

Weekend before Thanksgiving:

- Buy 1 16-19lb frozen turkey.
- If you buy a fresh bird, you can wait to buy it until the day before, but sometimes turkeys marked “fresh” are indeed frozen a little, so be sure to check closely the night before, so you’ll have time to thaw it if it’s icy.
- When you get it home from the store, put the frozen turkey—breast side down and still wrapped up in its original packaging in the fridge in a casserole dish/cookie sheet with sides to catch juices.

Tuesday

- Check the turkey to make sure it’s thawing and flip it to breast side up.

Wednesday

- Check the turkey again. This time, take the bird out of the fridge, unwrap, remove any of the packaged innards from the neck cavity and intestinal cavity and set aside.
- The leg joints should move freely and there should be no ice crystals left. (If not, you’ll have to give it a cold water bath, keeping it in the packaging and soaking it in cold water in a clean sink or tub immersed in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes or so.)
- Rinse with cold water (in and out) and pat dry thoroughly.
- Place it back on the cleaned casserole dish/pan. Wrap with saran and place back in the fridge.

Thanksgiving around Noontime

- Take the turkey out of the fridge, remove the saran, and salt/pepper it inside and out. I also sprinkle some poultry seasoning and a little ground sage on it as well.
- Tie the legs together with a bit of twine if you wish (it makes it look a bit nicer)
- Place your turkey on a rack in its roasting pan, tucking the thighs underneath the bird.
- Brush some melted butter over the bird (or spray it with canola/olive oil).
- Put an oven proof temperature gauge in the thigh, making sure not to hit a bone.
- At this point, you can leave your turkey out to get closer to room temperature as this will reduce your cooking time in the oven. (You may wish to cover it lightly with saran, until it goes into the oven. Don’t leave it out for longer than an hour though.)
- Preheat the oven to 325. Make sure the rack is on the lowest setting to accommodate it.

An unstuffed bird approx. 16-19lbs should take about 3-4.5 hours to roast at 325 degrees.

If you want to eat by 5:30-6ish, I usually put the bird in by 1:30pm.

You may want to cover it lightly with foil and remove the foil the last 30 minutes to 1 hour of cooking. OR you can wait to cover the turkey lightly with foil after it browns.

I have never really basted the turkey. I’ve read that it doesn’t do much good in terms of moisture, and may reduce the oven temperature so much throughout the cooking time that it is detrimental.

Thigh temp should be 165-170 when taking it out of oven and will rise to 175-185 while rests for approx. 30-60 minutes.

So by 4:45ish you’ll be taking the turkey out of the oven.

Let rest for approximately 30-45minutes, then start carving.

Turkey Gravy

(a very imprecise recipe—my measurements are probably off as I don't measure and go by eye)

- Towards the end of the resting time for the turkey (5:10 pm or so), remove the bird from the roasting pan, trying to keep it on a rack and placing it on a cookie sheet with sides/large pan/cutting board to catch any remaining dripping juices.
- Pour out the **drippings** from the pan into the fat separator or a large measuring cup/bowl. You'll want to let it sit for a bit.
- Using the roasting pan (you can do this in a separate pan, but you'll miss the brown bits cooked on the side of the pan), directly over medium-high heat, heat about ½ cup of turkey fat (you can add **butter or canola oil** to make enough if you need).
- Slowly (so you don't get lumps) add **flour**, mixing with a whisk to make a roux the consistency of peanut butter.
- Slowly add **chicken stock** (maybe 3-4 cups or so, I've never measured) and the other juices, mixing with a whisk until you get a consistency you want. Make sure to scrape all the brownish good stuff off of the roasting pan
- Add enough **Kitchen Bouquet** to get a nice brownish color.
- Let it cook for a bit.
- Taste and season with **salt** if needed.