

# Grandma Shuster's Turkey

4 servings with plenty of leftovers

Buy a 14-pound turkey, preferably fresh (arrange to pick it up the night before Thanksgiving & brine it overnight (see Brining a Turkey). If you buy a 14-pound **frozen** turkey it will take up to five days to defrost it (defrost it in the refrigerator to avoid salmonella poisoning) Buy a “broad-breasted” turkey **hen**. If you need a turkey larger than 14 pounds, it will have to be a Tom.

Plan to have the turkey done 30-45 minutes before you want to serve it. This is to allow time to make a big pan of gravy & to get food onto the table (vegetables should be prepared & ready to cook while gravy is being made). Since you will want to make gravy in the [roasting pan](#), you must have another [large pan or platter](#) to transfer turkey to when it is done – then cover it with [aluminum foil](#) & the roaster cover or a towel to keep it warm.

Roast turkey according to the chart below 325°. An [instant meat thermometer](#) should read 180°-185° in the thigh, 170°-175° in the breast & 160°-165° in the stuffing when the turkey is done.

Safe Turkey Cooking Times		
Set your oven at 325 degrees F and cook until juices run clear		
Weight (pounds)	Unstuffed Cooking Time (hours)	Stuffed Cooking Time (hours)
8 to 12	2 1/4 to 3	3 to 3 1/2
12 to 14	3 to 3 3/4	3 1/2 to 4
14 to 18	3 3/4 to 4 1/4	4 to 4 1/4
18 to 20	4 1/4 to 4 1/2	4 1/4 to 4 3/4
20 to 24	4 1/2 to 5	4 3/4 to 5 1/4

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1 Remove pin feathers with [turkey tweezers](#). Wash inside & outside with tepid water & dry with [paper towels](#) (note: some folks say not to wash poultry). Salt the inside.

2 Stuff the large cavity with dressing, remembering that the dressing will **expand** while cooking, so do not stuff tightly (if you don't like “inside” dressing, stuff it just half full). Pin skin together with [turkey skewers](#) & tie skewers with [string](#) to close the opening. Legs can be tucked into this cavity, but I just tie them together outside – also, some people stick the tail inside before closing the cavity.

**3** Stuff small (neck) cavity loosely & fasten with skewers & string. Tie around whole turkey with string to fasten down the wings. Put extra dressing into 2 large pans (Pyrex, which can also be used for serving, or aluminum), which have been buttered (remember to save a big pan to put turkey into when it is done & you want to make the gravy). Set dressing pans aside, covered with plastic wrap, so they won't dry out.

**4** Dry back of turkey with paper towels and butter & salt it. Then put turkey, breasts up, into roasting pan, on top of turkey lifting chains, so that it can be easily lifted out when done. Pat top (breasts) dry & butter & salt it. Put meat thermometer into heaviest part of a thigh (do not let it touch the pan).

**5** Roast at 325°, **not** covered. When turkey breast is brown enough, baste it with juices from the pan, using a turkey baster, then cover breast with a piece of aluminum foil to keep it from browning more, while the rest of the turkey cooks (Lorraine has never had to cover the breast).

**6** About 3 hours before calculated time for turkey to be done, baste the turkey, then put 1/3 to 1/2 of the extra dressing into the bottom of the roasting pan, saving the pans of extra dressing until later (putting all the dressing in makes it too fatty). If you have a large turkey, you may not have much room for dressing in the pan. Put in what you can.

**7** About 2 hours ahead of the turkey being done, put giblets, except liver into a very small covered casserole, along with the turkey neck. The little casserole should have some water & could have a little butter (kidneys should have their outer skin removed). Put in oven to bake. About one hour before the turkey is done, add the liver to the casserole. Baste the turkey.

**8** When turkey is done, put it into the pan or platter you saved especially for this moment, cover it with aluminum foil and a towel, or roaster cover (you may need help to lift the turkey out). Leave a little dressing in the roasting pan to flavor the gravy, but take out the rest of the dressing in the bottom of the roasting pan & mix it in with the 2 pans of extra dressing that were set aside. Then, put these pans into the oven, uncovered, to roast. Turn the dressing a couple of times during the next 30 minutes.

**9** Make gravy right in the roasting pan.

**10** After the gravy is done, leave it in the roasting pan to keep it warm. Then check the dressing in the oven; stir it & see if it is brown enough – it probably won't be & you can turn on the broiler for about 5 minutes, watching it the whole time & turning it often (don't leave it or it will burn!).

**11** While you are finishing browning the dressing in the oven, put the turkey on a good platter or else start carving it & put the pieces on a platter.

**12** Enjoy!

Note: Items highlighted in red and underlined must be on hand to insure success.