



A Nutrition Resource

HOLIDAY MEALS

TURKEY & THE FIXINGS

Thawing your turkey

IN THE REFRIGERATOR: Place the frozen turkey in a baking pan or on a platter to catch any juices that may leak. Once a turkey has been completely thawed, it can stay in the refrigerator for 1 to 2 days.

IN COLD WATER: Make sure the turkey is in a leakproof plastic bag. Fill your kitchen sink or a large pan with enough cold water to cover the turkey. Change the water every 30 minutes until thawed. Cook the turkey immediately after it is thawed.

APPROXIMATE THAWING TIMES (Thawing in the Refrigerator is Best!)

TURKEY SIZE (lbs.)	REFRIGERATOR THAW	COLD WATER THAW
4-12	1-3 days	2-6 hours
4-16	3-5 days	6-8 hours
16-20	4-5 days	8-10 hours

*Cold Water Thaw: Change water every 30 minutes

Turkey safety tips

- Remember – Always wash your hands, utensils, the sink, and anything else that comes into contact with raw turkey and its juices, with HOT, SOAPY water.
- Do not rinse the turkey! This spreads harmful bacteria.
- To prevent food poisoning, DO NOT let the turkey and leftovers stay out on the counter for more than 2 HOURS. Throw away any food that should be refrigerated (turkey, stuffing, gravy, etc.) if left out for more than 2 hours.
- Enjoy turkey and stuffing within 3 to 4 days and gravy within 1 to 2 days.

Roasting your turkey

- Preheat oven to 325°F.
- Remove turkey from plastic bag. Remove neck and giblets from cavity (usually in a separate bag).
- If you want stuffing, it is recommended to cook stuffing outside of the turkey in a casserole dish.
- Place the turkey, breast side up, in a shallow pan; brush with melted butter or oil. A wire rack can be placed under the turkey to keep it from sticking. Keep the turkey moist by covering loosely with foil. Remove the foil for the last hour of cooking.
- Insert a meat thermometer in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. Make sure the thermometer is not touching a bone. Even if your turkey has a “popup” temperature indicator, you still need to check the internal temperature with a food thermometer. The minimum internal temperature must reach 165°F to be safe.
- Let the turkey stand for 20 minutes before carving to allow the juices to set.

APPROXIMATE ROASTING TIMES FOR UNSTUFFED TURKEYS (at 325°F)

TURKEY SIZE	ROASTING TIME
8 to 12 pounds	2 3/4 to 3 hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 to 3 3/4 hours
14 to 18 pounds	3 3/4 to 4 1/4 hours
18 to 20 pounds	4 1/4 to 4 1/2 hours

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MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY | EXTENSION

Spiced Sweet Potato Casserole

Yield: 8 Servings | Serving Size: 1/2 Cup

3 pounds sweet potatoes (about 3 large sweet potatoes)

¼ cup packed brown sugar

2 Tablespoons unsalted butter

2 Tablespoons orange juice concentrate

2 teaspoons cinnamon

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon nutmeg

2 large eggs

Optional: ¼ cup chopped pecans

- 1) Preheat oven to 350° F.
- 2) Pierce potatoes with a fork; arrange in a circle on paper towels in microwave oven. Microwave at HIGH for 16 minutes or until tender, rearranging potatoes after 8 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes.
- 3) Cut each potato in half lengthwise; scoop out pulp into a large bowl. Discard skins. Add brown sugar, butter, orange juice concentrate, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg, and beat with a mixer at low speed until combined. Add eggs; beat until smooth.
- 4) Spoon mixture into a 1½-quart baking dish; sprinkle with pecans, if using. Bake at 350° F for 45 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	1/2 cup (197g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4.5g	6%
Saturated Fat 2.5g	13%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 55mg	18%
Sodium 220mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 44g	16%
Dietary Fiber 6g	21%
Total Sugars 19g	
Includes 8g Added Sugars	16%
Protein 5g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 79mg	6%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 859mg	20%
<small>*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small>	

Tips for making healthier side dishes

STUFFING: Use multi-grain or whole wheat bread. Add apples, cranberries, and/or mushrooms. Avoid recipes with sausage or bacon. Try wild rice, bulgur, or brown rice stuffing.

CRANBERRIES: Make your own cranberries from scratch. Use 100% orange juice to replace some of the sugar. Combine a 12-ounce bag of cranberries, sugar, orange juice, and ½ cup water in a saucepan. Bring to simmer and cook for 15 minutes. Let cool completely before serving.

GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE: Use low-fat dairy, such as low-fat milk or low-fat sour cream. Choose a low sodium, reduced fat cream of mushroom soup and homemade baked onions instead of canned, fried onions. Add additional vegetables like mushrooms and onions.

MASHED POTATOES: Use low-fat milk, low-fat buttermilk, or low-fat sour cream. Decrease the amount of butter and salt. Substitute some cooked, pureed cauliflower for the potatoes.

PUMPKIN PIE: Make a homemade crust instead of using a store-bought one. Substitute some low-fat sour cream or Greek yogurt for some of the butter in the crust. Use half whole wheat flour in the crust.

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