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Turkey Fryers

[Underwriters Laboratories Inc.](#) (UL) considers turkey fryers to be dangerous to use presenting numerous safety hazards to consumers. "We're worried by the increasing reports of fires related with turkey fryer use," says John Drengenberg, consumer affairs manager of UL. "Based on our test findings, the fryers used to produce those great-tasting birds are not worth the risks. And, as a result of these tests, UL has decided not to certify any turkey fryers with our trusted UL Mark."

Product Safety Tip: Turkey Fryers



The delicious deep-fried turkey has quickly grown in popularity but safety experts are concerned that backyard chefs may be sacrificing fire safety for good taste.

Turkey fryer hazards

- Many units easily tip over, spilling the hot oil from the cooking pot.
- If the cooking pot is overfilled with oil, the oil may spill out of the unit when the turkey is placed into the cooking pot. Oil may hit the burner or flames, causing a fire to engulf the entire unit.
- Partially frozen turkeys placed into the fryer can cause a spillover effect. This too may result in an extensive fire.
- With no thermostat controls, the units also have the potential to overheat the oil to the point of combustion.
- The lid and handles on the sides of the cooking pot get dangerously hot, posing severe burn hazards.

Important safety information

Don't fill the fryer to the top with oil!

Many turkey fryers feature a “fill line” indicating the suitable level of oil to add to the pot, but if that feature is absent from your fryer, follow these guidelines before unwrapping or seasoning the turkey to account for the displacement of the turkey:

- Place the thawed turkey in the fryer still wrapped, and place in the empty pot (you want the minimum oil level to be 3 inches to 5 inches from the top of the fryer). Add water until the top of the turkey is covered. Remove the turkey. Note the water level, using a ruler to measure the distance from the top of the pot to the surface of the water.
- Drain or pour out the water and dry the pot thoroughly. If the fryer has a drain valve, be sure there isn't any excess water in the spigot. Open the valve to drain the water and remember to close the valve before adding oil.

If you absolutely must use a turkey fryer, please use the following tips.

- Turkey fryers should always be used outdoors a safe distance from buildings and any other flammable materials.
- Never use turkey fryers in a garage or on a wooden deck.
- Make sure the fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping.
- Never leave the fryer unattended. Most units do not have thermostat controls. If you do not watch the fryer carefully, the oil will continue to heat until it catches fire.
- Never let children or pets near the fryer even if it is not in use. The oil inside the cooking pot can remain dangerously hot hours after use.
- To avoid oil spillover, do not overfill the fryer. Always check the displacement for the needed amount of oil.
- Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts when touching pot or lid handles. If possible, wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from oil splatter.
- Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and be careful with marinades. Oil and water do not mix, and water causes oil to spill over causing a fire or even an explosion hazard.
- The [National Turkey Federation](#) (NTF) recommends thawing the turkey in the refrigerator approximately 24 hours for every five pounds in weight.
- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby. Never use water to extinguish a grease fire. If the fire is manageable, use your all-purpose fire extinguisher. Immediately call the Hayward Fire department for help.

A safe alternative is a turkey fryer that doesn't require oil. New outdoor, oil-less turkey fryers use infrared heat - a technology popular in gas grills - to cook and the result is a juicy, tender bird with crispy skin.

For more information on Disaster Preparedness and safety related materials, please see our website at: www.hayward-ca.gov click on the red “Disaster Preparedness” button or contact the Hayward Fire Department Emergency Services Office for additional information at (510) 583-4948.