



Kentucky 4-H Chicken and Turkey Barbecue Project

Tony Pescatore, Wendy Stivers, and Jacquie Jacob, Department of Animal and Food Sciences

Cooking barbecue is a national pastime—as American as apple pie. What is more welcome than the aroma of food cooking on an outdoor grill? Barbecue cooking is for almost everyone, so get ready to develop skills you will use the rest of your life.

In this project you will:

- Cut up a chicken and/or a turkey for barbecue
- Handle poultry properly to prevent growth of bacteria that can cause food poisoning
- Start a fire in a charcoal grill
- Cook chicken and/or turkey on the grill
- Keep a record of your 4-H poultry barbecue activities

You also may:

- Enter a 4-H poultry barbecue contest
- Give demonstrations on barbecuing poultry
- Provide leadership to younger 4-Hers

First Things First

The first thing you need to know about cooking poultry is the importance of sanitation. Salmonella, bacteria that may grow quickly on poultry, can cause serious food poisoning. Therefore, it is important to follow these food safety guidelines:

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling raw poultry. Use a paper towel to dry your hands instead of a towel.



- Keep raw poultry cold, either in a refrigerator or in a cooler packed with ice.
- Keep cooked poultry hot. Serve it immediately; do not leave it at room temperature any longer than necessary to complete the meal.
- Wash cutting boards, countertops, knives, and other surfaces touched by the raw poultry with soap and water. Again, use paper towels to dry, and then throw them away.
- Be sure to have the fire hot before placing raw poultry on it to cook. A low fire provides a good environment for bacteria to grow.

Getting It All Together

Any time you cook out, you want to have all the equipment you need close by. You will find it frustrating to need tongs or water to put out a flame and have to run to the house in a hurry. Being prepared can make the difference between a successful barbecue and a disappointing one.

To prepare the poultry you will need:

- Sharp knife (6-inch boning or butcher knife)
- Cutting board
- Platter
- Plastic bag or wrap
- Water
- Soap
- Paper towel or hand towel

To barbecue the poultry you will need:

- Barbecue grill
- Long tongs for handling briquettes
- Long-handled lighter or matches
- Charcoal briquettes and lighter fluid
- Vegetable-oil spray
- Spray bottle
- Table for work area
- Paper towels
- Apron
- Second tongs for handling meat
- Basting brush
- Cooler with ice to keep sauces cold and to store raw chicken when not being handled
- Container for sauces
- Garbage bag
- Aluminum foil
- Platter
- Starter can and pliers (optional)

- Never use gasoline or kerosene as fuel to start a fire.
- Never pour more fuel on charcoal that has already ignited. It might blaze up and burn you.

Now that you know the safety rules, you are ready to learn how to build a charcoal fire:

- Line your grill area with aluminum foil with the shiny side up.
- Place enough charcoal in the grill to cover the grill area with briquettes a half-inch apart. Mound the charcoal up or use a starter can. A starter can may be built by taking a 3-pound coffee can (7 inches tall, 6 inches in diameter) and removing both ends of the can. Punch holes around the bottom of the can about 1-inch from the bottom edge. Space holes every inch or two.
- Soak the briquettes with charcoal lighter fluid. (Do not use gasoline or kerosene.) Light the charcoal with a long handled lighter or match.
- If a starter can is used, use pliers to remove the can when all the charcoal briquettes have a white edge around them.
- When the charcoals are covered with a white ash, the fire is hot enough for cooking. Spread the charcoal so that all the poultry will have even heat.

Where There's Smoke

Let's learn how to have a good charcoal fire. Before you start a fire, there are a few safety rules you must know. Charcoal cooking is safe when done properly, but you can be burned if you do not know and follow safety precautions.

- If you have never started a charcoal fire before, have an adult who has done so help you.
- Do not wear loose or hanging clothing when building a fire.



A well built charcoal fire using a starter can.

- Spray the grill rack with vegetable-oil spray, and place the rack on the grill 6 inches above the fire.
- If the fire supplies insufficient heat to complete the cooking process, you can make the fire hotter by knocking the ashes off the burning coals or moving the coals closer together.
- Do not add lighter fluid to hot coals.
- If the previous steps were not sufficient to increase the heat generated by the coals, add more charcoal.
- If the fire is too hot (which can result in burning your chicken or turkey), sprinkle the coals with water or move some of the coals to one side. If the fire flames up, sprinkle water on that area of the coals. Use the long-handled tongs to move the charcoal.



Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling raw poultry. Use a paper towel to dry your hands instead of a towel.

Once you have barbecued poultry, all the steps will become easy for you.

While your coals are heating, you can prepare the chicken or turkey. Until you have practiced, you may have to allow more time. Or you may want to practice building a fire before you actually need it for cooking.

Bring on the Bird

Oven-ready chicken weighing two to three pounds are ideal for barbecuing. A typical serving size for lean meat is 3 ounces so allow one quarter chicken per person (8-12 ounces). Turkeys under 16 pounds are ideal for barbecuing. If you purchase a whole turkey or turkey breast with bone, allow 7-8 ounces of turkey per person. If you purchase a boneless breast allow 5-6 ounces of boneless breast per person.

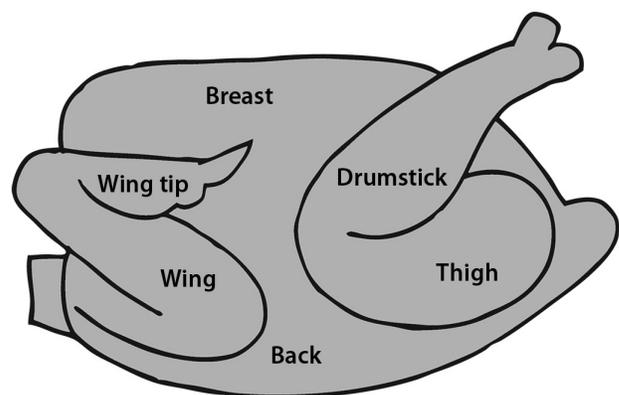
You can buy poultry fresh or frozen. Whichever you buy, it must be kept cold. Fresh chicken may be stored two to three days in the refrigerator or longer in the freezer. If you are taking the chicken somewhere else to cook it, you must store it in an ice chest or cooler with plenty of ice.

Thaw frozen chicken in the refrigerator or under running cold water. Never thaw chicken at room temperature.

Allow five hours per pound of meat to thaw in the refrigerator. Allow one half hour per pound of meat to thaw under running cold water.

Ready for the Butcher Block

Part of what you will learn in this 4-H project is how to cut up a chicken or turkey for barbecuing. In order to do a good job, you need to know something about the anatomy of poultry. "In order to do a good job, you need to know something about the anatomy of poultry – how it is put together! Study the drawing below.



Now you are ready to cut up your poultry. This takes a little practice and must be done with care.

Cutting Your Chicken

Broilers are normally split in half for barbecuing as described below.



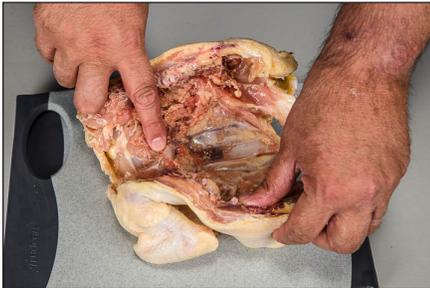
Place the chicken on its breast. Place the knife in the indentation beside the tail.



Some may find it easier to use cutting shears to split the back of the chicken.



Cut through the backbone to the neck. Leaving a portion of the back on each half will make it easier to turn the chicken while grilling.



Spread the chicken apart to expose the keel (breast bone). The keel is part hard bone, but is mostly cartilage.



Place the knife on the keel bone. Apply pressure to split the bone. Once the bone is split, cut through the cartilage.



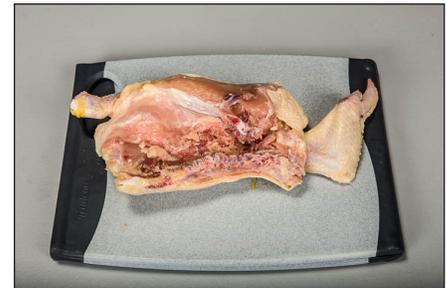
Separate the two halves by splitting the breast.



Optional: Remove the tail.



Optional: Nick the wing joint so the half will lay flat on the grill.



Remove the excess fat from the chicken to prevent fire flare-up from dripping fat.

Rinse each piece thoroughly under cold running water.

Wash your hands, and clean all utensils and surfaces that have come into contact with the raw chicken. Drying with paper towels is best.

Cutting Your Turkey

Follow the steps described below for preparing a whole turkey for barbecuing.



If you have a whole turkey, lay it on its back.



Remove both wings.



Remove both legs. (The wings and legs can be cooked separately.)



Loosen the back.



Remove the back.



Draw the knife along the side of the breast point.



Loosen the breast meat from the breast bone, and carefully remove the breast meat.



Be sure to remove both the large and small breast muscle (tenderloin).



Trim around the wing and along the back to remove the meat from the bone. Repeat for the other half of the breast.



The remaining back and breast bones can be used to make soup stock.



Optional: Remove the smaller breast muscle (tenderloin) for cooking separately.



You can grill your turkey breasts with the skin on or off. To remove the skin, just pull it back over the breast.

Wash the turkey breasts under cold running water and refrigerate until you are ready to cook. Wash your hands and clean utensils and surfaces that have been in contact with the raw turkey. Paper towels are best for drying hands and surfaces.

Stand Aside for the Cook

You are almost ready to cook. Just one more detail: What will you use to baste your poultry? Basting is the use of a liquid or sauce to moisten meat as it is cooking. Basting helps keep the meat moist and adds flavor.

There are many different recipes for barbecue sauce. You may want to try one of those listed. Do not use a tomato- or sugar-based sauce for basting because they have a tendency to burn. If you do use a tomato or sugar sauce, apply it to the meat as a final basting for color and flavor. Baste with another sauce to keep the meat moist.

Kentucky Barbecue Sauce

- 2½ cup water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2½ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ¼ cup vinegar
- 2½ teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ onion
- 1 teaspoon powdered mustard
- ½ teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 1 clove of garlic, minced

Combine all ingredients, and bring to a boil. Keep hot during basting.

8-10 servings

All-Purpose Barbecue Sauce

- 1½ teaspoon salt
- 4 teaspoon sugar
- ⅔ cup ketchup
- ½ cup vinegar
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- ⅔ cup tomato juice
- ¼ cup butter, margarine, or salad oil
- 1½ teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1⅓ cup water
- 2 small onions, finely chopped

Blend ingredients together, and bring to a boil. Keep sauce hot during basting.

8-10 servings



Oil & Vinegar Sauce

- 1 cup water
- 1 pint vinegar
- 1½ teaspoon salt
- ½ pound butter or 1 cup of salad oil

Blend ingredients together, and stir frequently to prevent separation of oil.

8-10 servings

Marinate Sauce for Turkey

- 2 cups of lemon-lime soda
- 1 cup salad oil
- 1 cup soy sauce
- 1½ teaspoon garlic salt

Mix ingredients together, and stir well. Sauce can be used to marinate (soak meat in sauce prior to cooking turkey) or can be used as a basting sauce.

12 servings

Double-check to see that you have everything you need, put on your apron, and let's cook.

Cooking the Chicken or Turkey

1. Place the chicken or turkey on a properly prepared grill, skin side up to seal the juices into the meat.
2. Turn the chicken and turkey frequently (5-10 minutes) to prevent burning. Use tongs to turn the meat. Do not use a fork, because it will release the juices and the finished product will be dry.
3. If the fire flames up on the meat, use the spray bottle to put out the flare-ups.
4. Baste the meat frequently to help retain moisture and prevent burning. (Remember, a tomato- or sugar-based sauce has a tendency to burn.)
5. Cook poultry until it is well done. When the chicken is done, the drumstick will twist out of the thigh joint and the wing joint will open easily. No red meat should be in any of the joints. Turkey meat, when fully cooked, will be white in color with a slight pink tint. Bright pink color indicates the turkey is not done.
6. Place poultry on a clean plate. Do not use the same plate you had raw poultry on unless it has been thoroughly washed.
7. Keep the poultry meat hot until served.

Some tips for cooking the turkey:

- Marinating the turkey prior to placing it on the grill will improve the flavor and moisture of the finished product. Remember to keep the turkey and the marinade cold during the marinating period.
- The turkey breasts can be cooked by wrapping the turkey in aluminum foil with the dull side out. This will help prevent the turkey from burning and will prevent moisture loss. In addition, the aluminum foil makes the turkey easier to handle.
- The turkey can be basted during cooking by opening the aluminum foil and basting the meat. You might want to add extra sauce to the meat and then close the aluminum foil.

Poultry Par Excellence

How will you know when your poultry is an excellent product? Well, the best way is your taste test. The experts will say you have an excellent product when:

- The poultry has an appealing appearance with uniform color
- The poultry is free of burned skin and blisters
- There is no ash dust or foreign material on the poultry
- The poultry has a pleasant, normal poultry odor and a good taste
- The sauce complements, but does not overwhelm, the meat

Let's Have a Cookout

Barbecued poultry is good, but it's better when you have something else to go along with it. As an entrée, poultry goes well with many food combinations. You can cook the meat, vegetables, and bread outdoors by taking advantage of the barbecue fire, or you may prefer to prepare the vegetables and salad indoors. You may barbecue poultry ahead and hold warm or re-warm prior to serving. Remember to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold to avoid food poisoning.



Remember to use clean utensils, hands, and dishes when working with raw poultry to prevent contamination.

The following are menu suggestions that go well with poultry. Most of these foods are easy to prepare, and you can find recipes for them in most cookbooks.

Menu 1

- Creamy potato salad
- Sliced tomatoes
- Celery sticks
- Buttered rolls
- Apple cobbler

Menu 2

- Pork and beans
- Tossed salad
- Buttered rolls
- Cherry pie

Menu 3

- Corn on the cob
- Green beans
- Tossed salad
- Biscuits
- Lemon pie

Menu 4

- Stuffed baked potato
- Broccoli
- Apple-celery salad
- Corn bread
- Brownies

Menu 5

- Wild rice casserole
- Peas with sautéed mushrooms
- Peach and cottage cheese salad
- Buttered rolls
- Rhubarb and strawberry cobbler

Menu 6

- Baked potato
- Spiced apricots
- Buttered broccoli
- Sliced cucumbers and sour cream
- Bran rolls
- Lime sherbet

State 4-H Chicken/Turkey Barbecue events

The State 4-H Chicken and Turkey Barbecue Events are held each year. Their purpose is to help 4-Hers develop skills in the preparation and use of barbecued chicken or turkey. Both juniors and seniors are allowed to participate in the state contest.

Contact your local 4-H agent for the latest information on registration forms, event dates, score sheets, and rules and regulations governing the events. Up-to-date information is in the 4-H Agents Awards and Events Handbook.

State senior winners in chicken barbecue and in turkey barbecue contests proceed to the National 4-H Chicken/Turkey Barbecue contest held in November in Louisville.

Demonstrations

An illustrated presentation is required of state level winners in the Chicken and Turkey Barbecue Contest who proceed to the National 4-H Chicken/Turkey Barbecue Contest. An illustrated presentation is not required at the state level. However, you may want to prepare a project demonstration for your county 4-H Communications Day activities. It would fit in the “Other Foods” category and would help you prepare for national competition if you have aspirations in that area.

Topics that would be appropriate include:

- Information about purchasing broilers/turkeys
- Selecting an outdoor grill, fire preparation, and safety tips
- Equipment checklist for outdoor cooking
- Barbecue sauces
- Testing for doneness
- Preparing and cutting up a chicken/turkey
- Preparing your own turkey breast steaks
- Cholesterol in chicken/turkey compared to other meats
- How to fire up your grill (direct heat, indirect heat, rotisserie grilling, smoke roasting)
- Barbecuing a whole turkey
- Marinades, sauces, glazes— what they are, how to make them, how to use them

Citizenship/Leadership Activities

- Have a county 4-H chicken/turkey barbecue contest.
- Have your 4-H council prepare the remainder of the meal. Invite representatives from the following organizations: school board, county and city governments, Extension district board, and school administrators and personnel.
- Conduct a county 4-H chicken/turkey barbecue contest at a local nursing home or senior citizens center. Invite the elderly to share your meal. See if the local grocery store will donate the poultry. Ask if the nursing home or senior citizens center will sponsor or prepare the remainder of the meal.
- Conduct your county 4-H chicken/turkey barbecue contest at the county fair, local mall, or local park and recreation department. Have brochures available on the local 4-H program to pass out to interested people. Develop a poster or sign advertising the county 4-H chicken/turkey barbecue contest and display in a prominent area. Plan a media campaign on the activity—radio, television, newspaper.
- Teen 4-Hers could serve as barbecue project leaders for 4-H youth ages 9-12. Use this project book and follow up to practice your barbecue skills and organize and sponsor a county contest for junior 4-Hers.

Project Records

You should include the following record sheets with any of your foods and nutrition record books.

Kentucky 4-H Poultry Barbecue Project Record



Name _____ Birth date _____

Address _____
Street & Number / Rural Route *Town* *Zip*

School _____ Grade _____ County _____

Fill in the following chart telling about your experience barbecuing poultry.

	Date:	Date:	Date:
Location or event			
Amount of poultry barbecued			
Type of grill used			
Inches from coals to grill			
Type of starter fuel used			
Minutes required before fire was ready			
Number of times you turned poultry			
Minutes required to cook poultry			
Number of people fed			
Sauce (homemade, purchased, or none)			

Do you think this poultry barbecue was excellent, good, fair? _____

What could you have done to make this a better product? _____

List other foods served with the barbecued poultry (circle those you prepared) _____

List all 4-H Chicken/Turkey Barbecue activities you completed (demonstrations, speeches, field trips, posters, etc.)

Type of Activity	Where	Date	Award or Recognition

List related leadership/citizenship activities you completed for this project.

Type of Activity	Where	Date	Award or Recognition

Attach a project story telling about the new skills and knowledge the 4-H Poultry Barbecue project has helped you develop.

Member *Date* *Leader* *Date*

You should include this record sheet with any of your foods and nutrition record books.