



LET'S STALK TURKEY

How to Heat & Eat Your Smoked Bird

Smoked turkey may be eaten cold or reheated.

To Heat Your Turkey in the Oven

Take the chill off the bird by allowing it to set at room temperature for 30-60 minutes prior to heating. Adjust oven racks as needed and set oven temperature to 325°F. For optimum safety, stuffing a turkey is not recommended. It is recommended you bake your own stuffing outside the bird in a casserole.

Leave your turkey or turkey breast in the cooking bag provided and place it in a shallow roasting pan to catch any juices that may leak. To keep the turkey moist, leave the cooking juices in the bag and add 1 cup of broth whisked with 2 tbsp. flour (vegetable broth gives a great flavor, but chicken broth may also be used.) The flour will help prevent the fat in the juices from getting too hot and bursting the bag. Season the bird or add herbs to the cavity as desired, like sprigs of fresh rosemary, sage and thyme. Close the bag with the foil seal provided, or cut a half inch strip from the open end of the cooking bag and use it to tie the bag closed (pull tightly but do not knot for ease of opening while checking temp.)

Turkey is safe for consumption when cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F as measured with a calibrated food thermometer. Note that the temperature will continue to rise another 5° or so *after* the bird has been removed from the oven. For turkey breasts, place the thermometer in the thickest part. For whole turkeys, place it in the thickest part of the inner thigh. Once the thigh has reached 165°F, check the thickest part of the breast to ensure the turkey has reached 165°F throughout. Turkey bones heat faster so keep the thermometer away from bone. **Plan on about 7–10 minutes per pound reheating time.** *Monitor temperature and avoid overheating to prevent the breast meat from becoming dry.*

Once the turkey has reached temperature, leave the cooking bag open slightly to vent. Let the bird rest 15–30 minutes before carving. Giving the turkey a rest will allow the meat to relax, the juices to flow and the temperature to come up a little and even out. This is one of the secrets to a great bird. Don't rush to carve or your turkey will be dry. If done right, this may well be the most tender turkey you've ever had!

Smoked turkey has a different color and texture than oven-roasted turkey. The meat may appear pink and have a smoother texture. This is normal. The smoking process causes a chemical change in turkey that creates this color change. As long as the turkey registers a temperature of 165°F, it is safe to eat.

To Heat Your Turkey in the Microwave

Warming the entire turkey in the microwave is not recommended but warming individual leftover servings is just part of the holiday! Placing leftover gravy over the bird may help prevent it from drying out. Placing a piece of plastic film over the plate will also help but remember to vent it slightly and take care when removing the film. Rotate the food for even heating.

The most important tip to warming leftover turkey, ribs, chicken or any of our smoked meats is to warm the meat on low power, no higher than 30%. This will help prevent it from drying out. Depending on the quantity, heat your food for a few minutes initially, then 30 seconds at a time, checking between each segment. Allow a minute or two standing time. Again, the internal temperature should reach 165°F.

Serve It Au Jus for Rave Reviews

Instead of simply carving the turkey and arranging it on a platter, you may consider serving it au jus (in its own juices) for maximum moistness and flavor. As soon as the bird is cool enough to handle out of the oven, remove it from the cooking bag, set it on a sheet pan, cover it loosely with foil and allow it to finish resting. Carefully pour the juices from the cooking bag into a 1 qt. measuring pitcher, skim off the fat and remove any large pieces with a slotted spoon. Add enough vegetable or chicken broth to make 3 cups. Pour broth into saucepan. Add 2 tbsp. minced garlic (bottled or fresh) and 1/2 cup butter, cut up into pieces. You may also add white wine, seasoned salt, poultry seasoning, sage, rosemary, thyme, pepper or other seasonings to your taste. Simmer the broth for a few minutes to blend the flavors. Carve the turkey, place the pieces in a serving pan, and pour the broth over. This is also a great way to prepare the leftovers for sandwiches on fresh, soft rolls.