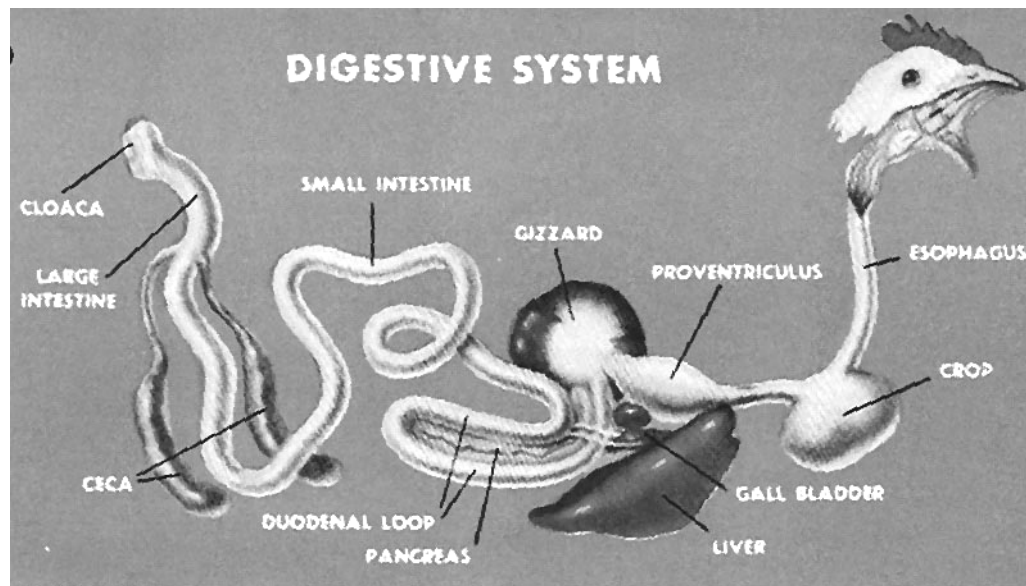


## CHICKEN & TURKEY DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

The digestive system is a tube, which extends from the bird's beak to the vent. Its work is to break down and absorb food for the body's use.



The digestive system includes the organs below, listed in the order by which food is passed through the body:

**BEAK** – the organ used to pick up feed and water.

**MOUTH** (including tongue) – Digestive processes are begun here by secretions from the salivary glands.

**PHARYNX** – A common passageway for food, water, and air.

**ESOPHAGUS** (gullet) – Carries food from the throat to the crop. Secretions from the mucous glands in the esophagus soften the food.

**CROP** – An out-pouched portion of the esophagus, located near its lower end. It is a storage place for food. From here food passes through the lower esophagus into the proventriculus.

**PROVENTRICULUS** – In this organ, also known as the glandular stomach, a sticky acid secretion causes coagulation of milk and starts digestion of protein. The proventriculus is a small spindle-shaped organ.

**GIZZARD** – Thick and tough, the gizzard is a muscular stomach, which serves as the chicken's "teeth." It crushes or grinds food, changing coarse substances into a near fluid mass.

**SMALL INTESTINE** – This organ consists of the duodenum, a U-shaped loop extending backward five or six inches, and the free portion (ileum), which is the largest part of the small intestine. Most of the digestive changes in food occur in the small intestine, mainly in the upper portion. It is from the lower part of the intestine that the body absorbs most food. The mesentery, a double membrane, covers the outer surface of the small intestine and connects it to the small region of the back. It contains blood and lymph vessels and nerves leading to the intestines.

**CECA** – Two ceca lie along the sides of the small intestine at its lower extremity. Droppings from the ceca are light brown, smooth and soft.

**RECTUM** – The rectum or large intestine receives digested material from the small intestine and ceca, and carries it into the cloaca.

**CLOACA** – This is a common passageway to the vent for digestive material, kidney excretions, and eggs or sperm cells.

**VENT** – The outer opening through which the bird expels droppings, urates, and eggs or sperm cells.

**LIVER** – The liver is an accessory digestive organ and is the body's largest organ. It aids digestion by secreting bile into the small intestine, acts as a storage place for digested starches and sugar, forms immunizing substances, filters impurities from blood returning from the intestine.

**PANCREAS** – The pancreas is also an accessory digestive organ. The pancreas is pinkish cream in color and located within the loop of the duodenum, the pancreas secretes digestive juice into the intestine. It also regulates the rate at which the body uses sugar by secreting insulin into the blood.