



## Safe Handling:

### Turkey

**Fridge time:** (whole, parts, ground and giblets) 1 to 2 days

**Freezer time:** To assure quality, following these freezing time limits: whole – 12 months; parts – 9 months; ground or giblets – 3 to 4 months

### Shopping

1. Raw turkey skin color is off white to cream-colored. The color under the skin can range from a pink to lavender blue depending on the amount of fat just under the skin; this is normal.

### Preparation

1. Allow about 1 day for every 5 pounds of turkey to thaw in the refrigerator.
2. If using microwave or cold-water submersion methods of thawing, following the general [safe handling](#) instructions.

### Cooking

1. The USDA recommends cooking turkey to a minimum of 165°F.
2. Higher temperatures may be used to achieve the texture and degree of doneness that consumers prefer.
3. **For optimum safety and uniform doneness, the USDA recommends that stuffing being cooked outside of the bird.** However, if cooking a stuffed bird, stuff the turkey loosely, cook the turkey immediately after stuffing and be sure the **center** of the stuffing reaches 165° F.
4. Safely cooked turkey may have a pink hue due to the hemoglobin in tissues which can form a heat-stable color.
5. Some USDA-inspected frozen stuffed whole turkey **MUST** be cooked from the frozen state to ensure a safely cooked product. Follow preparation directions on the label.

### Leftovers

1. Cooked turkey and turkey dishes can be stored in the refrigerator for three to four days and frozen for up to six months.

***Note: Pregnant women, children, elderly and immuno-compromised individuals can be at an increased risk of developing foodborne illnesses that can have fatal consequences. Additional care should be taken for safe handling.***