

The American Society of Hand Therapists expresses their warm wishes for a safe and joyful holiday season. Family members will be traveling across many miles in order to spend time together. Families will be joining together across the nation to spend time do various things such as watching classic holiday movies and/or football games or reminiscing about past family memories and in most households the traditional holiday “turkey” will be served. In fact, at Thanksgiving, Americans will cook and consume approximately 46 million turkeys, and attempt to carve the turkey at the table in a stressful and messy manner that can waste your carefully prepared bird as well as possibly cause an injury to your hands. This season ASHT wants to share some “safe” handling and carving tips for you and your family when cooking your turkey or any poultry.



Safety tips:

1. Refrigerate poultry immediately as soon as you bring it home from the store to avoid bacteria growth on your turkey or chicken.
2. Never thaw poultry on a countertop as bacteria can develop easily on a turkey or chicken at room temperature. It is better to thaw a turkey in your refrigerator in a pan of cold water. It is recommended to change this water every 30 minutes, this will also facilitate thawing.
3. Wash your hands, utensils, dishes, cutting boards or work surfaces with HOT, SOAPY water after handling or working with raw poultry; this will guard against the spread of bacteria to other foods being prepared in the kitchen.
4. Use acrylic cutting boards as opposed to porous wooden cutting boards when cutting raw or cooked poultry, because porous wooden boards are more difficult to thoroughly wash after use.
5. Use one dish for raw poultry and another for cooked food or thoroughly wash with HOT, SOAPY water.
6. Once the turkey or other poultry item is cooked, remove it from the oven, cover the meat with foil and allow the turkey to set for 20 to 30 minutes. This allows the meat to firm up and makes it easier to carve as the meat will not be slippery or rubbery. The meat will hold together better for serving too. Also transfer the turkey to a solid cutting board in the kitchen (avoid cutting at the table as there isn't usually as much room and most platters are not as stable as the cutting board.)
7. Step by step process on how to carve the turkey at website below:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/16/how-to-carve-a-turkey-thanksgiving-steps-photos_n_784258.html#s183203
8. Always cut a turkey or chicken with a sharp knife or electric knife.
9. Slice off the thigh and leg first. Do this by grasping the tip of one of the drumsticks with your fingers and pull the leg away from the body, making sure to pull the thigh out and down until the joint “pops” out of the hip joint. This procedure helps identify the thigh from the body. Cut at the broken joint by using the tip of the knife, making sure to cut as close to the body as possible. Repeat this on the opposite side.
10. To remove the thigh from the drumstick, first identify the “knee joint”.

This can be accomplished by bending the “knee joint” back and forth until the thigh and drumstick joint are located, then cut through the skin at the knee joint. Continue to bend the joint until the thigh and drumstick touch, then cut through the joint completely. Repeat this with the other thigh and drumstick.

11. To cut the drumsticks into slices. Hold the drumsticks vertically by the tip so that the large section rests on the cutting board. Slice the meat parallel to the bone and under the tendons. Turn the leg as you go to get even slices.
12. Cut the thigh meat into slices, using the same method as above with the drumsticks.
13. To carve the breast meat, first steady the bird with a large fork and then make a deep horizontal cut into the breast just above each wing, but do not slice free from the bird completely. This technique identifies the end of each slice of breast meat. Now, beginning at the top outer edge of one side of each breast, cut from the top of the breast in a downward direction creating a horizontal slice. Continue this until reaching the final smaller slices then follow the curve of the breastbone.
14. Finally remove each wing by cutting through the joint where the wing bone(s) meets the backbone.



Safe traveling and happy holidays to you and your family with warmest regards from ASHT!



Reference: Better Homes and Garden cookbook