



Safety tips for turkey fryers

Each year many people try to find easier and faster ways to cook their turkeys to make the day a little less stressful. Deep frying a turkey, not only delivers great flavor, but also allows less time spent in the kitchen and more time spent with family and friends.

Although there's some debate about whether turkey was actually served at the first Thanksgiving, there's no question that modern-day Americans are finding new and creative ways to serve up this traditional holiday favorite. Deep-fried turkey started in the Deep South, but has become something of a national craze in the past decade.

Underwriters Laboratories Inc.'s (UL) safety experts are concerned that backyard chefs may be sacrificing safety for good taste. In 2010, approximately two million people attempted to deep fry their turkey, 62 succeeded in setting their homes on fire. Although accidents resulting from turkey fryers do not always end in a fire, they can also cause severe burns and damaged property from the fryer tipping over.

One major cause of turkey fryer accidents is that the turkey is not completely thawed. The USDA recommends refrigerator thawing: allow approximately 24 hours for every five pounds and dry the turkey before cooking. Partially frozen and/or wet turkeys can produce excessive hot oil splatter when added to the oil.



Oil Selection and how much you use?

Only oils that have high smoke points should be used. Such oils include peanut, refined canola, corn oil, rice oil and sunflower. Canola oil is low in saturated fats and would be appropriate to combine with peanut oil if fat and cholesterol are a concern.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions to determine the proper amount of oil to add. If those are not available:

Step 1: Place turkey in pot

Step 2: Fill with water until the turkey is covered by about 1-2 inches of water

Step 3: Remove and dry turkey

Step 4: Mark water level. Dump water, dry the pot, and fill with oil to the marked level.

Although using a turkey fryer can be dangerous, there are actions that can be taken to reduce the likelihood that an accident or injury will occur. Consider the following safety tips:

1. Always use your turkey fryer outdoors, away from buildings and any material that can burn. Never use turkey fryers on wooden decks or in garages. Make sure to place the fryer on a flat surface.
2. Place the liquid propane gas tank and fryer so that any wind blows the heat of the fryer away from the gas tank, make sure there is at least 2 feet of space between the liquid propane tank and fryer burner.
3. NEVER leave the fryer unattended, NEVER overfill the fryer, the container must be large enough to hold the turkey with enough oil to cover it.
4. Check the oil temperature frequently. If the oil begins to smoke, immediately turn the gas supply OFF. (If you don't watch it carefully, the oil may catch fire).
5. Always use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts when using a turkey fryer. And, even though they may look silly, wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from oil splatter.
6. Raise and lower food SLOWLY to reduce splatter and avoid burns and remember to COVER bare skin when adding or removing food.
7. Never let children or pets near the fryer when in use. And, even after the food is on the table, remember: turkey fryers remain dangerously hot for hours.
8. **If a fire breaks out, never use water to try to put it out. Adding water to a grease fire will only make things worse, quickly, and could result in significant fire damage, as well as devastating injury. Make certain you keep a fire extinguisher on hand (use an ABC Multi-Purpose Dry Chemical Fire Extinguisher), but if the fire appears unmanageable, call 9-1-1 for help, rather than fighting it yourself.**



Cooking Preparation

- Typically, a 30 quart to 40 quart vessel with lid, basket, lifting hook and burner are needed
- Remove the turkey from the wrapper. Be sure to save the label that indicates the weight of the turkey. Use the turkey's weight to compute the total frying time.
- **Thaw the turkey completely. Remove the neck and giblets from the two body cavities.**
- Clean and dry the turkey both inside and outside
- Remove any excess fat around the neck to allow the oil to flow through the turkey.
- Remove the wire or plastic truss that holds the legs in place (if applicable). Cut off the wing tips up to the first joint and cut off the tail.
- Remove the pop-up timer from the breast (if applicable).
- Do not stuff turkeys for deep frying.

Note: Just prior to lowering the turkey into the oil, turn off the burner. As soon as the turkey is safely in the pot, immediately turn on the burner.



Caution:

NEVER use a propane-fired turkey fryer unattended, cooking oil is combustible, and if it is heated beyond its cooking temperature, its vapors can ignite. This is a fire danger separate from the burn danger inherent in the hot oil. Overheating can occur if temperature controls, which are designed to shut off the fryer if the oil overheats, are defective, or if the appliance has no temperature controls.

Propane-fired turkey fryers are designed for outdoor use, by the time Thanksgiving arrives both rain and snow is common in many parts of the country. If rain or snow strikes exposed hot cooking oil, the result can be a splattering of the hot oil or a conversion of the rain or snow to steam, either of which can lead to burns. Use of propane-fired turkey fryers indoors to avoid bad weather is contrary to their design and dangerous in its own right. Also, moving an operating turkey fryer indoors to escape bad weather is extremely risky. Fires have occurred when turkey fryers were used in a garage or barn or under eaves to keep the appliance out of the rain.



Cooking Tips:

Heat the oil to 350° F (180° C). Allow 45 minutes to one hour for the oil to heat. Use a candy thermometer to determine the temperature of the oil. Peanut oil is usually the preferred oil for this process because it does well at high temperatures.

When the oil reaches 350° F (180° C), carefully lower the turkey into the pot. It takes three to five minutes per pound for the turkey to cook. The skin will be black and the wings will be burned. When the turkey begins to float, it is considered done. To make sure it has reached the appropriate temperature, remove the turkey from the oil, and insert a meat thermometer into the thigh. If the thermometer does not read 180°F (90 - 100° C), return the turkey to the oil for additional cooking.

Prior to serving:

After removing the bird from the hot oil, let rest and drain on paper towels for 15 minutes. Then carve it up and enjoy your delicious holiday delight with family and friends.



Additional safety tips:

- Allow the oil to cool completely before disposing or storing.
- Immediately wash hands, utensils, equipment and surfaces that have come in contact with raw turkey.
- Turkey should be consumed immediately and leftovers stored in the refrigerator within two hours of cooking

Always follows the manufactures recommendations when using their products

Remember never use a propane-fired turkey cooker unattended; it only takes a few seconds to go from TURKEY FRYING to TURKEY FIRE

This information is provided to you by the IES safety committee