



## *On Dealing with Fresh Turkey*

You've planned the menu, invited the family and friends you want to grace your table. You're thankful to have located the best turkey available for your guests. How big a turkey will you need? Generally you can figure 0.5 - 0.75 lb. of bird per guest, though with such a scrumptious feast planned you can probably be conservative. So, you've gotten this wonderful, fresh turkey from the Bakers sitting on your counter. Now what? Even though water hasn't been added and the little pop-up timer is conspicuously absent, DON'T WORRY. You can serve a wonderfully roasted bird. Here are some tips I've successfully used (from Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book, c. 1950):

*\*Rinse bird inside and out; dry well (air or towel).*

*\*Rub inside with salt (1/8 tsp. /lb.)—do not salt/season the outside.*

*\*Sprinkle any desired spices inside bird (such as thyme, marjoram, garlic, rosemary, turmeric), or stuff with desired stuffing. You can stuff the neck cavity, and a bit of stuffing inserted under breast skin can help protect it.*

*\*Lay bird breast side down in roasting pan. Cover.* Betty suggests a cloth dipped in melted fat (olive or veg. oil) and keep the cloth moist. This makes the process fool-proof. If you use a bag or have a covered roasting pan (progress since 1950!), I found a bit of butter/oil spread over the skin does just as well without the fuss. Add only enough water to cover the pan bottom.

*\*Betty says, when bird is ¾ done, turn breast side up. OR Place bird so one side of breast rests on rack. When half done, turn to other side to roast evenly. In my covered, heavy roaster pan I haven't needed to do this, but in an open roasting tray/pan without a bag, this may be useful.*

| Weight    | Oven temp. | Total time   |
|-----------|------------|--------------|
| 8-10 lbs. | 325        | 3-3 ½ hrs.   |
| 10-14 lb. | 325        | 3 ½ - 4 hrs. |
| 14-18 lb. | 300        | 4 - 4 ½ hrs. |
| 18-20 lb. | 300        | 4 ½ - 6 hrs. |

*\*Roast per chart ("low and slow" are always safe choices—especially with fresh poultry—beware of overcooking):*

### *When is it done?*

A meat thermometer poked in the thigh reads 180.

Press fleshy part of drumstick—meat will feel soft.

Move drumstick up and down—it should readily "give" or break.

Meat juices will be clear with no red in them.

*Don't pitch the giblets or any broth to the dog! Both are rich in vitamins and amino acids. Simply simmer the carcass and giblets + neck in the broth (add water if needed) until the remaining meat falls off (1-2 hrs. for giblets to cook). Remove meat from bones. Add vegetables, desired seasonings (above choices, plus salt, pepper, and onion), and water if needed. Simmer for at least 10 minutes, or until veggies are tender. Thicken as you would for gravy if stew is desired.*