

Carve a turkey like a professional

Roasted turkey is the centerpiece of many holiday feasts. That glistening, golden skin and moist meat beneath is the perfect companion to potatoes, string beans and any number of side dishes. Many holiday chefs have received compliments on the appearance of a freshly prepared turkey sitting on the holiday serving platter. But those same chefs may not know how to properly carve up their masterpieces after the grand presentation has been made.

1. Place the turkey on a large, sturdy cutting board. Do not cut the turkey in the pan you used to cook it. Remove the string that may be tying the legs together. Turn the board so that the back of the turkey is facing you.
2. Choose a sharp knife to carve the turkey. A long, narrow knife may work best. Serrated knives may tear the turkey meat, so it may be better to use a flat knife. Some people prefer the ease of an electric knife. This is entirely your choice.
3. Cut through the skin on a leg and gently bend the leg as you slice through to expose the joint. Cut through and remove the entire leg. Then separate the drumstick

- from the thigh. Repeat on the other side.
4. Cut the thigh meat parallel to the thigh bone and place on your serving platter.
 5. To slice the breast meat, insert your knife in the center of the breast bone and cut down until you reach the ribs. Then slice the breast meat in toward your initial cut so you are cutting across the grain of the meat. This will keep the meat tender. Another idea is to remove one side of the breast and slice across it to produce smaller pieces for serving.
 6. Find the wish bone and place it on the side to dry. Children typically like to break the wish bone.
 7. Find the joint of the wings and remove them in a similar fashion as you did for the legs. They are small enough that they should not require extra slicing and can be placed whole on the serving platter.
 8. Drizzle the sliced meat with any reserved cooking juices to keep the turkey moist and flavorful.
- Since turkey is usually the star of many holiday meals, it pays to know the correct way to carve turkey for celebrations.



Better to carve in the kitchen, with your largest cutting board, and all the knives, towels, and counter space you need. There's also no audience in the kitchen.

How to safely thaw a turkey

By Marianne Gravely, USDA

While frozen, a turkey is safe indefinitely. As soon as it begins to thaw, bacteria that may have been present before freezing will begin to grow again. There are three safe ways to defrost a turkey: in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in a microwave oven.

Refrigerator thawing (recommended)
The USDA recommends thawing your turkey in the refrigerator. This is the safest method because the turkey will thaw at a consistent, safe temperature. This method takes some time, so allow one day for each 4 - 5 pounds of weight. If your turkey weighs 16 pounds, it will take about four days to thaw. Once thawed, the turkey is safe for another two days, so you can start thawing it six days before thanksgiving (the Friday before Thanksgiving).
The other two methods (cold water and microwave) must be done immediately before you start cooking the turkey, so you'll have to wait until Thanksgiving morning.

Cold water thawing
For the cold water method, leave the turkey in its original wrapping and submerge it in a sink (or container) full of cold water. It is important that the water be cold so that the turkey stays at a safe temperature. You should change the water every 30 minutes. Empty out the water and replace it with fresh cold water. With this method, allow 30 minutes of defrosting time per pound, so a 16 pound turkey will take 8 hours to thaw using this method (so you might need to start around 4 a.m. if you want to eat in the afternoon!). Once the turkey has thawed, cook it immediately

Microwave thawing
Before you commit to thawing your
See **THAW**, 6C

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