



# Deep Fried Turkey Facts



## **What is a deep fat fried turkey?**

Deep fat fried turkey is a cooking method in which the turkey is submerged in oil and fried at high temperatures. It is a concept that started in the south and has increased in popularity nationwide.

## **Can you actually deep fat fry a whole turkey?**

A whole turkey can be successfully cooked by a deep fat frying method provided that the **turkey is not stuffed and has been completely thawed.**

## **Why is it so popular?**

The turkey cooks relatively fast, 3-5 minutes per pound, in a deep fat fryer. The turkey is usually injected with marinate seasonings and the result is a flavorful and moist main dish.

## **Isn't it dangerous?**

There are safety concerns when working with such a large amount of oil. Select a cooking vessel large enough to completely submerge the turkey in oil without spilling over. The oils should cover the turkey by 1 to 2 inches. To determine the amount of oil needed, do a preliminary test using water.

## **How much oil do you need?**

Using water, place the turkey in the cooking vessel and add water to cover by 1 to 2 inches. Then remove the turkey and measure the amount of water used. This is the amount of oil required.

## **Deep-fried, isn't that high fat?**

The cooking fat does not necessarily increase the amount of fat in the turkey. Unfortunately, the information on the exact difference between oven roasted and deep fat fried whole turkey in calories and fat per serving is not available in the USDA Nutrient database.

## **Are there factors to consider when deciding whether or not to cook the turkey in that manner?**

Yes in fact there are at least two, **safety and cost.** Your cost involves finding a cooking vessel that can accommodate a 12 pound turkey, a large amount of cooking oil, a thermometer to monitor both the oil temperature and the turkey temperature.

Perhaps you have seen television news stories about the flammability of oil used to cook a turkey in a deep fryer. Most deep fryers do not have a thermostat so that the oil may continue to heat to very hot and easily start a fire near anything flammable...a deck, your home, landscaping, a garage.

## **Where do people usually place the turkey fryer?**

Select a safe place – such as outdoors, away from the house and **NEVER leave the oil unattended.**

***Always choose a spot to cook it away from flammable materials and away from children.***

## **How do you cook a deep-fried turkey?**

Heat the oil to 350 degrees F. Carefully lower the turkey into the hot oil. Allow approximately 3 to 5 minutes per pound cooking time. Remove the turkey from the oil with tongs and drain the oil from the turkey cavity. Check the temperature of the turkey with a food thermometer.

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## **What temperature should the turkey reach?**

The internal temperature of the turkey should reach 180 degrees F when measured in the thigh without touching a bone. If the turkey is not done, return it carefully to the hot oil for additional cooking.

## **After it is cooked, what then?**

Let the turkey rest about 20 minutes before carving. It is normal for the skin to be very dark brown, almost black.

## **What are my choices when purchasing turkey?**

You can purchase a turkey fresh or frozen. Prefer to purchase a turkey less than 14 pounds because a big turkey will not cook well. Plan enough time to defrost the frozen turkey completely before deep fat frying

## **How do I prepare to deep-fry a turkey?**

First you must thaw the turkey if it is frozen. Refrigerated thawing is recommended. Thaw the turkey on an unopened wrapper, breast side up on a tray at the bottom shelf of your refrigerator. For every 4 pounds of turkey allow 1 day of thawing.

## **What if I am short on time for thawing?**

If you are short on time, cover the turkey completely with cold water to thaw in your kitchen sink. Change the water every thirty minutes. For every pound of turkey allow thirty minutes to thaw.

## **Never thaw turkey at room temperature!**

## **What about marinade?**

You can purchase a turkey that is already marinated in seasonings or marinate it yourself with your preferred ones. Once you marinate it, you will notice the frying of the turkey seals the flavor and it turns out to be very moist.

## **Which oil is recommended?**

Choose oils with high smoke points such as peanut, canola and sunflower. Peanut is the most popular due to its abundant flavor (Turkey Federation).

## **How hot should the oil be?**

Heat the oil to 350°F and monitor it so that it does not reach the smoke point. As oil may spill out of the pan, you may consider to cook it someplace else other than on your deck, not only for safety reasons but also because it will stain your deck.

## **Oil temperature should not exceed 400°F to avoid a fire hazard.**

## **How do I know the turkey is done?**

As with any meat, you can only be sure that the turkey is cooked completely by using a food thermometer.

## **Where do I place the thermometer?**

You must place the thermometer into the deepest part of the thigh until you feel it has reached bone. Once you have reached the bone, come back a little bit and read the temperature. Read the instructions to your thermometer to determine the amount of time you should leave the thermometer in the turkey before you read its temperature.

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## When is the turkey completely cooked?

You can only be sure the turkey is completely cooked when **the thermometer reaches the temperature of 180°F**

## How long does it take to cook the turkey?

Around 3-5 minutes per pound of turkey in the deep fryer. (USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline).

## How do I store the turkey?

Never store the whole turkey. After cooking, slice it first and place it in shallow containers to refrigerate or freeze at the appropriate temperatures as shown on the table below.

## Proper temperature and length of time of turkey storage in refrigerator and freezer

Turkey Item	Refrigerator	Freezer
Fresh whole turkey	1 to 2 days	12 months
Fresh turkey parts	1 to 2 days	9 months
Ground turkey, giblets	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Cooked turkey	3 to 4 days	4 months

## What do I have to do to the oil before storing it?

Make sure you wait for the oil to cool down before storing or handling it.

Be sure to strain the oil through a fine strainer before storing. If you are using seasonings, filter the oil through a fine cheesecloth (Turkey Federation).

## How should I store the oil?

The oil should be covered and refrigerated to avoid becoming rancid. It can be stored in the refrigerator for several months until signs of deterioration begin. The oil will return to its liquid consistency when reheated.

## How many times can the oil be reused?

According to the Peanut Board, peanut oil can be used 3 to 4 times before signs of deterioration begin, see below.

## Signs of oil deterioration are:

- Foaming
- Darkening or smoking excessively
- Rancid smell
- Failure to bubble when food is added.

## Resources Used

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-800-535-4555

USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service:

[www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)

National Turkey Federation: [www.turkeyfed.org](http://www.turkeyfed.org)

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