
Thanksgiving Checklist

2012

4 Weeks

- Email family to get head count

3 Weeks

- Create menu
- Send email with food assignments (include menu if there are newbies)
- Confirm oven space/time if needed
- Order turkey (if ordering fresh; if buying frozen budget 4-5 days to thaw)

2 Weeks

- Make cooking game plan
- Review recipes and make shopping list; plan for two trips – one for advance purchases and non-perishables, one for last minute supplies and perishables

Sunday

- Bake cornbread for stuffing
- Make pie dough and refrigerate [if making crust at same location pies will be baked, roll out pie dough into pie plates and freeze].

Monday

- Start defrosting turkey (full day per 4-5 pounds of fowl)
- Shopping trip #1; buy food storage containers for people to take home leftovers
- Buy cheese for cheese plate

Tuesday

- Make cranberry sauce
- Make mushroom gravy
- Make squash stuffing
- Assemble dishes to be baked (e.g. sweet potato casserole, stuffed squash)
- Peel and cut up vegetables for roasting and side dishes
- Make all chilled dishes; salad prep (make vinaigrette; wash and dry greens, wrap loosely in paper towels, place in plastic bag, and put in crisper)

Wednesday (Thanksgiving Eve)

- Iron cloth napkins and tablecloths
- Bake side dishes (e.g. Strata, sweet potato casserole, brussel sprouts, stuffed squash/Portobello mushrooms)
- Pick up fresh turkey from market, if buying fresh
- Prepare the stuffing, but leave out any raw eggs until you stuff the bird
- Second shopping trip; buy flowers
- Make centerpieces
- Make appetizer (pumpkin-cauliflower dip)
- Prepare serving dishes
- Bake pies as late in the day as possible
- Set table; set aside dessert plates, silverware, and serve ware

Menu

Appetizers:

Sides:

[Salad]/Cheese

Dessert:

Prep Order on Tuesday

Prep Order on Wednesday

T-day morning

8:30am

- Bring the stuffing and potatoes to room temperature
- Chill wine, beer, and other beverages
- Remove the turkey from the refrigerator, and allow it to sit for 1 hour at room temperature
- Bake sweet potatoes

10:15 am

- Preheat the oven, and stuff the turkey
- Put the turkey in the oven, basting it every hour
- Bring sauces and sides to room temperature
- Finishing touches on table

1pm

- Set up bar and beverage area
- Milk for coffee in fridge
- Grind coffee beans
- Set up cheese plate
- Prep baskets for bread
- Grind coffee; enough for two batches – brew one batch and put in pot; set up second batch to brew for dessert and refill kettle
- Set up appetizer area

2 pm Guests arrive

3 pm

- Check the temperature of the turkey at the thigh, which is the thickest part. If the thermometer reads 165 degrees, remove the turkey from the oven. If not, check the temperature every 15 minutes until the bird is done. The bird will need to rest for 30 minutes prior to carving.

While the turkey rests

- Remove stuffing from bird; transfer to a baking pan and bake until the stuffing reaches 165 degrees.
- Reheat casseroles (e.g. mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole)
- Heat rolls
- Finish the gravy
- Bring pies to room temperature

Just before the meal

- Carve turkey
- Set out food-storage containers and re-sealable plastic bags for leftovers
- Take out the trash and replace the bags for fast cleanup after dinner

After dinner

- Make coffee
- Make whipped cream
- Set up dessert station

Beverage Bar

Wine

Water

Non-alcoholic beverages

Glasses

Dessert Area

Plates

Forks

Spoons

Pie servers

Coffee cups and saucers

Sugar

Milk

Table

Salt and pepper

Cranberry sauce

Butter

Water

Wine

Bread