Everything You Need To Know About How To Roast A Thanksgiving Turkey



All Your Questions About Cooking Turkey in a Roaster Oven Answered

What type of Roaster Oven is best for me?

We have three types of Roaster Ovens to choose from and the best

one for you depends on what you're cooking.

The classic 18 Qt. Roaster Oven has been a staple at holidays, parties, and gatherings for years. It can hold up to a 22 lb. turkey and even bake full pies. It can also be used for cooking and serving chili, hot dogs, or other hot foods for big get-togethers. While your 18 Qt. Roaster Oven cooks the turkey, you can use your oven for side dishes.

The smaller 6 Qt. Roaster Oven is very similar to its larger counterpart. It has the full versatility of the 18 Qt. Roaster Oven, but in a more compact size. Best suited for turkey breasts, Cornish game hens, or side dishes on Thanksgiving because of its compact size, it still features the versatile 200-400 degree temperature range. If you're having a smaller Thanksgiving meal, this is the right Roaster Oven for you.

NESCO's newest addition, the High Speed Roaster, is the fastest way to cook a turkey. It can cook up to an 18 lb. turkey in less than two hours and uses infrared lights to sear turkey skin to a perfect golden-brown perfection. The center heating element cooks from the inside out to ensure an even cook every time. This Roaster can also be used for other meat dishes like beef roasts or kebobs.

How long do I roast my turkey in a NESCO Roaster Oven?

In a traditional Roaster Oven, turkeys takes 15 to 20 minutes to cook per pound, and an additional 30-45 minutes if the turkey is stuffed. With the High Speed Roaster Oven, cook time is 6 minutes per pound. Just make sure to turn off the center heating element halfway through to avoid overcooking the inside of the turkey. For full instructions, you can read our Roasted Turkey

recipe here.

Always make sure to cook your turkey until the meat reaches 165 degrees at the thickest part. Be patient with your turkey! You can't rush perfection.

Do I need to thaw my turkey before roasting?

Yes, no matter what type cooking method you use, you must thaw your turkey. Plan ahead because this takes several days!

If you're in a hurry, fill a large pot or your sink with cold water. Next, place the unwrapped turkey breast-side down in the water (make sure it's fully submerged). Thaw for a half hour per pound, changing the water every half hour.

How can I get the skin golden-brown and crispy?

In a traditional Roaster Oven, the turkey skin doesn't get that crispy, golden-brown look and feel that everyone loves. The secret is browning sauce. Browning sauce is made from caramelized sugars and gives your turkey that crispy texture and extra flavor.

To use browning sauce, add a teaspoon to the melted butter brushed on before cooking. Make sure to coat the turkey evenly—a little goes a long way.

With a High Speed Roaster, browning sauce isn't necessary.

What do I do after my turkey is done?

When your turkey reaches 165 degrees all the way through, carefully remove it from the Roaster Oven. Let the bird rest for 30 minutes before carving to allow the juices to distribute evenly. This is a good time to make your gravy, set the table, and finish up your sides.

How do I make gravy after cooking?

Good gravy can make or break your Thanksgiving meal. Luckily, it’s easy to make gravy after cooking your turkey. Simply take one or two cups of the turkey drippings and mix with ¼ cup all-purpose flour, a pinch of salt, and a pinch of pepper (more to taste), and whisk until well-blended.