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TRAVELING WITH THE TURKEY DINNER

Can the turkey be cooked a day ahead of time and then taken to someone's house the next day?

It is not recommended. Once the turkey has been cooked and cools, the turkey meat should be removed from the bone prior to refrigeration. A better alternative is to cook the turkey the same day at the location it will be served or transport it no more than 30 minutes away.

How long will a raw or cooked turkey keep unrefrigerated?

No longer than two hours. For either a raw or cooked turkey, it's still a good idea to use an insulated cooler as a carrier (use two coolers if carrying both types). To transport a raw turkey, take it out of the refrigerator and place it in the cooler with ice immediately before leaving. Stow it where it will be coldest in the car. Upon arrival, immediately refrigerate the raw turkey. The cooked turkey should be reheated immediately to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F. (or higher), or eaten within two hours of being cooked. Leftover meat should be removed from the bone and placed in shallow containers prior to placing in the refrigerator.

Can I slow-cook the turkey at 200 degrees F. overnight so it's ready to go in the morning?

No, it is unsafe food handling practice. Cooking a turkey (or any other meat, for that matter) in an oven set lower than 325 degrees F is dangerous, it takes too long for the turkey to reach an internal temperature high enough to kill food borne bacteria and may potentially cause illness.

Can turkey be partially cooked ahead of time and then finished later?

No again! Partial cooking of meat or poultry is a very unsafe practice. Cooking must be done in one continuous operation to assure the destruction of bacteria that cause food borne illness. You may, however, partially cook turkey in a microwave or convection oven *immediately before* transferring the turkey to a heated grill or to a preheated conventional oven for finishing.

How should other holiday food items be handled during transit?

Most rolls, bread, cakes, cookies, candies and baked goods don't pose a problem unless they contain custard, cream filling, or other dairy products (which makes them a perishable food item). Meats, gravy, stuffing and other perishable foods should be transported in about one half hour or less. Once you have arrived at your destination, either reheat perishable food to 165 degrees F., or

higher or cool to 41 degrees F., or lower. Use insulated containers or wrap in foil and cover with heavy towels to help maintain hot food temperature. Place cold foods in a cooler with ice or freezer packs.

Remember, all perishable foods should not remain at room temperature longer than two hours.

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