

PRACTICALITIES: Carving Turkey off the public table



Equipment: Have large carving knives/chef knives professionally sharpened before service. Turkey is placed on a large, clean, sanitary cutting board. (Board is safely anchored in place with a wet cloth underneath.) When carving at a buffet or at-table the carving procedure is executed with a two-pronged carving fork in one hand and a knife in another. When carving quickly in the kitchen off the public table - controlling the turkey with the touch of your non-dominant hand is most efficient. This procedure is demonstrated below. Have an oven-proof serving platter ready. Save all turkey bones and skin not on display for turkey stock using freezer bags.



1 Whole leg removal

Place the turkey breast-side up. The legs are facing towards you. Holding one leg firmly around the thigh, gently rotate and pull the leg outward and away from the main body of the turkey with your hand. Release the stretching skin with the tip of your knife.

2 Whole leg removal

The natural separation between the thigh and the edge of the breast is now exposed. Enhance this separation with the tip of your knife by slowly finessing the separation while exposing the inner hip joint area at the top of the thigh. Once the end of the leg bone is exposed, cut cleanly and firmly through this hip joint with the base of your knife. This is a sweet spot that should release easily. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for both legs.

3 Separating thigh from drumstick (and deboning drumstick meat option)

Cut the drumstick from the thigh where they form their sharpest angle. This is another joint sweet spot. Slice firmly through the joint with the base of your knife. For these purposes we have chosen to leave the leg section intact but an option (not pictured) is to slice medallions from the leg while turning the leg - shaving the meat off. Repeat this procedure on the other side of the turkey.

4 Deboning thigh meat (and leaving thigh bone intact option)

Remove the thigh meat in one large piece from the bone by running the tip of the knife along the inner bone on both sides to loosen the meat. Gently expose the bone safely with the help of your fingers. Keep the meat in one whole piece. Another option is to leave the meat on the bone intact.

5 Slicing boneless thigh meat

Finding the natural grain of the meat (the direction of the muscle fibers) slice crosswise through these grains. Choose your desired thickness of slices. Repeat steps 4 and 5 for the second thigh.

6 Whole wing removal

Holding one wing firmly, gently and slowly pull the whole wing away from the body. Release the stretching skin with the tip of the knife and expose the wing joint where the wing meets the body. Slice cleanly and firmly with the base of the knife through this joint - it should release easily. Repeat this removal on other side of turkey. Leave the wings intact.

7 Whole boneless breast removal

Using your fingers, feel for the firmness of the long breast bone line running straight down the centre of both breasts. Now follow this line with the tip of your knife to slice and separate the meat from one side of the rounded breast bone carefully. Pulling the breast meat away with your hand - scrape and finesse the tip of your knife carefully along the rounded sternum.

8 Whole breast removal (and removing slices while on the bird option)

Following the natural curve of the bone with the tip of your knife remove all the breast meat keeping the meat intact. Use your hand to pull and tilt the meat away from the bone. The whole breast removal technique is pictured here for maximum meat yield and control of slice size. Repeat this whole removal procedure for both sides of turkey. An option (not pictured) during a buffet service involves slicing the breast without removing it from the bird by making horizontal slices above an intact wing and vertical slices down through the breast meat to meet in the middle and remove individual slices.

9 Slicing boneless breast

Choose to leave skin intact or remove the skin before slicing. (Moisture Tip: Lay skin over sliced meat to retain moisture/flavour during rewarming phase. Remove skin as desired before service.) Place the single breast on the cutting board rounded side up. Finding the natural grain of the meat (the direction of the muscle fibers) slice crosswise through these grains. Choose your desired thickness of slices. You can angle the knife to get broader slices. Repeat this procedure for remaining breast.

10 Decorative arrangement

Pictured here a suggested arrangement of sliced turkey, edible aronia berries and variegated sage.