

How to Buy

POULTRY



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How to Buy POULTRY

Poultry's popularity is growing as consumers seek foods that are versatile, quick-to-fix, economical, and nutritious.

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Points to Consider

Wholesomeness...quality...class...nutritive value...cost...convenience...and informative labeling are some of the points to consider when purchasing poultry.

Wholesomeness

All poultry must be officially inspected to ensure that it is wholesome, properly labeled, and not adulterated. The processing plant's premises, facilities, equipment, and procedures must be inspected. And, the inspection stamp must appear on the label. This mandatory inspection is done by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. It must be done before poultry can be graded for quality.



Labeling for Safety

Poultry inspection procedures are designed to minimize the likelihood of harmful bacteria being present in poultry products. However, some bacteria could be present and could become a problem if the poultry is not handled properly during preparation. USDA requires that safe handling and cooking instructions be put on all packages of raw poultry; this includes any poultry product not considered "ready to eat."

Safe Handling Instructions

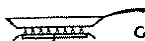
This product was inspected for your safety. Some animal products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.



Keep refrigerated or frozen.
Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.



Keep raw (meats or poultry) separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw (meat or poultry).



Cook thoroughly.



Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Processed poultry products considered “ready to eat”— such as poultry hotdogs, luncheon meats, and turkey ham — are also perishable. They, too, should be kept refrigerated and handled with care to prevent spoilage.

For information about poultry inspection and safety, call USDA’s Meat and Poultry Hotline. The national toll-free number is 800-535-4555. In the Washington, DC, area, call (202) 720-3333.

Quality Assurance

Grading involves evaluating poultry in terms of quality standards. Quality standards reflect factors that affect the inherent properties of poultry, factors that determine its relative degree of excellence or value. The highest quality is U.S. Grade A, the only grade you are likely to see in the store. U.S. Grades B and C may be sold at retail, but are usually used in further-processed products where the poultry meat is cut up, chopped, or ground.



The official grade shield certifies that the poultry has been graded for quality by a technically trained government grader. USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service provides the grading service, on a voluntary basis, to poultry processors and others who request it and pay a fee for it.

Poultry That is Graded

U.S. grades apply to six kinds of poultry: chicken, turkey, duck, goose, guinea, and pigeon.

The USDA grade shield may be found on the following ready-to-cook poultry products, whether chilled or frozen:

whole poultry carcasses,

poultry parts — with or without the skin, bone-in or boneless,

poultry roasts, and

poultry tenderloins.

There are no grade standards for poultry necks, wing tips, tails, giblets, or poultry meat that is diced, shredded, or ground.

U.S. Grade A Poultry

Grade A poultry whole carcasses and bone-in parts

are fully fleshed and meaty;

have a good conformation, a normal shape;

are free of disjointed or broken bones;

have a well-developed and well-distributed layer of fat in the skin;

are free of pinfeathers, exposed flesh, and discolorations; and,

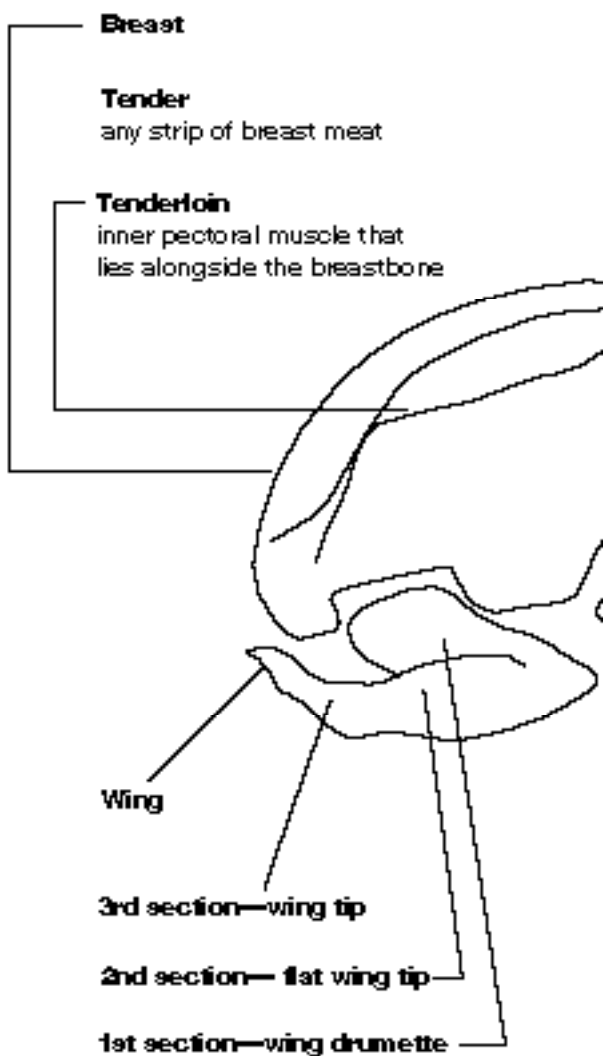
in the case of whole carcasses, have no missing parts.

Grade A boneless poultry products are free of bone, cartilage, tendons, bruises, and blood clots.

Grade A poultry products that are frozen must be free of freezing defects such as dehydration or excess moisture.

Poultry

Popular retail cuts



Chicken and turkey white meat comes primarily from the breast and wings. The dark meat comes from the thighs and drumsticks.

Poultry half

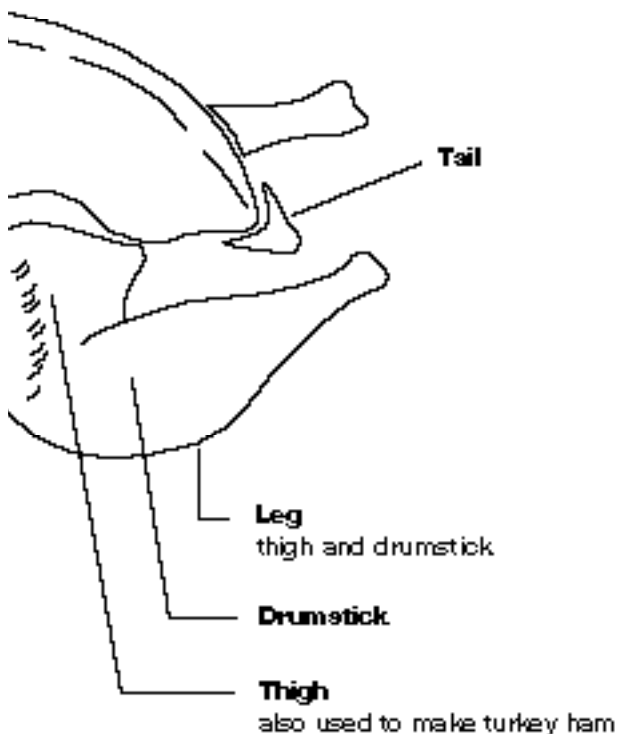
full-length split down
breast and back producing
approximately equal
left and right sides

Breast quarter

half a breast, a wing,
and a portion of the back

Leg quarter

a thigh, a drumstick,
and a portion of the back



Select by Class

The class of poultry indicates the age of the bird. Age affects the tenderness of poultry meat and dictates the cooking method to use for maximum flavor and tenderness. Poultry meat from young birds is more tender than poultry meat from older birds.

Young birds provide tender-meated poultry that is suitable for all cooking methods, especially broiling, barbecuing, roasting, or frying. They may be labeled as:

Chicken: young chicken, Rock Cornish game hen, broiler, fryer, roaster, or capon.

Turkey: young turkey, fryer-roaster, young hen, or young tom.

Duck: duckling, young duckling, broiler duckling, fryer duckling, or roaster duckling.

Goose and guinea: young goose or guinea.

Pigeon: squab.

Mature birds provide less tender-meated poultry that is suitable for moist-heat cooking such as stewing or baking, and may be preferred for use in soups, casseroles, salads, or sandwiches. They may be labeled as:

Chicken: mature chicken, hen, fowl, baking chicken, or stewing chicken.

Turkey: mature turkey, yearling turkey, or old turkey.

Duck, goose, and guinea: mature or old duck, goose, or guinea.

Pigeon: pigeon.

Safe Handling

Wash hands, cutting board, utensils, and work surface with hot, soapy water before and after handling raw and cooked poultry.

Keep raw poultry in the refrigerator (40 °F). Cook within 1 to 2 days, or freeze it.

Keep frozen poultry in the freezer (0 °F). Cook promptly after thawing. Thaw in the refrigerator; in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes; or in a microwave oven.

Keep cooked poultry in the refrigerator. Use within 4 days, or freeze it.

Completely cook poultry at one time. Never partially cook, then store and finish cooking later.

Whole birds should be stuffed just before cooking. Mix dry ingredients with other ingredients (for example, margarine, onion, and broth) just before stuffing the bird. Remove stuffing from the bird immediately after cooking. Store stuffing separately in the refrigerator.

When serving poultry, never leave it out of the refrigerator more than 2 hours.

Put cooked poultry on a clean plate, never on a plate that held raw poultry and had not yet been thoroughly washed.

Nutritive Value

Poultry provides protein, niacin, vitamins B6 and B12, iron, zinc, and phosphorus. Fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol are also present in all poultry, with most of the fat being in the skin. Use the *Nutrition Facts* panel on each individual product label to learn about the nutrient content of that food and how it fits into an overall daily diet. The *Nutrition Facts* panel must appear on all processed poultry products, while its use is voluntary on single-ingredient raw poultry.

Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol to help reduce the risk of getting certain diseases and to help maintain a healthy weight. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggest choosing a diet containing 30 percent or less of calories from fat and less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fatty acids. Also, some health authorities suggest that dietary cholesterol be limited to an average of 300 milligrams or less per day.

The Food Guide Pyramid (see inside back cover) suggests 2 to 3 servings each day of food from the meat group, the equivalent of 5 to 7 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish. Count as a serving 2 to 3 ounces of cooked poultry, about the amount of poultry meat on a medium chicken breast half.

Tips: To reduce fat in cooked poultry, broil, roast, bake, simmer, or microwave poultry rather than fry. Cook whole birds on a rack. Drain and discard any fat that accumulates during cooking. Remove the skin before eating. When you choose poultry dishes that are higher in fat, balance your fat intake by choosing other foods that are low in fat.

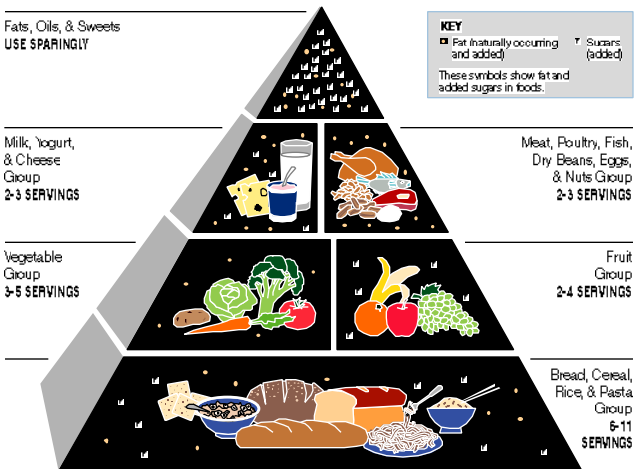
Fat Content of Chicken

Chicken, light and dark meat, roasted, 3 oz.

	Without skin	With skin
Fat total (grams)	6	12
Saturated fatty acids (grams)	2	3
Cholesterol (milligrams)	75	74
Calories	160	200

For more information about nutrition, write:
 U.S. Department of Agriculture,
 Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
 1120 20th Street NW, Suite 200 North
 Washington, DC 20036

Food Guide Pyramid A Guide to Daily Food Choices



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Use the Food Guide Pyramid to help you eat better every day...the Dietary Guidelines way. Start with plenty of Breads, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta; Vegetables; and Fruits. Add two to three servings from the Milk group and two to three servings from the Meat group. Each of these food groups provides some, but not all, of the nutrients you need. No one food group is more important than another - for good health you need them all. Go easy on the fats, oils, and sweets, the foods in the small tip of the Pyramid.

The "Food Guide Pyramid" booklet (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Human Nutrition Information Service, August 1992, Leaflet No. 572) can be purchased. Send a \$1 check or money order, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, to Consumer Information Center, Department 117-B, Pueblo, CO 81009.

HOW TO BUY POULTRY

■ Look for the Grade

Buy U.S. Grade A poultry.

Bone-in products are fully fleshed and meaty, have a normal shape, are free of disjointed or broken bones.

Products with the skin on are free of pinfeathers, exposed flesh, and discolorations.

Boneless products are free of bone, cartilage, tendons, bruises.

■ Look for the Class

The name suggests the cooking method.

Young poultry for all cooking methods: Broiler, fryer, roaster, capon, Cornish game hen, or the word “young.”

Mature poultry for moist-heat cooking: Hen, fowl, stewing or baking chicken, or the words “mature” or “old.”

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