

Ultimate Thanksgiving Prep Ahead Checklist

Stay sane and serve a delicious from-scratch meal like a boss!

www.SimplifyLiveLove.com

_____ **Make ahead dishes that freeze well (As early as you can)**

- breads
- mashed potatoes
- desserts

_____ Plan food and drink menu (**Consider how you will use your oven space when making the menu**)

_____ Make lists & shop for ingredients (**You'll need to shop twice. Wait to buy fresh produce items until Monday or Tuesday. Buy everything else as early as possible.**)

_____ Wash all dishes (**servicing dishes, fancy dishes, wine glasses etc**)

_____ Polish silver (if necessary)

_____ Wash & iron linens if needed

_____ Finalize table décor, place setting ideas

_____ Clean your house and refrigerator

_____ **Make sure frozen turkeys have enough time to thaw:**

- 12-16 pounds = 3-4 days (Put in fridge on Sunday or Monday)
- 16-20 pounds = 4-5 days (Put in fridge on Saturday or Sunday)
- 20-24 pounds = 5-6 days (Put in fridge on Friday or Saturday)

_____ Set out fresh artisan bread to dry for stuffing (so much better than store bought!)

_____ **Make ahead dishes that reheat well or keep well in the fridge** (Tuesday or Wednesday of Thanksgiving Week)

- Stuffing
- Sweet potato casserole
- Cranberry sauce
- Appetizer dips
- Prep veggies and fruit for appetizer trays and store in air tight containers in the fridge
- Salads and salad dressing (**Wait to add some ingredients on serving day: avocados, eggs, tomatoes, salad dressing**)
- Homemade whipped cream

_____ Put any frozen dishes in the fridge to thaw (**Wednesday morning**)

_____ Set the table ahead of time

[SimplifyLiveLove.com](http://www.SimplifyLiveLove.com)

Sample Thanksgiving Day Menu

Appetizers:

- Baked Camembert with Pomegranates & Hazelnuts (<https://simplifylivelove.com/easy-baked-camembert-with-pomegranates-and-hazelnuts/>)
- Fruit tray (<https://simplifylivelove.com/healthy-fruit-dip-recipe-tray/>)
- Veggie tray (<https://simplifylivelove.com/healthy-veggie-dip-made-with-fresh-dill-sour-cream/>)
- Cheese & crackers

Main Course:

- Turkey (<https://simplifylivelove.com/best-way-to-cook-a-turkey/>)
- Ham (can't go wrong with a spiral ham cooked in the crock pot!)

Side Dishes:

- Mashed potatoes (make ahead and freezer recipe - <https://lifeasmom.com/mashed-potatoes-freezer/>)
- Sautéed green beans with garlic & almonds (<https://simplifylivelove.com/haricot-vert-green-beans-with-garlic-toasted-almonds/>)
- Pear & Pecan Salad w/ Parmesan Crisps (<https://simplifylivelove.com/pear-pecan-salad-with-parmesan-crisps/>)
- Corn Bread Stuffing
- Sweet potato casserole
- Homemade rolls (make ahead and freeze recipe from - <https://anoregoncottage.com/soft-100-whole-wheat-dinner-rolls/>)
- Butter

Desserts:

- Pumpkin cheesecake (make ahead and freezer - <https://simplifylivelove.com/easy-pumpkin-cheesecake-cartonsmart-organic-pumpkin-puree-2/>)
- Apple and/or cherry pie
- Pumpkin pie
- Homemade whipped cream

Drinks:

- Wine
- Sparkling cider
- Coffee
- Tea

Thanksgiving Day Timeline for a 2 pm Meal

(Based on a 12-16 pound turkey)

- 9:30 am** Preheat oven and prep turkey
- 10:00 am** Place turkey in oven
- Clean kitchen
 - Empty Dishwasher
 - Prep coffee pot
 - Finish prepping anything that was not finished ahead of time
 - Remove butter from fridge to soften for bread
- 1:00 pm – 1:15 pm** Remove turkey from oven when the thigh meat has reached 165 degrees. Tent with foil and rest for 30 minutes. While turkey is resting, reheat anything that needs to be reheated. Make gravy.
- 1:30 pm – 1:45 pm** Carve turkey
- 2:00 pm** Serve food and enjoy your hard work!

