

Straight - forward Turkey

Roasted



This is a Z2 (ZReduction) recipe. Read this whole recipe before you buy your turkey so you purchase all of the ingredients you will be using. There are lots of options.

Two things to settle on first. How big, fresh or frozen? How big is pretty easy.

A 12 – 15 pound turkey will serve about 13 people.

A 15 – 18 pound turkey will serve about 14 people

A 18 – 22 pound turkey will serve about 20 people.

Simple math. Don't ever let that one confuse you. And for extra leftovers just get a bigger turkey.

Fresh or frozen is simple. Get fresh whenever you can and if you can afford it. I like to get it from a local butcher when possible and organic is a nice bonus. If you get frozen just make sure you follow the instructions on thawing. Nothing worse than a novice cook who takes the turkey out of the freezer on Thanksgiving morning and then melts down to a puddle of tears

because that person just found out they needed to take it out and put it in the refrigerator two days before so it would thaw.

Now you have to decide on what equipment you'll use to cook the turkey. In the simple department, I say just find an oven-proof pan big enough to hold it. Be careful with those disposable pans. They are very difficult to handle without them buckling and you don't want your turkey to hit the floor. I don't bother to put it up on a roasting rack. I don't tie the legs together. I don't pin the wings down. You can forget all that. Just be sure to take out the giblets. Don't leave anything in the cavity. You can make all kinds of things with the giblets but in the simple department you can toss them or get worried about what you want to do with them after the turkey is in the oven.

Instructions:

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees.

Rinse the turkey inside and out and pat the outside with paper towels to get the extra moisture off.

Set it in the pan. Breast side up is my preference.

Going for super simple? Just spray the turkey with some olive oil spray or slather olive oil or soft butter across all of the skin. You choose. Spray is the easiest. Then season it with something. It can be as simple as grated sea salt and pepper. Or you can dust it with your favorite meat rub. Some folks insist on salting the inside. I say go for it you want to. But it's not necessary.

With super simple, you can leave the cavity empty. Others swear by putting a few sticks of celery in. They say the celery steams and keeps the turkey moist. I agree. I have done it with chicken. You can also put onion in there or sprigs of fresh

herbs like thyme and sage and rosemary. You choose. Or go without. You are not going to eat whatever you put in there anyway. It's just for the smells/flavors – it might impart into the meat but feel free to default to nothing in the cavity. My favorite is to put a couple of lemons cut into wedges in the turkey and then make a lemon cream gravy to go with it. I'll give you that recipe too.

Put your turkey on a lower rack; maybe one step up from the bottom, depending on how big your turkey is. You don't want it hitting the top cooking element. Leave some room.

Roast the turkey at 400 degrees for 30 minutes and then turn the heat down to 325. This is the only thing you have to remember. Set a timer if you have to.

Roast the turkey until it reaches 170 degrees. To figure out how long it will take, just do the math. 15 minutes per pound. 15 pounds of turkey X 15 minutes per pound is 225 minutes or 3 and $\frac{3}{4}$ hours.

I use an insta-read thermometer toward the end of the cooking time to check it. Stick it in the breast just above the leg so you are checking the thick part of the meat. If you are lucky you might even get a fresh turkey that has a pop-up timer in it for extra help. Frozen turkeys usually have a pop-up timer.

Basting. I baste the turkey with one of those old-fashioned turkey basters once every 30 minutes. Don't be opening the oven too often or it will take longer to cook the turkey. You can use broth or even water along with the juices the turkey is producing. Make sure there is always a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or even a bit more of liquid in the bottom of the pan. Add water or broth if necessary to keep it level and not dry on the bottom of the pan.

You can check on how brown the turkey is getting when you baste

it. When it gets to a nice golden color that you like you make a 'tent' for your turkey. That just means you take a large piece of aluminum foil and fold it over the top of the turkey and let the ends dangle. That just keeps it from getting darker. When you go back in to baste it again just take the aluminum foil off, baste and put it back on. Simple.

When your turkey has reached the 170 degree point take it out of the oven. I also take it out of the pan and put it on a platter or cutting board to rest.

Let it rest for 20 minutes. While it's resting I make the gravy and get any other last minute details done.

Then carve the turkey and serve. Don't get too wiggled out about the carving. Perfect slices don't taste any better than chunks.

And have a Happy Thanksgiving. Concentrate on laughing and telling fun stories with your guests and let the stress melt away.

Enjoy!

Cheers,