promptly refrigerate or freeze leftover stuffing.** Bacteria spread fastest at temperatures between 40 °F and 140 °F, so chilling food safely reduces the risk of foodborne illness. Place leftovers in shallow containers. Refrigerate (40 °F or below) or

freeze the cooked poultry and stuffing within 2 hours after cooking. Use refrigerated leftovers within 3 to 4 days; frozen food within 4 months. Reheat leftovers to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F.

If you purchase pre-made stuffing or pre-stuffed birds at grocery store, FSIS offers the following advice to ensure safe preparation at home:

- **Premixed Stuffing:** Some retail stores sell premixed stuffing. If sold as a cooked product, the stuffing is safe to use. However, do not stuff raw poultry with this cooked product. At home, reheat it to 165 °F before serving.
- **Fresh Pre-Stuffed, Uncooked Whole Poultry:** USDA does *not* recommend buying retail-stuffed, uncooked fresh turkey, roasters, Cornish hens or other whole stuffed poultry from a retail store or restaurant. These products are highly perishable and present a potential bacterial hazard. DO NOT USE THEM. If you have purchased one of these products, discard it or return it to the place of purchase.
- **Frozen, Pre-Stuffed, Uncooked or Cooked Poultry (Whole):** If the packaging displays a USDA or State mark of inspection it has been processed under federally- or state-controlled conditions and therefore is safe to consume. Store frozen, pre-stuffed birds in the freezer and follow the package directions for safe handling and cooking.

DO NOT THAW a commercially pre-stuffed frozen turkey before cooking. Follow the manufacturer's recommended cooking directions. A frozen stuffed turkey should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F as measured with a food thermometer.

For more information about stuffing food safety, go to:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Turkey_Basics_Stuffing/index.asp.

Consumers with food safety questions can "Ask Karen," the FSIS virtual representative available 24 hours a day at AskKaren.gov. The toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.