

Brine in No Time!

Frequently Asked Questions about Turkey Brining

To learn more about brining and see a step-by-step demonstration, check out Epicure's Cooking School with our professional chefs on YouTube (search for Epicure Selections).

What is brining?

Brining is the process of soaking (marinating) meat in a seasoned salt-water solution prior to roasting – a simple technique that adds flavour and moisture to roasts. Brines are absorbed between the layers of meat, keeping it tender, juicy and flavourful as it cooks.

What is the benefit of brining?

There are many great reasons to brine a turkey before roasting:

1. Brining ensures moist and juicy breast meat, even if it overcooked by as many as 10 degrees over the recommended internal food safe temperature of 165° F (74° C).
2. A brined turkey will be pleasantly seasoned inside and out.
3. During the brining process, the turkey will absorb water. Water is an excellent conductor of heat and a brined turkey will cook in less time, often saving as much as 30 minutes in the oven.

What else can I brine? Can I brine other meats?

Yes. Mildly flavoured lean cuts of meat benefit the most from brining. The most popular items to brine are:

1. **Turkey:** whole, butterflied or pieces
2. **Chicken:** whole, butterflied or pieces
3. **Cornish game hens:** whole or butterflied
4. **Pork:** fresh ham, tenderloin, chops and loins
5. **Seafood:** salmon, trout and shrimp
6. **Game:** moose, elk, venison and bison

Are smaller brining bags available?

VE Brining Bags are available 4 to a set – 2 large and 2 small. They can be ordered from your Independent Epicure Consultant or online at www.epicureselections.com

What is the best VE Brining Collection to try if I want a traditional turkey flavour?

We would suggest the VE Tuscan or VE Canadian Maple Brining Collection. For more adventurous palates, or for a new twist on tradition, try the VE Asian Fusion or VE Tex-Mex Brining Collections.



How long should I brine my turkey for?

Brine the turkey for 12–24 hours; it is recommended to brine a turkey 1 hour per pound of meat. Time is of the essence; it is better to ‘under-brine’ than ‘over-brine.’ Brining for too long can ruin the taste and texture of the turkey.

Can I reuse the prepared brine?

No. The brining solution should be discarded immediately after use to prevent any possibility of food-borne illness. Even if boiled, brines and marinades are not food-safe to reuse.

Are the brining bags reusable?

No. VE Brining Bags are single-use only and should not be reused for food-safety reasons.

Can I brine a frozen turkey?

Yes. However, when selecting a frozen turkey, ensure that it is not pre-basted. Some frozen turkeys, such as Butterball, are injected with a brine solution and, if brined, will end up tasting saltier than desired.

Can I defrost my turkey in a brine to save time?

No. For best results, we highly recommend that the turkey be completely thawed before starting the brining process. Food safety is a concern – when a turkey is thawed in a brining solution, there is no accurate way of knowing how long the turkey took to thaw and how much of the meat has absorbed the brine. Therefore, the turkey will not brine evenly – some parts may be over-brined and other parts not at all.

When cooking a turkey, I usually add water to the bottom of my roasting pan. Can I use the brining solution instead? Won't this give it more flavour?

No. As the water evaporates, the brine will become increasingly concentrated, making it incredibly salty. As a result, it will ruin any part of the turkey sitting in the brine.

Can I put my vegetables and potatoes in with the turkey to brine too?

No. If the vegetables are brined, they will steam rather than roast. During this process, the water will evaporate, leaving you with a salty and unpalatable finished product.

Can I brine my turkey in warm brine?

No. The brine must be cold before covering the turkey. If you pour warm brine on the turkey, it will begin to cook at an unsafe temperature and release bacteria that may be harmful.

Food-Safe Tip: Quickly chill brine by placing the container in a sink of iced water before storing in your refrigerator.

How much brine do I need to use?

You may halve or double the brine. The important thing with brining is to prepare enough to cover the meat entirely. Allow enough preparation time so that the brine is cold before using.



Do I need to rinse my brined turkey prior to roasting it?

Yes. This is a VERY important step. Rinsing the turkey will remove any excess brine, ensuring that the turkey is perfectly seasoned. Patting the turkey dry with paper towel will ensure a crisp skin and a perfectly roasted turkey.

What should I brine my turkey in?

We recommend placing a VE Brining Bag in a VE Chef™ Eclipse® Coated Roasting Pan and securely sealing the brining bag, ensuring all air is removed. Turn the bag over to ensure that the entire turkey is covered in brine.

Can I stuff a brined turkey?

No. We recommend that you cook the stuffing outside of the bird. Stuffing a brined turkey will result in overly salty stuffing.

Can I make gravy from pan juices of a brined turkey?

Yes. If you have followed the directions by carefully rinsing and patting the turkey dry before roasting, the pan drippings will produce great-tasting gravy. We recommend a combination of prepared VE Chicken Bouillon and pan drippings for the gravy.

Does brining affect sodium levels in the final product?

If the turkey is brined correctly, according to current research and Epicure’s guidelines, the sodium level should increase by approximately 25%. Eaten in moderation (we recommend a 3-oz serving), both traditionally roasted and brined turkey can fit into a healthy-eating lifestyle.

Can I use a pop-up turkey indicator?

This is not recommended. The brining solution has a tendency to make these stick in the meat and the product may not work successfully.

How do I know if my turkey is fully cooked?

The best way to ensure a properly cooked turkey is by inserting a VE Instant-Read Pocket Thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh. It should reach an internal food safe temperature of 165° F (74° C).

What size of turkey will I need to feed X number of people?

Size of Turkey	Servings (with no leftovers)	Servings (allows for leftovers)
10-12 lbs.	8-10	6-8
14-16 lbs.	12-14	9-11
18-20 lbs.	16-18	12-14
22-24 lbs.	20-22	14-16



Will this be the best roast turkey ever?

Yes! Once you've tried brining, you'll never go back!

How do I carve my roasted turkey?

Follow VE's easy turkey carving instructions:

1. Let the turkey rest 20–25 minutes after removing it from the oven.
2. Remove the leg and thigh by slicing down through the ball joint that connects the thigh to the body.
3. Remove one side of the breast. Start at the breastbone and work the knife along the curve of one side of the rib cage.
4. When you've cut down the side as far as you can go, make a horizontal cut along the bottom and remove the breast in one piece.
5. Place the breast on a serving platter or cutting board and cut into slices.
6. Separate the thigh meat from the bone with your fingers.
7. Serve the drumsticks whole or remove the meat with your fingers, being careful to remove the tendons as you go.