



1 Week THANKSGIVING Meal Planner

Use this Thanksgiving feast prep/ countdown checklist so you know what to do and when so your dinner turns out to be a fun, memorable event for everyone - including you!

ONE WEEK BEFORE

- Make a shopping list.** Go over your entire menu and each recipe, nothing that you'll need for the feast. Look over your spicy rack: Do you have enough of everything to properly cook your meal?
- Buy non-perishables.** Some ingredients you'll need are shelf stable, such as flour, seasonings, and canned goods, so pick them up now. Don't forget extra paper towels, cleaning supplies, and any special holiday decor.
- Do a deep clean.** While you'll still need to clean your house the day before, now's the time to get deep. While you're at it, make sure the fridge is clean and that you have plenty of room to store the food.
- Pick your turkey.** This will give you time to defrost it, which can take several days.
- Prepare a cooking plan.** You might be tempted to just wing it on the holiday, but it's best to decide ahead of time exactly when you'll do what.

THREE DAYS BEFORE

- Buy your perishables.** You might have to fight the crowds a bit, but the stores won't be as busy today as they will be the day before the holiday.
- Defrost your turkey.** The safest way to defrost a turkey is in the refrigerator, so you'll need at least three days of defrost time. Place it in a pan to catch the juice.

TWO DAYS BEFORE

- Start peeling and dicing.** Some recipes call for chopped onions, for example. Do that in advance. You'll thank yourself when you're elbows deep in big meal prep the day of.

ONE WEEK BEFORE

- Bake your pies.** You can store many pies at room temperature, but refrigerated is best for custard-based pies (including pumpkin).
- Make reheatable side dishes.** You can make mashed potatoes and casseroles the day before and store them in the fridge, for example, which can save you a ton of time.
- Set your table(s) up.** Put out place settings, arrange chairs and decorate.
- Clean your house.** Tidy up the main dining area, of course, but make sure your bathrooms and living areas sparkle, too.

THE BIG DAY

- Wake up and bake that turkey.** If you're roasting a turkey in the oven, set your alarm and get that going as soon as you can.
- Stick to your plan.** That cooking schedule we mentioned a little earlier? Stick to it.
- Prepare the rest of your side dishes.** While the turkey is cooking, cook the rest of your side dishes. Defrost items that you froze a couple of weeks ago, and put drinks in the cooler or fridge.
- Reheat.** Now's the time to reheat the dishes you made yesterday.
- Prep the meat.** When the turkey (or whatever meat you're serving) is fully cooked, let it rest for 20 to 30 minutes before carving. While it rests (and redistributes juices), set all of the side dishes out on the table or buffet, and tell everyone who's not on the kitchen crew to get ready and to sit down at the table - there's an incredible feast on the way.