

Thanksgiving Day, Backward from Dinner

Write your clock times in the left column and put this on the fridge. Everyone who asks "what can I do?" gets pointed at it.

We eat at _____ Turkey goes in at _____

How long the turkey takes

Roasted at 325°F, per the USDA. Add 30–45 minutes of resting; that total is how far ahead of dinner it goes in.

WEIGHT	UNSTUFFED	STUFFED
8–12 lb	2¾–3 hrs	3–3½ hrs
12–14 lb	3–3¾ hrs	3½–4 hrs
14–18 lb	3¾–4¼ hrs	4–4¼ hrs
18–20 lb	4¼–4½ hrs	4¼–4¾ hrs
20–24 lb	4½–5 hrs	4¾–5¼ hrs

It's done at 165°F in the thickest part of the thigh, away from the bone (and 165°F in the stuffing, if stuffed). Start checking 45 minutes before the chart says. A thermometer beats the pop-up timer every time.

Example: dinner at 3:00, a 15-lb unstuffed bird. Four hours plus a 45-minute rest = in the oven by 10:15.

TIME	HOW LONG BEFORE	WHAT HAPPENS	
	First thing	Turkey out of the fridge; pat it dry and season it while the oven heats to 325°F. Set out the butter to soften. Coffee.	☐
	Turkey goes in	Breast up, thermometer in the thigh. Write the time in the box at the top of this page.	☐
	4 hrs before	Do every dish in the sink now, while it's quiet. Put out something to snack on so nobody hovers.	☐
	3 hrs before	Peel potatoes if you didn't make them ahead; hold them in cold water. Cranberry sauce out of the fridge.	☐
	2 hrs before	Casseroles and stuffing out of the fridge so they're not ice-cold going in. If the turkey is browning too fast, tent the breast with foil.	☐
	1 hr before	Turkey should be closing in on 165°F. Reheat the mashed potatoes in a slow cooker or over low heat with more butter. Gravy base warming.	☐
	45 min before	TURKEY OUT. Tent it loosely; it rests 30–45 minutes. Oven up to 350–375°F. Casseroles and stuffing IN. This is the window.	☐
	30 min before	Make the gravy from the drippings. Rolls in for the last ten minutes, or warm in a towel-lined basket. Butter, cranberry, and pickles to the table.	☐
	15 min before	Carve. Pull the sides. Everything to the table at once — it will all be hot enough. Fill waters, light candles.	☐
	Dinner	Sit down. You did it.	☐
	Within 2 hrs after	Leftovers into the fridge: turkey off the bone, everything in shallow containers. Carcass into a stock pot or the freezer.	☐

YOUR ADDITIONS *pick up Grandma, pull the ham, kids' table, the dog*

In the oven while the turkey rests

Thirty to forty-five minutes, at any temperature you want. Write down what goes in so you don't stand there thinking.

at °F at °F

at °F at °F