

# QUICK GUIDE TO CHEF NANCY'S TOP **Special Occasion** Resources

*mmmmm!* think like a chef

Access many of Chef Nancy's Thanksgiving, Christmas, and special occasion recipes, and cooking and sourcing tips:

[Nancy's website & blog](#)

[Nancy on Facebook](#)

[Nancy on Twitter](#)



Learn Nancy's [kitchen knife skills and sharpening tips](#)

And, take Nancy's [knife skills hands-on cooking class](#)

Get Nancy's delicious [special occasion stuffing system](#)

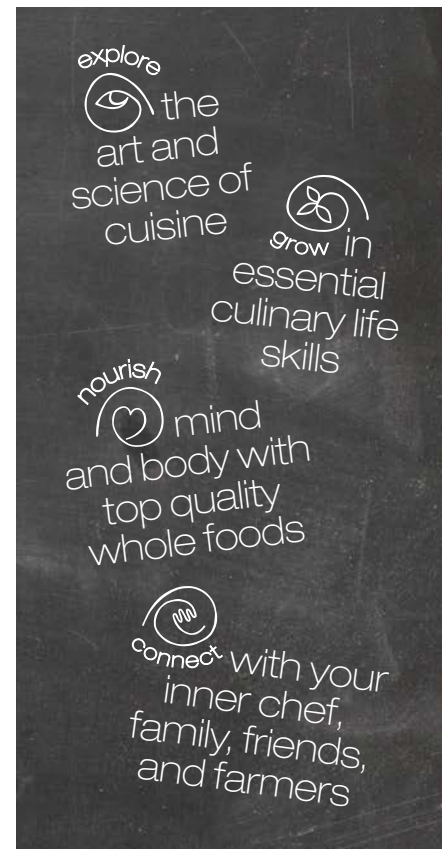
Get Nancy's [turkey dinner serving survival notes](#)

Discover Chef Nancy's [turkey roasting notes](#) (see next page)

Learn how to [roast and braise birds perfectly and explore turkey, holiday meal alternatives, sauces, gravies, and jus in Nancy's delicious gourmet dinner cooking class](#) "A Winter Evening - French Style."

Get Nancy's [free recipe e-booklet for a savoury vegetable sauté recipe!](#)

Subscribe to Nancy's [free, quarterly newsletters to get usable tips and in-depth lessons](#) on making perfect soups, obtaining perfect cooking results, throwing a dinner party, and having your best food experiences.



Take Nancy's dinner party [cooking classes to discover chef's secrets like making homemade stocks and sauces, properly roasting meats, and making perfect, colourful, crisp-tender vegetables](#) every time!

# A FEW NOTES ON TURKEY

Please review more detailed information with the help of:  
Turkey Farmers of Ontario [www.turkeyfarmers.on.ca](http://www.turkeyfarmers.on.ca) (click: all about turkey) and  
EatRight Ontario (click: turkey food safety) [www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca) or  
Government of Canada (click: food and nutrition) [www.healthy Canadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthy Canadians.gc.ca)

**Oven Temperature 325 F (160 C)**  
**Never cook a turkey at less than 325 F (160 C)**

Weight (lbs/kg)	Stuffed (hours)	Unstuffed (hours)	Serves
6-8 lbs/3-3.5 kg	3-3 1/4	2 1/2-2 3/4	5-7
8-10 lbs/3.5-4.5 kg	3 1/4-3 1/2	2 3/4-3	7-8
10-12 lbs/4.5-5.5 kg	3 1/2-3 3/4	3-3 1/4	8-10
12-16 lbs/5.5-7 kg	3 3/4-4	3 1/4-3 1/2	10-13
16-22 lbs/7-10 kg	4-4 1/2	3 1/2-4	13-18

The chart above, as a general guideline, is what I have always followed for positive yields. I am so happy to see [eatrightontario.ca](http://eatrightontario.ca) has a fantastic turkey weight calculator from the turkey farmers of Canada that takes children/adult eaters and leftovers into account. Click here: [Whole Bird Turkey Calculator | Turkey Farmers of Canada](#)

## Suggested Equipment

Roasting pan (recommend not disposable), roasting rack, tin foil, wooden spoons, two medium pots, meat thermometer, small mixing bowl, pastry brush or baster, whisk, strainer, \*sharp large knife for carving, large cutting board + large cookie sheet to catch juices, and an extra pair of hands during carving!

## Sourcing Turkey

Buy an Ontario turkey :) Consider working with a fresh (not frozen) turkey. This may require pre-ordering with your butcher - I find overall it is less hassle and better tasting! Do some research - ask a farmer or butcher for more information about turkey farming practices and the source of your turkey.

Turkey is done when a meat thermometer operating and set correctly indicates doneness. Also for the safest judgement it is best to double check with logic and common sense:

- A meat thermometer inserted in the inner thigh (avoid touching the bone) of a stuffed turkey reads 180F (82 C). Interior stuffing must reach a temperature of at least 165 F (74 C).
- A meat thermometer inserted in the inner thigh (avoid touching the bone) of an unstuffed turkey reads 180 F (82 C).
- The legs move easily when twisted gently and the juices out of the turkey “run” clear not red...meaning the turkey juices look yellow or clear like stock not brownish or reddish indicating rawness.
- As a general rule - the doneness falls in the range of cooking times suggested above.

All rights reserved. Copyright 2012 - 2015 Nancy Henley

## Preparing and Cooking Turkey

I like to cook my turkey old-school ...simply in a roasting pan in the oven, breast-side up, uncovered, seasoned and lightly stuffed.

- Before planning your gathering and buying your turkey and roasting pan, visually check your oven size!
- Remove neck and giblets from body cavities right away, refrigerate and use within two days. Make a giblet/neck stock! Sauté meat briefly in a pot, then cover pieces in the pot with lightly salted water (add water to at least an inch above giblets) and add a few pieces of onion, celery and carrot. Bring mixture to a boil. Then turn heat to simmer and cook until meat is tender for 40 minutes to an hour. This liquid can be used as part of your gravy and the meat saved for people or dog snacks :).
- **For other poultry safety/storage/preparation tips please refer to the websites on page 1. For instance - a common kitchen mistake made is rinsing the turkey. DO NOT rinse the turkey. Due to splattering - this can encourage the spread of bacteria (cross-contamination). Keep your hands and surfaces clean by washing with hot, soapy water. Replace tea towels, cloths and kitchen sponges.**
- Season the bird by rubbing with the herb rub listed below and rub all over - top to bottom or just use salt and pepper.
- Stuff bird with stuffing (please see my special occasion stuffing system [www.nancyhenley.com](http://www.nancyhenley.com) “cooking inspiration - kitchen diary” tab) [Chef Nancy's Special Occasion Stuffing System](#)) or add a sprig of sage, rosemary, thyme, a bay leaf or some orange slices to cavity. **To decrease the risk of salmonella poisoning, stuff bird at last minute before cooking and do not pack stuffing tightly in cavity or to be sure, cook stuffing separately.**
- Secure legs by tucking under band of skin or tie loosely with string.
- Fold wings behind back to secure neck skin.
- Place turkey on roasting rack in a somewhat shallow (this helps to cook it more efficiently), sturdy (for ease and safety while lifting and basting the bird), roasting pan - breast up (this is the meatier/plumper side up).
- If stuffed, insert meat thermometer into the centre of stuffing. (Check both a thigh and the centre of stuffing to be sure.)
- If unstuffed, insert meat thermometer into inner thigh, being careful not to touch bone.
- Roast turkey at 325 F (160 C) using roasting table as a guide, basting regularly with pan juices (or brushing juices over bird with a pastry brush).
- Check for doneness at shorter end of range to be sure not to overcook turkey as a variety of factors will affect cooking time. If it is done - it is DONE! There is no need to overcook a turkey “to be sure”.
- When turkey is at its optimal golden colour, tent it loosely with tin foil to prevent further browning while the interior continues to get to the proper temperature.
- When turkey is done, remove it from oven and it can be allowed to sit and “rest” for 15 minutes, tented with foil, to allow the juices to settle so they will not be lost upon slicing. This is not a necessity though at time-crunched dinner parties. Keeping the turkey hot until guests sit down will be more of the challenge. Be organized. (See my turkey dinner serving survival notes [www.nancyhenley.com](http://www.nancyhenley.com) “cooking inspiration - kitchen diary” tab) [Turkey Dinner Serving Survival Notes](#)

**Carve turkey with a large sharp knife. Temporarily honing a blade with a sharpening steel is NOT sharpening** \*\* Organize ahead of time and sharpen your carving knife with an expert at a kitchenware, knife or hardware store (please see my kitchen knife skills notes for links to local sharpeners on [www.nancyhenley.com](http://www.nancyhenley.com) “cooking inspiration - kitchen diary” tab)... or do it yourself with a [sharpening stone](#). I can show you this at a hands-on knife class. If you are slicing a very large bird, an extra pair of hands is useful for this carving stage. Keep the carved pieces warm under foil. Serve onto warmed plates as turkey tends to cool down fast when carved and distributed amongst a large family!

All rights reserved. Copyright 2012 - 2015 Nancy Henley

### Suggested Herb Rub for a medium-sized turkey (with dried spices)

3 tablespoons	olive oil
1 1/2 teaspoons	paprika
2 1/2 teaspoons	salt or to taste
1 teaspoon	garlic or to taste
1 tablespoon	mixture of rosemary, sage, tarragon or to taste
1 tablespoon	thyme or to taste
1/2 teaspoon	pepper or to taste

- Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Rub this blend all over turkey - top and bottom.

### Turkey Gravy

2 tablespoons	flour (or more for a very large bird and large amount of drippings)
2 cups	combo of white wine (optional), chicken or turkey stock or water
pinch	dried thyme, sage or 1 tbsp mixture fresh chopped thyme, sage
the remainder of	roasting pan drippings
few tablespoons	cornstarch-cold water mixture as needed (see below or follow
cornstarch package	directions)
to taste if needed	salt and pepper

- When turkey is done, pour all liquid-oil “drippings” from roasting pan into medium sized pot. Let fat rise to the top, skim off fat with a spoon and discard. (Note: If for some reason the bottom of the roasting pan is burnt then do not make gravy with it. If everything left in the pan is a medium golden or dark brown colour - follow these gravy directions.)
- Sprinkle remaining brown particles and juices in the roasting pan with 2 tablespoons of flour. Stir to coat the flour with brown bits.
- “Deglaze” roasting pan by pouring a 2 cup mixture of white wine (optional), chicken or turkey stock and/or water into pan. (Add a pinch of thyme and sage if you like.)
- Place pan on stove top and turn heat to medium low or low heat. Heat pan carefully, scraping the bottom constantly to dislodge turkey “glaze” from pan.
- Strain and scrape everything immediately from the roasting pan (do not leave a thing in the pan as this is high flavoured goodness) into the medium pot and heat to boiling, whisking constantly. Taste and then season your pot gravy with salt and pepper. Thicken gravy to desired consistency with cornstarch-cold water mixture: Mix 1 tablespoon cornstarch with 2 tablespoons cold water until lumps have dissolved. Pour this mixture, while stirring, in a thin stream into the boiling liquid gravy until it thickens to your desired consistency. It should thicken immediately. Repeat this step if more thickening is required.
- Strain into warmed gravy boat and serve.

Note: Given that it is a busy day and there never seems to be enough gravy for a large crowd - it is very helpful to have chicken or turkey jus, chicken or turkey stock or other roasted bone sauces like “demi-glace” made ahead and stored in the freezer. Whenever I roast a chicken I save and boil or roast the chicken bones to make stocks and gravies which I store in the freezer labelled for uses such as this. We demonstrate these stock, soup and sauce techniques all the time in class. [www.nancyhenley.com](http://www.nancyhenley.com) Check out all the class menus via the “Book a Class” tab.

All rights reserved. Copyright 2012-2015 Nancy Henley