

Protection Pointers by Glad®

How Long Does Turkey Last in the Fridge or Freezer?

If you're looking to extend the life of some turkey you've stocked up on, you might be wondering: how long does turkey last in the fridge, and how long does turkey last in the freezer? Read on to learn the basics of storing turkey for later use.



Storing Turkey in the Fridge

Unsure of the best process for storing turkey in the fridge? Don't worry — it's pretty simple! Raw pieces of turkey can be wrapped in Glad® Press'n Seal®, then stored in an airtight bag like Glad® Flex'n Seal™ Food Storage Quart Bags. Sliced cold cuts can be stored in a food storage bag, with any extra air squeezed out before it's sealed. Be sure to wash your hands before and after handling turkey, especially if it's raw.

If properly stored, raw turkey can last in the fridge for 1–2 days, while cold cuts last up to 5 days. How long does cooked turkey last in the fridge? If you have leftovers that include cooked turkey, you can expect those to last in the refrigerator for 3–4 days.



Freezing Cooked Turkey and Raw Turkey

If you have enough turkey leftovers to last more than a few days, you might want to consider freezing cooked turkey instead of refrigerating it. The same is true if you're stocked up on raw turkey that you don't plan to cook right away. Luckily, the process for storing turkey in the freezer — whether it's cooked or raw — is really simple.

Create an airtight seal around each individual piece of turkey using Glad® Press'n Seal, then put them into an airtight bag, such as Glad® Flex'n Seal Freezer Quart Bags, making sure to squeeze out any extra air before sealing. If you're freezing a whole turkey, just wrap your bird in several layers of Glad® ClingWrap or Glad® Press'n Seal. In both cases, you'll want to store the turkey in the deepest part of the freezer. When properly stored, raw turkey pieces should stay good in the freezer for up to 9 months, while whole raw turkeys last for a year when frozen. Cooked turkey pieces last in the freezer for 4–6 months.



Thawing Frozen Turkey

Per the USDA's guidelines, you should never thaw frozen turkey on the counter or in hot water, nor should you leave it at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

The best way to thaw turkey (whole or in pieces) is to move the frozen package from the freezer onto a plate and into the fridge, and then let it thaw gradually. Depending on the size of what you're thawing, this method can take a full day. If raw frozen turkey is thawed in the refrigerator, the defrosted turkey can last in the fridge for 1–2 days before it needs to be cooked or refrozen.

If you're in a hurry to thaw your turkey, there's a faster method you can use. Ensure the turkey is in an airtight bag — like Glad® Flex'n Seal Food Storage Quart Bags — then submerge it in cold tap water, changing the water every 30 minutes so it continues to thaw. You can also thaw frozen turkey pieces in the microwave, but if you want to use that method, you should plan to cook it immediately after thawing to prevent bacteria from growing.

You can learn more about how to store meat and how long meat can last in the fridge or freezer with our meat storing tips.

