



**Food Safety and Inspection Service
United States Department of Agriculture
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Types of Food Thermometers

Choose and use the one that is right for you!



Dial Oven-Safe (Bimetal)

Reads in 1-2 minutes
Place 2-2 1/2" deep in
thickest part of food

- Can be used in roasts, casseroles, and soups
- Not appropriate for thin foods
- Can remain in food while it's cooking
- Heat conduction of metal stem can cause false high reading
- Some models can be calibrated; check manufacturer's instructions



Digital Instant-Read (Thermistor)

Reads in 10 seconds
Place at least 1/2" deep

- Gives fast reading
- Can measure temperature in thin and thick foods
- Not designed to remain in food while it's cooking
- Check internal temperature of food near the end of cooking time
- Some models can be calibrated; check manufacturer's instructions
- Available in "kitchen" stores



Fork

Reads in 2-10 seconds
Place at least 1/4" deep
in thickest part of food

- Can be used in most foods
- Not designed to remain in food while it is cooking
- Sensor in tine of fork must be fully inserted
- Check internal temperature of food near end of cooking time
- Cannot be calibrated
- Convenient for grilling



Dial Instant-Read (Bimetal)

Reads in 15-20 seconds
Place 2-2 1/2" deep in
thickest part of food

- Can be used in roasts, casseroles, and soups
- Temperature is averaged along probe, from tip to 2-3" up the stem
- Cannot measure thin foods unless inserted sideways
- Not designed to remain in food while it is cooking
- Use to check the internal temperature of a food at the end of cooking time
- Some models can be calibrated; check manufacturer's instructions
- Readily available in stores



Thermocouple

Reads in 2-5 seconds
Place 1/4" or deeper, as needed

- Gives fastest reading
- Good for measuring temperatures of thick and thin foods
- Not designed to remain in food while it's cooking
- Check internal temperature of food near the end of cooking time
- Can be calibrated
- More costly; may be difficult for consumers to find in stores



Disposable Temperature Indicators

(Single-use)

Reads in 5-10 seconds
Place approximately 1/2" deep (follow manufacturer's directions)

- Designed to be used only once
- Designed for specific temperature ranges
- Should only be used with food for which they are intended
- Temperature-sensitive material changes color when the desired temperature is reached



Pop-Up

- Commonly used in turkeys and roasting chickens
- Pops up when food reaches final temperature for safety and doneness
- Checking the temperature in other parts of the food with a conventional food thermometer is recommended



Oven Cord

- Can be used in most foods
- Can also be used outside the oven
- Designed to remain in the food while it is cooking in oven or in covered pot
- Base unit sits on stovetop or counter
- Cannot be calibrated