Thanksgiving Day 2026 Cooking Plan

Unstuffed whole turkey at 325°F, counted back from dinner · Thanksgiving is Thu., Nov. 26, 2026

WORKED EXAMPLE: DINNER AT 4 P.M. ON THU., NOV. 26

Turkey weight	Roasting time at 325°F	Into the oven	Start checking	165°F by	Carve
8 to 12 lb	2 h 45 min to 3 h	12:40 p.m.	3:25 p.m.	3:40 p.m.	4:00 p.m.
12 to 14 lb	3 h to 3 h 45 min	11:55 a.m.	2:55 p.m.	3:40 p.m.	4:00 p.m.
14 to 18 lb	3 h 45 min to 4 h 15 min	11:25 a.m.	3:10 p.m.	3:40 p.m.	4:00 p.m.
18 to 20 lb	4 h 15 min to 4 h 30 min	11:10 a.m.	3:25 p.m.	3:40 p.m.	4:00 p.m.
20 to 24 lb	4 h 30 min to 5 h	10:40 a.m.	3:10 p.m.	3:40 p.m.	4:00 p.m.

YOUR DINNER TIME

Dinner at _____ on Thu., Nov. 26

Turkey weight	Roasting time at 325°F	Into the oven	Start checking	165°F by	Carve
8 to 12 lb	3 h + 20 min rest				
12 to 14 lb	3 h 45 min + 20 min rest				
14 to 18 lb	4 h 15 min + 20 min rest				
18 to 20 lb	4 h 30 min + 20 min rest				
20 to 24 lb	5 h + 20 min rest				

ON THE DAY

- Into the oven = dinner time minus the longest roasting time minus the 20-minute rest.
- Start checking at the shortest roasting time; the thermometer, not the clock, says when it is done.
- Check three places, avoiding bone: thickest part of the breast, thigh and wing. The turkey must reach 165°F.
- Let the turkey stand 20 minutes before carving. Cook stuffing in a casserole dish, not inside the turkey.
- Refrigerate leftovers at 40°F or colder within 2 hours of cooking.

Food off the table by _____ **(2 hours after cooking)**

Source: USDA roasting timetable for an unstuffed turkey at 325°F, as published by University of Illinois Extension; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Preparing Your Holiday Turkey Safely. The clock times are our plan built from the chart, not the USDA's words.