

To Stuff or Not To Stuff the Turkey



Choosing to stuff your turkey or cook stuffing in a casserole dish is a matter of personal preference. As with any preparation involving raw food ingredients, it is important to carefully follow proper food safety and handling procedures to ensure a safe turkey. If you decide to stuff the turkey, the following guidelines are recommended:

- Prepare stuffing just before placing in turkey. Use only cooked ingredients in stuffing and use pasteurized egg products instead of raw eggs. Place prepared stuffing in turkey just before roasting. Do not stuff the turkey the night before roasting.
- Stuff both neck and body cavities of completely thawed turkey, allowing $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of stuffing per pound of turkey. Do not pack stuffing tightly in turkey.
- Always use a meat thermometer. The turkey is done when the thigh temperature reaches 180°F. on a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh next to body, not touching bone. Move the meat thermometer to the center of stuffing; temperature should be 160°F. Then the stuffed turkey is done, remove turkey from oven and let turkey with stuffing stand 15 minutes. This stand time allows the stuffing temperature to reach 165°F. for an added measure of safety.
- When the turkey is cooked on an outdoor grill, water smoker or by fast cook methods where the turkey typically gets done faster than the stuffing, it is recommended that the turkey not be stuffed.

Sources: [Butterball Turkey Talk-Line, 2000.](#)