



Safe Storing, Handling & Cooking Tips for Chicken



SHOPPING FOR CHICKEN.

- When shopping, pick up your chicken last so it's not sitting for a long time at room temperature in your cart. And, if you're running errands, save your grocery shopping until last so chicken and other meats aren't left in a hot car.
- Once home with your chicken, refrigerate it immediately. At room temperature, the quality and safety of fresh chicken are quickly compromised. Never let it sit out on the countertop — even if you plan to make it for that night's dinner.

TRANSPORTING/SERVING CHICKEN.

- When transporting chicken, use an insulated container or cooler with ice until dinner is served.
- When grilling or barbecuing outdoors, keep chicken refrigerated until ready to cook.
- Do not place cooked chicken on the same plate used to transport the raw chicken to the grill (unless it's been washed in hot, soapy water).
- Never put marinades or sauces used on raw chicken on cooked foods.

STORING CHICKEN.

- Packaged, raw chicken can be refrigerated in its original wrapping in the coldest part of the refrigerator for 48 hours after purchase. If it is not to be used in 48 hours, freezing is recommended.
- Cooked, cut-up chicken is best when refrigerated for two days or less; whole, cooked chicken, three days or less.
- Store fresh, uncooked chicken on a low shelf of the refrigerator so it does not drip onto other items.
- For convenience and to prevent freezer burn, wrap separate pieces in foil or plastic bags. Then place all wrapped or bagged pieces into a larger freezer bag or foil wrap. Press all air out of the bag/foil package and label package with contents and date frozen
- Storage Temps: Refrigerator 40° F; Freezer 0° F

THAWING CHICKEN.

There are three ways to thaw chicken, listed below in order of preferred method, and time needed. You'll know the chicken is thawed when it feels soft, moist and cold — not hard and stiff.

1. Refrigerator: This is the best method, if you have time. Keep your chicken off the kitchen counter and in the fridge. It takes about 24 hours to thaw a 4-pound, whole chicken in the refrigerator; cut-up parts, 3 to 9 hours.
2. Cold Water: Place chicken in its original wrap or watertight plastic bag in cold water; change water every 30 minutes. A 4-pound, whole chicken will take about 2 hours to thaw.
3. Microwave: For quick-thawing of chicken (raw or cooked), use the microwave. Thawing time varies according to the form in which chicken is frozen (whole or parts, number of parts frozen together, etc.). Use Defrost or Medium-Low setting. Microwave 2 minutes; let stand 2 minutes. Repeat if needed. Turn chicken and separate parts as it thaws. Take care that chicken does not start to cook.

KEEPING HANDS & SURFACES CLEAN.

- Rinsing chicken before using is optional. But if you do rinse it, wash your sink out with hot, soapy water afterwards.
- Do not let raw chicken juices come in contact with other foods in the fridge.
- Keep raw and cooked foods separate during preparation. And never use the same cutting board for raw chicken and vegetables without washing it in hot, soapy water first.
- Wash all surfaces and equipment that the raw chicken comes in contact with during preparation, including bowls, plates, cutting boards, knives, countertops, etc. And don't forget your hands!

COOKING CHICKEN & HANDLING LEFTOVERS.

- Always test for doneness using an instant-read meat thermometer in the thickest part of the roasting chicken (breast or thigh). Be sure that the thermometer probe does not touch the bone.
- According to the USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service the chicken should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F. However, for more tender meat, bring the temperature of the chicken to 180°F.
- Even after chicken is cooked, it's important to either keep it hot or cold. To keep it safe, follow these rules:
 - Don't leave cooked chicken at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
 - Either keep it hot (140° to 165°F) or refrigerate it at 40°F or below.