



## Chicken

**Fridge time:** (whole, parts, ground or giblets) 1 to 2 days

**Freezer time:** To assure quality, follow these freezing time limits: whole – 12 months; parts – 9 months; ground – 3 to 4 months; giblets – 3 to 4 months

## Storage

1. If a use-by date expires while the chicken is frozen, the food can still be used.

## Preparation

1. Boneless chicken breasts will usually defrost overnight in the refrigerator. Bone-in parts and whole chickens may take 1 to 2 days or longer. Once the raw chicken defrosts, it can be kept in the refrigerator an additional day or two before cooking. During this time, if chicken defrosted in the refrigerator is not used, **it can safely be refrozen without cooking first.**
2. If using microwave or cold water submersion methods of thawing, following the general safe handling ([link to intro page on safe handling](#)) instructions.
3. Chicken may be marinated in the refrigerator up to 2 days. Boil used marinade before brushing it on cooked chicken and discard any uncooked leftover marinade.
4. Chicken must be stuffed immediately before cooking. Some USDA-inspected frozen stuffed whole chicken **MUST** be cooked from the frozen state to ensure a safely cooked product. Follow preparation directions on the label.

## Cooking

1. The USDA recommends cooking whole chicken to 180 degrees F as measured in the thigh using a food thermometer. When cooking pieces, the breast should reach 170 degrees internally. Drumsticks, thighs and wings should be cooked until they reach an internal temperature of 180 degrees F.
2. Ground poultry and ground poultry dishes should always be cooked to 165° F internal temperature.

***Note: Pregnant women, children, elderly and immuno-compromised individuals can be at an increased risk of developing foodborne illnesses that can have fatal consequences. Additional care should be taken for safe handling.***