

Outdoor Turkey Deep Fryer Buying Guide

Deep-fried turkey is not only delicious, it also cooks much quicker than a traditional turkey cooked in the oven.

The most important part of cooking an awesome fried turkey is making sure you have a [really good turkey fryer](#) - and knowing the right way to cook your bird.

Not sure which turkey deep fryer is best?

[Read these reviews](#) of the best fryers available.

Meet The Turkey Fryer



A **turkey fryer** is an apparatus for deep-frying a turkey.

Fried turkey has been a longtime favorite in the Southern United States, and has recently become popular in other parts of the country because of the reduced time needed to cook a turkey in a deep fryer, versus other conventional methods such as an oven or a rotisserie grill.

Equipment

A traditional turkey fryer kit consists of a burner, a large stock pot with lid, a basket and/or poultry holder, a lifter and a thermometer.

The burner operates on a standard propane tank that usually must be purchased separately. Current burner units are much lower than the original design so as to increase stability and help prevent tip-overs. Lower cost units use an aluminum stock pot and a steel burner while higher-end units include a stainless steel pot and burner.

Some stock pots may have an integrated valve to drain the oil. The poultry holder consists of an aluminum or stainless steel disk with a metal rod formed into a loop with the ends affixed to the center of the disk. The loop is placed through the cavity of the turkey and the lifter is used to lower and remove the turkey. If a basket is used, it includes a bail that is grabbed by the lifter. The thermometer has a long probe and is used to monitor the temperature of the oil.

The fryer can also be used to cook other poultry and seafood. The stock pot lid is used to cover the pot only when not actually frying or when preparing other foods by boiling in water. Heavy gloves and an apron are recommended.

[Some vendors](#) now offer an add-on temperature control valve. This consists of a valve that goes between the propane tank and the burner and a lead with a thermal sensor. The sensor is placed into the oil and the valve adjusts the flame to achieve a constant temperature.

Electric turkey fryers have been introduced that can be used indoors. Although the electric fryer does not heat up as fast as with propane, it includes a thermostat with a timer and a thermal safety shut-off. Electric fryers can also be used to prepare other foods by frying or boiling.

Safety

Deep-frying a turkey uses oil over an open flame, thus it presents some hazards. The operation must be considered hazardous from the time the flame is lit to the time the turkey is removed and the oil is cooled.

- A propane burner must never be used indoors, on a wooden deck, under a roof, tree, or near any flammable materials.
- The propane tank must be placed as far away from the cooker as possible.
- It is critical to note that oil expands in volume by over 10% at cooking temperature! Leave room for expansion when you fill the pot with oil.

- Never leave the fryer unattended.
- The turkey must be fully thawed or fresh and must be dry. If ice contacts boiling oil it will cause a boilover and a fire hazard.
- Always measure the amount of oil needed and never overfill the pot. Place the turkey in the empty pot and fill with oil to 1 inch from the top of the turkey. Remove the turkey and heat oil.
- Keep children and pets away from the fryer during and after operation.
- Ensure a fire extinguisher rated for flammable liquids is readily available.
- Use a thermometer to monitor the temperature of the oil during operation and keep the temperature at 350 °F (175 °C). Reduce the heat immediately if the oil begins to smoke.
- Use heavy gloves or oven mitts and wear a long-sleeve shirt. Wear closed-toe shoes, not sandals.
- Do not consume alcohol during the process.
- Turn the burner off before putting the turkey into the oil. If the oil overflows at least it will not catch fire. Relight the burner if all is well.
- Lower and remove the turkey carefully and slowly to avoid oil splashing or spillage.
- Make sure to add extra soy-sauce before eating to get the oils and acids to drain out of the turkey.

There is also a possibility that an overheated turkey fryer can explode. Also, if the oil ignites, it can be what one Underwriters Laboratories representative called "a vertical flame thrower". A number of homes and other buildings (such as garages) have been destroyed due to the unsafe use of a turkey fryer and UL has refused to list turkey fryers, releasing a short and graphic explanatory video on their concerns.

Preparation

Deep-frying requires a cooking oil with a high smoke point such as canola oil, peanut oil, safflower oil or a blend. Cooking time is about four minutes per pound of turkey, so a 15 pound turkey needs to be cooked for about one hour in 350 °F (175 °C) oil. Oil can be recovered, stored, and reused several times before it becomes rancid or contaminated. Storage life can be extended by filtering used oil and keeping it cool. A generous rub of salt and pepper may be used to increase flavor. The turkey can also be seasoned with an injectable marinade. Fried turkeys cannot be stuffed, nor do they provide drippings or broth for gravy.

Nutritional Stats

After roasting, the most common method of (turkey) preparation is deep-frying, southern style, which involves submerging the whole turkey into a deep frying vat. Nutritionally, this is not the nightmare you might imagine. "If performed properly, deep-frying does not make food excessively greasy, because the moisture in the food repels the oil. The hot oil heats the water within the food, steaming it from the inside out; oil cannot go against the direction of this powerful flow because (due to its high temperature) the water vapor pushes the bubbles toward the surface."⁴ Indeed, while a 9-ounce serving of roasted turkey (mixed parts) weighs in with 548 calories and 27 grams of fat, the same size serving of turkey, deep fried in peanut oil, has about 574 calories and 31 grams of fat.⁵ Even though southern cooking doesn't have a reputation for being the healthiest of American fare, "(f)ried turkey is traditionally prepared in peanut oil because it naturally maintains high temperatures throughout the cooking process and stops the oil from absorbing into the meat. This results in a bird that's crispy on the outside, moist on the inside and has a slight nutty taste. Deep-frying cuts way down on cooking time as it takes about three minutes per pound, as opposed to the hours needed to roast a turkey." Furthermore, peanut oil is recommended as the preferred oil to deep fry a turkey in. Aside from its delicious taste, "(p)eanut oil is one of the healthiest oils. It is a vegetable oil that is naturally trans fat-free, cholesterol free, and low in saturated fats. Peanut oil is high in unsaturated fats, especially monounsaturated fat, like olive oil. It is also a source of the antioxidant, vitamin E and phytosterols, which benefit heart-health.

Peanut oil is also a perfect choice for healthier frying because it can be heated to a higher temperature than other oils, and this results in lower oil pick up in the food.”⁶¹

Resource links

- [Best Outdoor Turkey Deep Fryers 2014](#)

This buying guide can be found [here](#) along with other reviews and tips.

¹Jacobson, Michele. " Just Because You're An American Doesn't Mean You Have To Eat Like One!" ShiresPress, 2011. pp 124-5.