

Turkey (dark) (Poultry & Eggs)

Interesting facts: White meat is generally preferred in the United States while other countries choose the dark meat. A turkey typically has about 70 percent white meat and 30 percent dark meat. The two types of meat differ nutritionally. White meat has fewer calories and less fat than dark meat. The rich flavor of dark meat is especially valued in soup and stew recipes. Dark meat holds up well in rich marinades and is a perfect choice for grilling and barbecuing.

How to select: Purchase organic, free range hormone and antibiotic free birds. Check that the skin is unbroken, free of cuts, tears, bruises, or blemishes. When buying turkey parts, choose parts that are moist and pink. The skin, if any, should be creamy-white, not bluish. The “sell by” date on fresh turkey is seven days after the bird has been processed. The turkey is fresh until then, and for a day or two afterward. Don’t buy fresh turkey—whole or in parts—unless you plan to cook it within that time period. Avoid packages that have a lot of frozen liquid in them—the fluid indicates that the turkey was defrosted and refrozen. If frozen turkey is properly handled at the store and at home, there should be no difference in quality between fresh and frozen birds.

How to clean and store: Frozen turkeys should be rock hard and stored well below the freezer line in the freezer case. Make sure the package is tightly sealed so the turkey is free of freezer burn and ice crystals. To defrost place in refrigerator for 24 hours to defrost.

How to prepare and cook: Roasted

Roasted: Preheat the oven to 350 °F. Rub 3 tablespoons lemon juice and some salt and pepper on the outside of the turkey. Then lift up the skin where you can and rub these seasonings directly on the flesh. Place the turkey thigh side down in a shallow roasting pan. Roast unstuffed turkey for 15 minutes for each pound. At 30 to 60 minutes before it is done, measure the internal temperature with a meat thermometer. (The range reflects the differing size of the turkey; do so at 30 minutes for smaller turkeys and 60 minutes for larger ones.) When it reaches 125 °F, you should turn the turkey and then increase the oven temperature to 400 °F for the remaining roasting time. When the turkey is done, its internal temperature must read 165°-170°F when the thermometer is inserted into the mid-thigh. When it is done remove it to a platter, and let it sit for 15-20 minutes before carving to allow the juices to be redistributed and the meat to become moist throughout.

Recipe idea:

Ground Meatloaf: Preheat oven to 375 °F. Heat 1 tablespoon avocado or olive oil in a large sauté pan and cook for 5 minutes: ½ chopped onion, 1 chopped carrot, 1 chopped celery stalk. Add 5 ounces of chopped mushrooms and 2 minced garlic cloves and cook 10 minutes. In a bowl place 2 pounds ground turkey 2 cups cook quinoa, onion mixture, ½ cup chopped parsley, 2 eggs, 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce and ½ teaspoon of salt and pepper. Form into a loaf (may make two smaller ones) and roast in the middle of the oven for 1 hour. Let stand 5 minutes before slicing. May be frozen for 3 months.