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Roasting times: up-to-the-minute advice

If a joint of meat or fresh chicken throws you into a state of utter confusion, you're not alone. Roasting may seem to be a bit of an inexact science, but armed with some simple numbers and the right temperatures, it's easy to get a juicy, succulent result every time.

To roast turkey



Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 7, 425°F (220°C).

For an 8-10 lb (3.5-4.5 kg) turkey: Cook for 30 minutes then reduce the temperature to gas mark 3, 325°F (170°C) and cook for a further 2½-3 hours. Then give it a final 30 minutes (uncovered) at gas mark 6, 400°F (200°C).

For a 12-14 lb (5.5-6.5 kg) turkey: Cook for 40 minutes then reduce the temperature to gas mark 3, 325°F (170°C) and cook for a further 3-3½ hours. Then give it a final 30 minutes (uncovered) at gas mark 6, 400°F (200°C).

For a 15-20 lb (6.75-9 kg) turkey: Cook for 45 minutes then reduce the temperature to gas mark 3, 325°F (170°C) and cook for a further 4-5 hours. Then give it a final 30 minutes (uncovered) at gas mark 6, 400°F (200°C).

To tell if the turkey is cooked, pierce the thickest part of the leg with a skewer then press the skewer against the leg to see if the juices run clear without any trace of pink – if the juices are clear, the turkey is cooked.

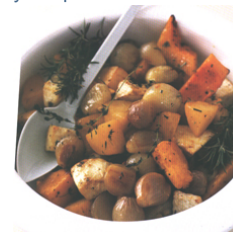
To roast lamb

Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 5, 375°F (190°C). Season the surface of the lamb with salt and freshly milled black pepper and place it, uncovered, on the middle shelf of the oven. Roast for 30 minutes per lb (450 g) and make sure you baste the lamb at least 3 times while it is cooking. If you like to serve your lamb quite pink, give it 30 minutes less cooking time.

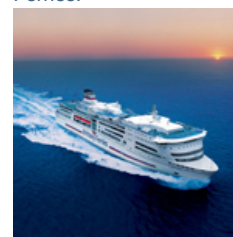
To tell if the lamb is cooked to your liking, insert a skewer into the centre, remove it, then press the flat of the skewer against the meat: as the juice runs out, you will see to what degree the meat is cooked – the pinker the juice, the rarer the meat. When it is cooked as you like it, remove it to a carving board and keep it in a warm place to rest for 30 minutes.

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### To roast beef

Choose sirloin or wing rib (three ribs) on the bone. Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 8, 450°F (230°C), season the meat with [salt and pepper](#) and rub the fat with a dusting of flour and dry mustard. Roast at this temperature for 20 minutes, then reduce the temperature to gas mark 5, 375°F (190°C) and continue to roast – basting at least three times – for 15 minutes per lb (450 g) for rare, plus 15 minutes more for medium, and another 30 minutes for well done. Allow to rest in a warm place for 20-30 minutes before carving.



### To roast pork



Choose a loin of pork, on the bone but chined (this means the bone is loosened), and pre-heat the [oven](#) to gas mark 8, 450°F (230°C). Make sure the surface of the skin is really dry, then rub in Maldon sea salt and roast for 25 minutes, then lower the temperature to gas mark 5, 375°F (190°C) and allow 35 minutes per lb (450 g). Don't baste the pork, or the crackling won't be crisp. Allow to relax in a

warm place for 20-30 minutes before carving.

### To roast chicken

Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 5, 375 F (190 C). Place the chicken in the roasting tin and smear 2 oz (50 g) of softened butter all over the chicken with your hands. Season the chicken all over with salt and freshly milled black pepper then arrange 7 rashers of smoked streaky [bacon](#) in a row along the breast. Cut one extra rasher in two and place a piece on each leg.



Roast for 20 minutes per lb (450 g) plus 10-20 minutes extra – this will be 1 hour and 50 minutes to 2 hours for a 5 lb (2.25 kg) bird. Baste three times during the cooking. During the last basting, remove the crisped bacon rashers and keep them warm. For the final 15 minutes of cooking, increase the heat to gas mark 7, 425°F (220°C) to give the skin that final golden crispiness. When it is cooked, remove it from the oven and cover it with foil. Leave to rest for 30 minutes before serving.

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