



Roasted Turkey

from: **Jeff Ray**

DIRECTIONS

Probably the hardest thing to do right, when it comes to Thanksgiving dinner, is the one thing that started it all: roasting a turkey. Turkeys are big, have two distinctly different types of meat and require an art that is not practiced but (usually) once a year. Below is the advice I've culled from my parents, an uncle and a revelation of a read from the only cooking magazine I subscribe to, *Cooks Illustrated*.

First, always buy your turkey fresh. Buy it about two days before Thanksgiving, bring it home and soak it in a brine solution for 24-48 hours. The day before you cook, take it out, dry it with paper towels and wrap it tightly in plastic wrap, and keep in the fridge overnight.

Go out and get about a pound of salt pork. On cooking day, poke the thighs, legs and breast a few times, then rub the skin down with a mix of a tablespoon kosher salt and two teaspoons baking powder. (This will help brown the skin.) Pin the wings back, pack it with stuffing and then tie the legs together. Roast – breast side down – with the salt pork on the top (the back) for a couple of hours till the breast gets to 130 degrees.

Here is the hard part. Take the turkey out, turn the oven to 450 degrees, throw away the salt pork, take out the dressing and turn the bird over in the roasting pan. Cook until the breast hits 160 degrees and the thighs about 175 degrees. It should take about 45 minutes.

Take it out and let it set for at least 30 minutes before you start to carve. If you've done this right, the breast meat will be moist but the dark meat cooked through – a difficult task when cooking a huge bird in a household oven. Your guests will marvel at how good the white meat is – the secret is in the salt pork.