

How To Figure Out Your Turkey Cooking Time

Figuring out the **turkey cooking time** is one of the tricky parts about planning a big turkey dinner. After all, you want to be eating at a reasonable time, and ideally the turkey will be completely cooked, but still nice and moist.

But there are a lot of things that affect how long it'll take for your turkey to cook. In this article, we'll go over the [different factors that affect turkey roasting time](#). Then, we'll give you a [chart of the different cooking times for turkey](#).

Here we go!

What Affects Turkey Cook Time?

When it comes to cooking turkey, just knowing the turkey's weight isn't enough. There are a lot of different things that come into play when you're trying to determine the cooking time for your turkey.

- The **size and weight** of the turkey are obviously major factors. The heavier the turkey, the longer it'll take to cook.
- The **oven's temperature** makes a difference, too. And lots of things affect the oven's temperature: what setting it's at, how often you open the door, and every oven has its own particular temperature fluctuations.
- The **moisture** in the turkey affects how long it'll take to cook. A brined turkey contains more moisture and so it cooks a bit faster.
- A **stuffed** turkey takes a bit longer to cook than an unstuffed one. The stuffing absorbs some of the heat, and affects how the heat circulates inside the turkey. A stuffed turkey takes about 30 minutes longer to cook than an unstuffed one.
- The turkey's **temperature** when you place it in the oven is a factor, too. A turkey nearing room temperature will cook faster. A turkey that's frozen can take up to 50% longer to cook.
 - You'll get better results if you let the turkey reach room

temperature before cooking it. But because of bacteria growth, you shouldn't let it sit outside the fridge for more than an hour.

- Using a **rack** can speed up the cooking time. In fact, anything you do that helps there be more air flow around the turkey will make it cook faster.
- The **roasting pan** you use affects the cooking time, too. Shiny pans deflect the heat away and can make the turkey roasting time longer than if you use a dark pan.
- How you **cook** the turkey can make a difference. If you cook the turkey using a lid, it'll cook faster. Using a tent foil slows down the cooking process and makes it take longer.

So what does all this mean? There are just so many factors that it's impossible to tell how long it'll take to cook a turkey. But what you *can* do is tell when it's done. How? By using a **meat thermometer**.

Turkey is considered safe to eat when the **white meat reaches 170F** and **dark meat reaches 180F**. Since the turkey's internal temperature **will continue to rise 5-10 degrees** after you take it out of the oven, you can tell when it's time to take the turkey out of the oven when it's at **165F-170F**.

Turkey Cooking Time Chart

Still, if you're planning a big turkey meal, it's nice to have an **approximate turkey cooking time** so that you can plan dinner more easily. So here you go.

Just remember, it's only an *estimate*. Keeping an eye on the turkey's internal temperature is still the best way to get a perfectly cooked and juicy turkey. And it's always a good idea to check up on the turkey 45 minutes or so before the chart says it'll be done. You never know, and better safe than dry turkey.

Turkey Cooking Times

Turkey Weight	Unstuffed	Stuffed
10 to 14 lbs	3h00 to 3h30	3h30 to 4h00
14 to 18 lbs	3h30 to 4h15	4h00 to 4h45
18 to 22 lbs	4h15 to 4h30	4h45 to 5h00
22 to 26 lbs	4h30 to 5h00	5h00 to 5h30

And don't forget, the turkey needs to **rest** outside the oven for about 30 minutes before you carve it.

- The rest time allows the juices to redistribute evenly throughout the meat, giving you a juicier turkey.
- It also makes the turkey easier to carve.
- You can use this time to make the gravy, cook the potatoes and other side dishes you might have. That way everything's ready at exactly the same time!

Well, that's it for turkey cooking times. Remember, these are **general guidelines** to help you get an approximate time for dinner, but the real test is the meat thermometer.

Enjoy!