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.*