

Cooking Tips

Whole Smoked Turkey

Refreezing and Refrigeration

If your turkey arrives unthawed, you may refreeze it since it is completely cooked. Or if you plan to serve it within 2 to 3 days, simply put it in the refrigerator.

Thawing

The turkey should be thoroughly thawed before heating, to ensure an even temperature.

Refrigerator Method - Put the turkey in the refrigerator the night before you plan to cook it.

Check on it the next morning, several hours before you plan to re-heat it, when it should be thawed or mostly thawed. If not, take the turkey out of the refrigerator and let it thaw on the counter.

Heating

Our smoked turkey is thoroughly cooked, so it only requires reheating. For the best results, the turkey should be completely thawed before you heat it to preserve moisture and ensure an even temperature when you serve it. These heating methods assume your turkey is thoroughly thawed.

Microwave: Remove bag and plastic mesh from the thawed turkey. Place the bird breast-side-up in microwave-safe baking dish. Heat on medium-high (70% power), 5 minutes per pound or until breast reaches 140 degrees F. Rotate halfway through time. Let stand 10 minutes before carving.

Conventional oven: Remove bag and plastic mesh. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Place the bird breast-side-up on a rack in a shallow pan. Heat about 6-8 minutes per pound if thawed, or 10 to 12 minutes per pound if frozen, or until the breast reaches 140 degrees F. Let stand 10 minutes before carving.

Smoked Turkey Do's and Don'ts

- DO NOT stuff whole smoked turkey, as it is already cooked. Stuffing should be prepared and cooked separately.
- All leftovers should be stored in shallow containers and refrigerated within two hours of cooking.

Smoked Ham:

Thawing

Two methods that can be used to safely thaw our hams are the **refrigerator method** and the **cold water method**. Never thaw them on the kitchen counter. The outside of the meat will reach a temperature above 40°F while the inside is still frozen. The area that reaches a temperature above 40°F would be susceptible to bacterial growth. Use one of the thawing methods described below.

Refrigerator Method - Thawing ham in the refrigerator is the slowest but safest method and will result in the least amount of moisture loss in comparison to the other methods. The temperature of the refrigerator should be maintained at 35°F to 40°F to discourage growth of harmful organisms as the meat thaws. Leave the ham wrapped and placed on a platter or a tray to catch the drippings as it thaws or unwrap and loosely cover with plastic or foil.

Approximate Refrigerator Thawing Time

Small Ham	4 to 5 hours per pound
Large Ham	5 to 7 hours per pound

After thawing in the refrigerator the ham can be refrigerated safely for 3 to 5 days. If you decide not to cook the meat within this time, the meat can be refrozen. Remember however, that each time the meat is frozen it loses some of its flavor quality. Do not refreeze meat that has been thawed using the cold water or microwave methods.

Cold Water Method - Thawing ham in cold water is a faster method than thawing in the refrigerator and it is safe as long as the proper precautions are taken. Fill the sink with enough cold tap water to cover the cut of meat, place the ham in a leak proof bag and put it into the cold water. Be sure that the meat is sealed tightly so that it is not exposed to the water. Meat exposed to the water will result in flavor and color loss, and will have a greater chance of bacterial growth. The water must be replaced with fresh cold water every 30 minutes. Do not use warm or hot water because it will encourage the growth of bacteria.

Heating:

Our hams are delicious cold, but if you want to reheat them, please follow the instructions below.

Oven Method: Place the ham, cut-side-down, on heavy-duty aluminum foil and wrap the ham thoroughly. Or use an oven roasting bag; follow instructions on the bag for preparation. Bake in a preheated 300 degrees F oven for 12-15 minutes per pound, or until a meat thermometer registers 140 degrees F. Remove from oven and let sit for 10 minutes before serving..

Slow Cooker: Our hams emerge very moist and tender from the slow cooker. Make sure that the ham will fit into your slow cooker. Place the ham in the appliance. You will need to add some moisture in the form of some Coke or Pepsi, chicken broth, or water; about 1 cup will do it. Cover and cook on low for 5-8 hours, until ham is thoroughly heated. If you want to glaze the ham, place on a broiler pan and cover with glaze; broil 10" from the heat for 10-15 minutes, watching carefully, until glaze is cooked.

Ham Do's and Don'ts

- Do allow the ham to sit at room temperature for 1-2 hours before cooking.
- Do use a sharp carving knife with a thin blade to cut the ham.
- Don't baste the ham with its drippings during cooking, as they tend to be too salty.
- Don't coat the ham with sugar, honey or glaze until the last hour of cooking. One application is usually enough.
- Don't throw out the ham bone; use it to flavor soups or bean dishes.