

Guide to the safe preparation, cooking and handling of poultry

Every year illness can occur following the consumption of poultry containing food poisoning organisms such as campylobacter and salmonella, but the danger to health can be dramatically reduced, provided some simple basic rules are followed.

STORAGE

1. To prevent bacteria from multiplying, frozen birds should be kept in a freezer until ready for thawing.
2. Fresh poultry should be kept in a covered container in a refrigerator. It is important that the surface of the birds do not come into contact with other foods during storage.

PREPARATION

1. Frozen birds must be thoroughly defrosted (preferably in a refrigerator), prior to cooking. Defrost until the body is pliable, the legs flexible and the body cavity free from ice crystals (see table below for recommended thawing times).
2. Remove the giblets before cooking. Frozen giblets should not be used until thoroughly thawed.
3. Prevent cross-contamination. Ensure that unwashed working surfaces which have been used for raw poultry are not used for any cooked food, and always wash utensils which have been used for poultry preparation before using them in connection with cooked food.
4. Beware of the liquid which gathers on thawing. It may be heavily contaminated. Carefully dispose of down the drain and disinfect the sink and its surroundings before further use.
5. Cook as soon as possible after thawing or, if a fresh bird, immediately after taking out of the refrigerator.
6. On completion of preparation, disinfect all working/hand contact surfaces and utensils. Then wash hands thoroughly.

COOKING

1. It is essential that the meat is thoroughly cooked until the internal juices run clear (for cooking times see table below). Extra cooking time or a higher oven temperature is required when foil is used to cover the bird during cooking.
2. Cook any stuffing in a separate roasting dish rather than inside the bird. It will cook more easily and cooking guidelines will be more accurate.
3. After cooking serve immediately or cool as quickly as possible in a cool room.

STORAGE AND REHEATING

1. Leftovers should be left to cool, covered and placed in the fridge ideally within two hours after being cooked **and consumed within 2 days**.
2. Ensure cooked meat does not come into contact with any possible source of contamination (e.g. raw meats/vegetables).
3. If reheating, the safest way to do this is to lay slices of cooked cold turkey in an oven proof dish and cover with gravy. Then cover the whole dish with a lid or foil and place in a hot oven, making sure the turkey is piping hot before serving.
4. You shouldn't reheat leftovers more than once.
5. Leftovers can also be frozen and used within one month.

Recommended thawing and cooking times

Oven ready weight	Thawing time (fridge)	Cooking time 350°F/180°C/Gas mark 4
5lbs	27hrs	2-2.5hrs
10lbs	54hrs	3-3.5hrs
15lbs	81hrs	4.5-5hrs
20lbs	109hrs	5.5hrs
25lbs	136hrs	6.5hrs
30lbs	163hrs	6.5-7hrs
35lbs	190hrs	7-7.5hrs
40lbs	218hrs	7.5-8hrs
45lbs	245hrs	8-8.5hrs

- **Failure to keep raw meat and cooked/prepared food apart is dangerous**
- **Failure to thaw thoroughly is dangerous**
- **Failure to cook thoroughly is dangerous**