

Thanksgiving

PREP GUIDE

ONE WEEK BEFORE

- Make a Shopping List:** If you haven't planned your menu yet - it's time! Go over your recipes, take inventory of what you have at home and supplement with ingredients you still need. Remember spices, herbs and any other main ingredients.
- Clean:** No one wants to be cleaning the day before a holiday. This is a great time to get all your house cleaning done. It's also a time to clear out your fridge and freezer. Use up any perishables, leftovers and perhaps cook with whatever you have on hand or stored in the freezer. Do this before you go shopping!
- Grocery Trip #1:** I like to break up my grocery shopping into 2 trips so I don't buy fresh herbs and perishables too far in advance. 1-2 weeks ahead is a great time to stock up on pantry staples: butter, flour, sugar, canned pumpkin, other specialty baking items including pie pans. Don't forget the wine and liquor!
- Plan for Turkey:** If you purchased a frozen turkey, allow ample time for it to thaw. Rule of thumb is: 1 day per 4-5 pounds of turkey. A 10 pound bird will take 2 days to defrost. Just be aware of timing and space in fridge and freezer.
- Delegate:** If you have anyone joining you for the holiday, delegate their responsibility so they have time to plan and gather ingredients. That will leave you with a clear picture of what you have left to do.

THE WEEKEND BEFORE

- Serving Dishes:** The weekend is a perfect time to finish cleaning and also begin matching your dishes with serving ware you have. If you can utilize your dining room or service buffet to lay everything out, even better. Pro tip: place a sticky note on each platter with the name of the dish that will fill it.
- Pie Dough:** If you are making pies from scratch, it's a LIFESAVER to make your dough ahead of time. Make your dough and even shape and form into pie plates if you have freezer room.
- Bread products:** If you plan to make any rolls or scones, you can also prepare them over the weekend and pop into your freezer.

MONDAY

- Grocery Trip #2:** Time to buy the rest of your ingredients. If you can, make use of online grocery shopping and save time. Make final inventory and grab all you need to cook.
- Defrost Turkey:** If you haven't started, check on your turkey defrosting time.
- Cranberry Sauce:** You can make your cranberry sauce today and pop into fridge.
- Turkey Stock:** Pull out the neck and other parts of the turkey that you can use for stock, or as your butcher for turkey bones. Make your stock today and store in fridge. Use the rest of the week.

TUESDAY

- Dry Brine:** If you are dry brining your turkey, today is the day to begin that process. It takes longer than a wet brine but takes less space.
- Chopping Veggies:** If any of your recipes require dicing vegetables: onions, celery, carrots, you can do that today and store in container in the fridge.
- Prepare Stuffing:** Making stuffing? You can prepare the entire stuffing casserole and store in fridge until ready to bake on Thursday. The extra time in the fridge allows flavors to meld together quite well.
- Meats & Fillings:** Prepare any fillings for savory dishes - savory pies, sausage for stuffing, etc.

WEDNESDAY

- Pies:** Prepare pie fillings and completely bake. Pies need time for the fillings to set. And hopefully you've already made your pie dough!
- Potatoes:** You can absolutely prepare some potatoes dishes ahead of time. Sweet potatoes casserole, make today and bake tomorrow. Potatoes au gratin can be prepared ahead and baked the day of. If making mashed potatoes or something with sliced potatoes, prepare potatoes and allow to soak in cold water with a splash of vinegar in the fridge overnight. This will ensure they don't turn brown/black. On Thanksgiving Day, drain and cook as intended.
- Wet Brine:** Prepare your wet brine for your turkey if you are going that route. It needs 12-24 hours.
- Set Table:** Set the table.
- Bar:** Prepare the bar, chill drinks a cooler is great for this to save fridge space. Or if you live in a cold area, just pop outside!

THANKSGIVING DAY

- Read your plan:** Take time to read over your menu and timing for cooking whatever is left or when you will heat prepared foods.
- Turkey:** Cook your turkey according to weight and account for 20-30 minutes for it to rest once done. This will give you time to finish baking any items or heat up anything.
- Finish Side Dishes:** Finish final prep of side dishes while/before your turkey is cooking.
- Clean as you go:** Start the day with an empty dishwasher, load as you go and run when you need. Keep dishes washed and put away to help keep clutter down.
- Cocktail:** Grab a cocktail, pat yourself on the back and enjoy the day!!!!