

Whoops forgot to thaw the turkey... NOW WHAT?

So you forgot to thaw the turkey for holiday dining. It's okay and actually safer to cook the turkey from a frozen state. A frozen turkey will not have juices spread around the kitchen, will not waste water as you try to thaw it, and will produce an excellent and juicy product. It is important that the final temperature of the deep portions of the turkey reach 165°F minimum for food safety purposes. The Turkey Federation recommends that for quality purposes, the temperature reaches 175° to 180°F in the leg/thigh portion. What about the giblets? These can be removed from the center cavity after about 3 hours of cooking. If they are in a paper bag, they can be left until the turkey is done.

Here are the procedures for cooking a turkey from the frozen state.

Requirements: a food thermometer (bimetallic quick read or digital quick read); a shallow baking pan and rack large enough for your turkey; aluminum foil; a turkey 12-15 lbs; oven pre-heated to 325°F.

Time: depends upon size and temperature. Plan on 5 – 5½ hours for a 12-14 lb turkey and measure temperature.

End temperature: minimum 165°F at deepest breast or thigh. Desirable 175° - 180°F not for food safety but for quality.

Procedure:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 325°F making sure that the shelving will fit the turkey (middle shelf).
2. Line the shallow baking pan with aluminum foil and place the rack in the pan.
3. On a clean surface, unwrap the frozen turkey and place the turkey on the rack.
4. Put the turkey into the oven and bake.
5. At 3 hours, determine if you can remove the giblets package.
6. At 4 to 5 hours, measure temperature at deepest point in breast. Minimum temperature should be 165°F before removing from oven. If not at 165°F, leave in oven.
7. When 165°F is reached in the breast, remove the turkey from oven and place a foil tent over it. Let it rest for 20-30 minutes before carving.
8. Enjoy.
9. Refrigerate leftovers as promptly as is possible.