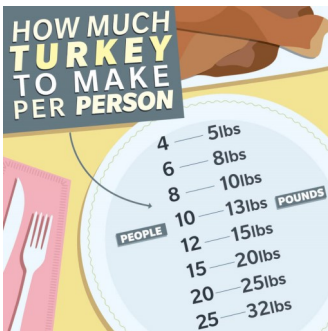


Family and Community Health “Connections” in Tom Green County



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Talking Turkey: Cooking Whole Turkey Tips!

1. *Plan ahead!* While the thought of tackling the entire Thanksgiving meal can be intimidating, a little bit of advance planning and organization can go a long way in helping your holiday run smoothly. Know what recipe you’re preparing and size of turkey you will need. If you want plenty of leftovers, plan for 1.25-1.5. pounds of turkey per person. If you’re buying a frozen turkey, get it in advance. You can also check with your local grocery store to get a better idea for when turkeys will be in stock or place a special order.

2. *Make sure your turkey is thawed!* There’s nothing like a frozen turkey on Thanksgiving Day to throw off meal prep. There are three safe ways to defrost a turkey: in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in a microwave oven. 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.

3 WAYS TO THAW A TURKEY

Refrigerator: Safe to store the turkey for another 1 – 2 days in the refrigerator. This is the USDA recommended thawing method. How to thaw: Allow approximately 24 hrs. for every 4-5lbs of bird.

Cold water: Cook immediately after thawing. How to thaw: Submerge the bird in cold water & change every 30 mins.

Microwave: Cook immediately after thawing. How to thaw: Use defrost function based on weight.

DID YOU KNOW? It's safe to cook a frozen turkey though cooking time will be 50% longer! For more information on safe thawing methods, visit fsis.usda.gov

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER

3. *To brine or not to brine?* Brining really has one main goal: keeping the turkey tender and extra juicy while it cooks. There are two types of brines: wet and dry. We recommend taking this extra step. You won’t regret it!

Tips Continued on page 2...

Source: National Turkey Federation

Turkey Tips Continued...

4. *Don't overcook the turkey!* Keep that turkey tender by using a meat thermometer to make sure your turkey reaches a safe internal temperature of 165°F. An important part of using any thermometer is the proper placement in the turkey. Unsure of where to put the thermometer in a turkey? Here are few tips to keep in mind:

- When preparing a whole turkey, insert the thermometer into the thickest portion of the turkey breast, the innermost portion of thigh and the innermost portion of the wing.
- Make sure the thermometer does not touch bone, gristle or the pan.
- When inserting the thermometer in a turkey breast or ground turkey patty, insert it from the side. The thermometer is easier to read and more accurate than when inserted from the top.

Checking your turkey's temperature

Check to make sure your turkey reaches the safe internal temperature of 165°F in at least three places.



And a few more tips for good measure...

- Try cooking your turkey breast down to help keep the meat moist and tender.
- Start the roasting process with your turkey breast tented with foil. Remove the foil for the last half of cooking.
- Need a little bit more than one turkey? Prepare a bone-in turkey breast in addition to your whole bird.

A Safe Holiday Meal

1 in 6 AMERICANS WILL GET A FOODBORNE ILLNESS THIS YEAR

Follow these simple steps to ensure a SAFE holiday meal

SHOP SAFELY

Keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat and poultry



Store perishable foods quickly: within 30 minutes



PREPARE SAFELY

WASH HANDS, SURFACES, AND UTENSILS between EACH FOOD-PREP STEP



A FOOD THERMOMETER IS THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW THAT MEAT HAS BEEN COOKED TO A SAFE TEMPERATURE!

Keep **hot** foods above 140°
Refrigerate **cold** foods at 40°

COOK TURKEY AND CHICKEN TO **165°F**

STORE SAFELY

Store leftovers in shallow containers for faster cooling

EAT or STORE **2 hours** (3) & eat the leftovers within days

REHEAT LEFTOVERS TO **165°F!**

Turkey Leftovers: Left Out No More...

Grab your mismatched Tupperware and a fork! One of the best parts about pulling off the big meal is all the food that is left behind long after your guests have loosened their belts. This holiday season, make the most of your leftover turkey, and store those leftovers safely for optimal freshness. Discard any uneaten food after being left out for more than two hours. You can seal any salvageable leftovers in storage containers for up to four days in the refrigerator – or freeze your turkey to use over the next few weeks. No matter how you celebrate or the contents of your (overflowing) dinner plate, leftovers are the real winners of Thanksgiving. Or shall we say the person who gets to take them home!

Source: National Turkey Federation

AgriLife Extension has these tips to follow during the holidays:

- Eat slowly, because your body needs time to realize you are full.
- Eat mindfully, and really think about the color, smell, taste and texture of what you're eating so that you can truly savor your food.
- Stop eating when you feel slightly full. You don't have to eat everything on your plate.
- Don't skip meals on the day of a big party, where you know you'll eat more. Just eat a smaller portion.
- Watch your alcohol intake and follow the recommended guideline of one drink per day for women and two per day for men. Drink water or sparkling water with a splash of juice.
- Keep track of what you're eating with a food journal. Research shows that those who keep a record of meals between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day lose weight instead of gaining it.

Source: www.fcs.tamu.edu

Enjoy Your Holiday the Healthy Way !

The average person puts on some extra pounds in the six weeks between the Thanksgiving holiday and the New Year. Unfortunately, weight that's gained in a short six weeks may take six months to lose. And if you had already been trying to shed a few pounds, putting on that holiday weight can really give you the blues. Don't despair. Gaining weight during the holidays is not inevitable. You can enjoy your holiday meals and still face that scale with confidence by the New Year. One way you can do that is by moving your resolution date up two months and making a November Resolution to **"Maintain No Gain"** this holiday season.

Maintain, No Gain is a six-week course dedicated to helping you maintain your weight during the holidays. The goal of this program is for you to maintain your weight within 2 pounds. We also encourage you to focus on consuming 5 servings of vegetables and fruits each day, as well as you continue to engage in regular physical activity.

Your Family & Community Health, AgriLife Extension Agent will walk you through interactive activities and scenarios to help you learn how to make correct decisions. You will also gain access to weekly printable logs to keep track of your habits and progress throughout the course. We hope that you join us and Maintain, No Gain this holiday season!

Contact your Local County Extension Office for more details.

Get Up and MOVE !

Physical activity reduces stress, boosts the immune system and creates changes inside the body that lead to better health. It will not make up for all the extra calories that we are likely to take in during the holiday season, but it can help develop a healthy habit that may make it easier to take off any weight that you gain after the holiday season ends. Take a walk or play the Fall Physical Activity Bingo!



<https://extension.umn.edu/event/managing-your-health-through-holidays>

<https://food.unl.edu/article/fall-food-and-fitness>

Prep: 20 mins | Cook: 4-8 hrs. | Servings: 8

~ 448 calories per serving per serving

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<https://www.facebook.com/TomGreenCount-yFCH/>

I like this recipe because it is EASY! It has the bird, stuffing and veggies all cooked together! Now you have your oven FREE for baking healthy PIES!

Ingredients:

6 lb boneless turkey breast
6 stalks celery, diced
6 carrots, peeled and diced
4 sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 cup onion, diced
24 oz cornbread stuffing mix dry
5 cups chicken broth
1/4 cup chopped parsley
Optional: fresh herbs to taste (thyme, sage, rosemary)



Instructions:

1. Place thawed turkey breast in bottom of Crock Pot.
2. Add in the vegetables, parsley, and herbs - top with dry stuffing mix, and pour chicken broth over all ingredients. You may not need all of the broth.
3. Cover and cook on low for 7-8 hours or on high for 4-5 hours or until turkey is cooked through.
4. Move stuffing and veggies to a serving bowl. Move turkey to a platter, straining the juices in Crock Pot.
5. Allow turkey to rest for 5 minutes before slicing. Use reserved juices to moisten stuffing and turkey slices as needed.

Tom Green EEA County News

- ⇒ **Association & Veribest Club meeting:**
November 8, 2022 @ 9:30 a.m.
State Workshop
District 7 TEEA host follow-up
Held at Extension Office
Hostess: Ruby Matscheck
- ⇒ **District 7 TEEA Fall Training meeting** will be held in San Angelo, TX on Tuesday, November 15, 2022.
- ⇒ **The 2022 Tom Green EEA Christmas Party** will be held December 13, 2022 in the Extension

Family and Community Health

“Connections” is provided by the following Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family and Community Health Agents:

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- Chanie Schaffner, Coleman County
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- Staci Winders, Nolan County
- Kandice Everitt, Runnels County
- McKinley Crownover, San Saba County
- Kim Miles, Taylor County
- Courtney Redman, Tom Green County
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- Barbara Brown, BLT Regional Project Specialist