

THANKSGIVING MEAL PLANNING

C O U N T D O W N



Thanksgiving
is always on the
last Thursday
of November

1
ST
WEEK OF
NOV

Basics

Plan for number of

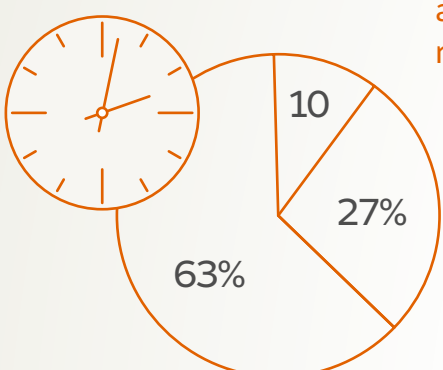
- Tables
- Chairs
- Tablecloths
- Napkins
- Plates
- Glasses
- Silverware
- Decor



Choose time of day

Brunch, Lunch
or Dinner?

63% prefer
early afternoon,
27% say dinner,
and 10% have
no preference



2
ND
WEEK OF
NOV

Menu & Shopping List

Write it down!

- Decide on menu - appetizers, cocktails, main dishes, desserts
- Choose [recipes](#) and create a shopping list

Side dishes



Cold dishes, like this [Homemade Cranberry Sauce](#) » can be prepared ahead and kept in fridge until ready to serve.



Got a cast iron pan? Roast veggies in the oven in the pan when the turkey comes out and is resting.



[Green beans](#) » are an elegant and easy side dish. Serve caramelized cranberries with bacon, topped with toasted nuts.



You can prepare all of these ahead of time.

Menu & Shopping List, continued

Appetizers

Fall soups served in small cups are the perfect make-ahead dish.



Rolls & breads

Homemade rolls like these [Copycat Hawaiian Sweet Rolls](#) » are best baked on the day the dough is made.

Frozen breads can be defrosted and baked on Thanksgiving Day.



Turkey tips

Fresh: Place order 2 weeks before Thanksgiving

Frozen: Buy, bring home & store in freezer

Desserts

Quantity: Allow 2 desserts per 5 people

Style: Serve something show stopping, something simple...or both!

Drinks

Wine: 4 glasses to a bottle

Champagne: 6 glasses to a bottle

Signature drink: make a big batch

2
WEEKS
BEFORE



**PRO
TIP** »

Why and When to Pre-Bake Your Pie Crust

Make Pie Dough, Stock & Soup

Make and freeze pie dough: Wrap disks tightly in plastic wrap and thaw in the refrigerator overnight before you're ready to use them — most pies can be made the day before Thanksgiving.

Homemade gravy: Make stock for gravy and freeze.

Soup: Make ahead. Stir in all ingredients except for cream, which can be added at the last minute when you reheat.

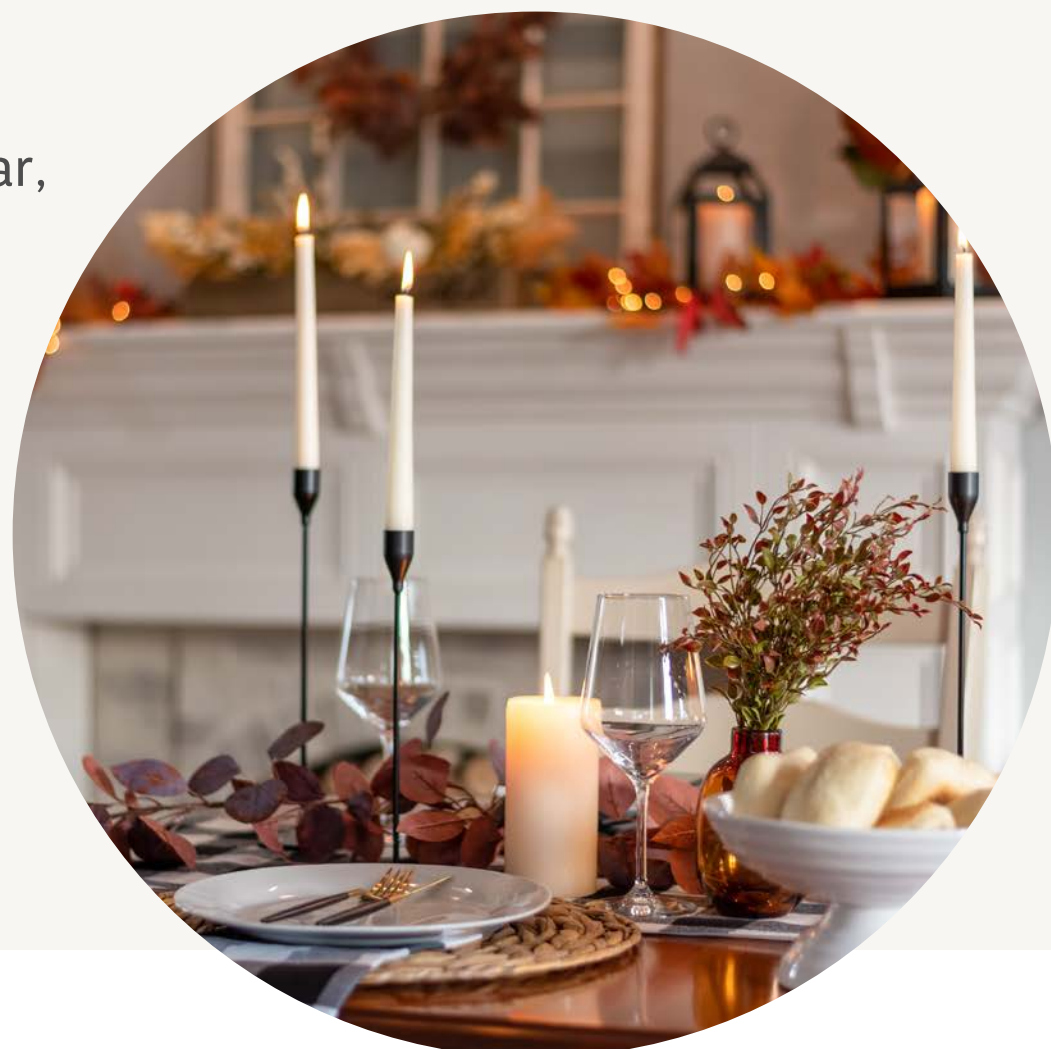
1
WEEK
BEFORE

Shop for Non-Perishables & Table Prep

Shop: Pantry and frozen items like flour, sugar, spices, nuts, dried fruits, store-bought stocks, canned pumpkin, frozen breads

Table: Set table with plates, napkins, and glassware

Serving dishes: Set out serving dishes and place on table



Defrost Turkey & Buy Perishable Ingredients

3
DAYS
BEFORE

Shop: Buy perishables like vegetables, dairy, fresh fruits, and additional meats.

Turkey: Allow at least one day of thawing for every 4 lbs of turkey. Thaw in coldest part of the fridge and set pan underneath turkey to catch any drips.

Brine: Thaw turkey before brining. Brine 12-24 hours before cooking.



[Turkey Brine Tips and Recipes For The Holidays](#) »



» [Baked Turkey with Tarragon Orange Sauce](#)



2
DAYS
BEFORE

Assemble/Prep Veggies & Make Sides Ahead

Cold sides: Make fresh cranberry sauce, or savory green or pasta salad (no dressing), cover and refrigerate

Hot sides: Cut up fresh veggies for side dishes/casseroles, cover and refrigerate

Set-up: Take out all prepared frozen items including stock, rolls, and pie crusts



Make Desserts & More Side Dish Prep

1
DAY
BEFORE

Pie: Make pies and desserts. Store covered in fridge.

Sides: (Cover all and refrigerate)

- Sauté onions, shallots or garlic
- Put sliced butter, jam, toppings and garnishes (chopped herbs or chives for soup) in small serving bowls, cover and refrigerate
- Make salad dressing, cover and refrigerate
- Make gravy with homemade stock, cover and refrigerate
- Make bread pudding/stuffing/casseroles, cover and refrigerate
- Toast nuts if any dishes contain them (no refrigeration needed)

Breads:

- Make dough and cover with plastic
- Store unbaked in fridge



GO
TIME!

THANKSGIVING DAY

165°F

Turkey: Allow 4 hours for this process

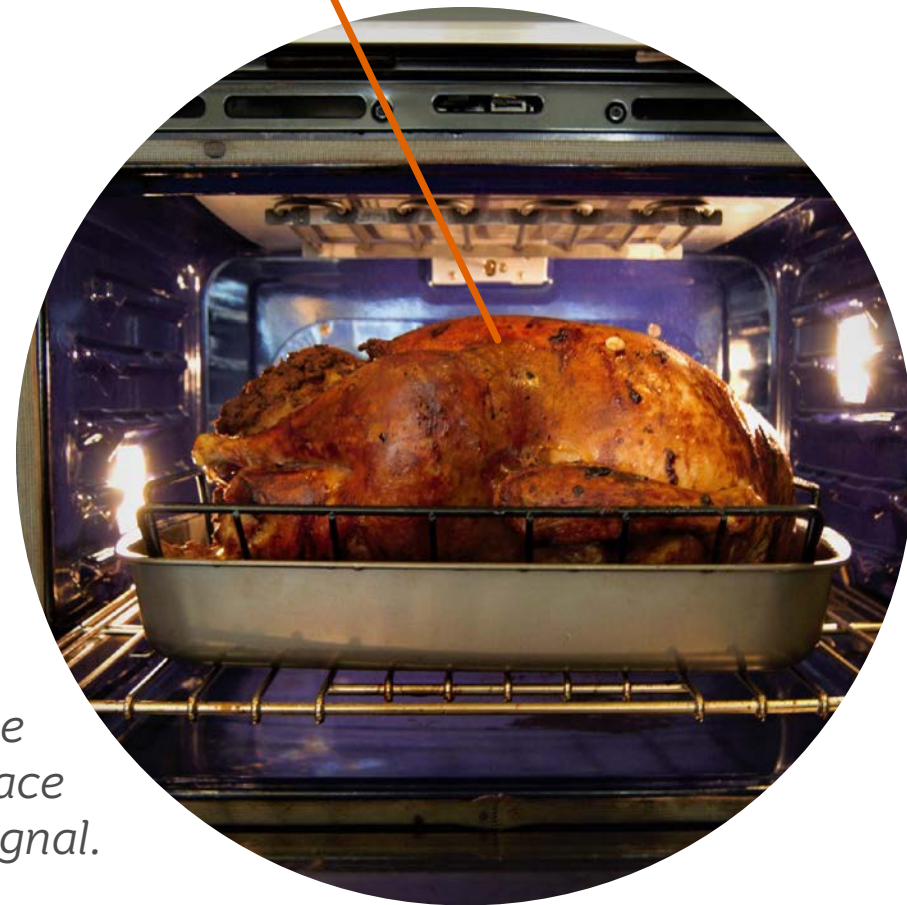
For a 13-15 lb turkey, preheat oven in the morning to 450°F and cook turkey for 30 minutes, then...

Reduce temperature to 350°F

Bake until the thickest part of bird has reached 165°F, about 2½ to 3 hours

Turkey tip

Many digital probe thermometers (with long metal wires) have temperature alarm settings. If using these, stick probe in thickest part of bird at beginning of roasting and place thermometer outside oven. Set alarm and wait for signal.



While the Turkey is Cooking...

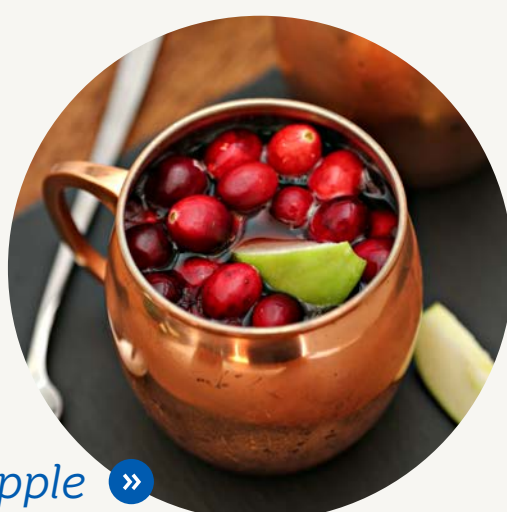
Bread: Set rolls out on counter to get to room temperature before baking unless otherwise specified. Bake when temperature is turned down for turkey. Reheat in oven right before serving.

Soup: Put soup in dutch oven on low and let cook/warm an hour before serving – if frozen, make sure you allow enough time to defrost and warm. Stir in creams at the last minute.

Extras: Set out prepared toppings and garnishes.

Gravy: Add cream to prepared stock and season. Keep on low or warm in microwave right before serving.

Cocktail: If making fizzy cocktail, assemble all liquid ingredients and pour in fizzy liquid right before serving.



Cranberry Apple
Moscow Mule »

» [Thanksgiving Recipes](#)



Don't skip this step!

When turkey is done, let it rest out of the oven for 20-25 minutes. Make a tent over the bird by taking a large piece of foil, folding it in half long ways and putting it over the turkey as a “hat” – this lets the bird rest so its juices can redistribute.

Serving time tip: While turkey is resting, it's a great time to re-heat your casserole in the microwave or on the stove top. Roast veggies in the oven. Use your crock pot to keep side dishes like mashed potatoes or green beans warm. Once sides are hot and ready, you can put them in a pan on the stove and cover to keep warm. Cold salads can be taken right from the fridge to the plate.

After the meal

Brew coffee to serve with dessert, offer cream and sugar.

Set out desserts and serve!

SINCE 1843
**Imperial
Sugar**



» [Chocolate Swirl Pumpkin Pie](#)