

Thanksgiving preparation checklist for a stress-free day!

2 Weeks Before Thanksgiving

- Create your guest list.
- Deep clean your kitchen, especially the oven, fridge and freezer.
- Plan your Thanksgiving menu. (If you want to use a new recipe, test it ahead of time.) And, if your guests plan on bringing a dish, keep a list of what each person will bring.
- Create a grocery shopping list. Start checking store circulars for sales on items you will need. Shop for the non-perishable items on your grocery list, such as canned and boxed goods, sticks of butter, and items that can be stored in the freezer.
- If you plan on ordering a turkey or ham, call ahead and schedule your order now.
- Plan your Thanksgiving décor. Check Pinterest for creative ideas. Schedule time to make decorations and find ideas for making your place cards. Check the dollar store for candles and other decorative items.
- If needed, schedule a carpet cleaning.
- If you have a fireplace or outdoor fire pit that you will be using, make sure you have enough firewood.
- Unpack the "special occasion" dishes. Get out Grandma's old silver and plates. Thanksgiving is a great time to use family heirlooms.
- If you need to buy or rent chairs, folding tables, serving dishes, warmers, extra plates, silverware or linens, start now.
- Check the dollar store for paper products and plastic ware, aluminum and plastic containers for guests to take home leftovers in, and aluminum foil and plastic wrap.
- Purchase several warming trays to keep dishes warm for serving on Turkey Day.
- Start saving empty plastic bread bags. These are great for storing extra ice.
- Clean and declutter the areas of your home where guests will be, like the porch, living room and dining room. Declutter and organize your entryway and coat closet.
- If you will have overnight guests, clean and declutter guest rooms and wash bed linens and towels. If an overnight guest is bringing a baby or small child, ask a friend or neighbor to borrow a high chair, pack-and-play and other helpful items if you don't have them.
- Create a stack of paper leaves so guests can write down what they are thankful for. On Turkey Day, display them on the inside of the front door as a wonderful remembrance of the day.
- Make a schedule for baking and food prep work in the week ahead. Review recipe ingredients and grocery lists to make sure you have everything you need.
- Buy or print out coloring pages and crayons, a few board games or other items to help keep kids occupied throughout Thanksgiving Day.

1 Week Before Thanksgiving

- Take inventory of your serving dishes according to your menu to make sure you have enough.
- Wash and iron your table linens and napkins if you are using cloth ones. You can always take them to your local drycleaner if you are short on time!
- You should have a good idea of the number of guests, so create those place setting name cards and plan out seating arrangements.
- Calculate when you need to start thawing the turkey.
- Confirm when guests plan to arrive. Double-check who needs refrigerator space, oven time or serving platters.
- Clear space in your refrigerator and freezer.
- Wash potholders and dish towels, clean trivets and glasses.
- Clean your coffee maker by running vinegar through it and then rinsing it twice with fresh water.
- Make extra ice and store it in the freezer in the clean bread bags.
- Order fresh flowers or gather seasonal greenery from your own garden.
- Schedule airport pick-ups.
- Make final preparations for all the guest rooms. Make up guest beds with clean linens and stock guest linen closet with freshly laundered towels.
- Spruce up outside with the lawn mowed, leaves raked, and Fall décor on the exterior of your home.
- Write an hour-by-hour Thanksgiving day plan. Include when to put the turkey in the oven, heat the rolls and light the candles.

2 Days Before Thanksgiving

- Set the table or gather everything you'll need and place it near the table to make setting it the night before Thanksgiving as simple as possible.
- Chill beverages.
- Finish shopping for food and pick up all your orders from groceries, bakeries and other food shops.
- Fill up the salt and pepper shakers needed for each table.
- Prep ingredients for recipes.
- Prepare all the soups and desserts. Store in airtight containers.

One Day Before Thanksgiving

- Make all the side dishes and desserts that can be prepared ahead of time.
- Clear off your countertops so there is plenty of room. Run orange or lemon peels in the disposal to make it smell fresh and clean.
- Arrange flowers or leaves in vases. It's nice to include a small bouquet in the guest bathroom or a spicy scented candle.
- Hang fresh towels and put full rolls of toilet paper in the bathrooms. Make sure the liquid soap container is full.

- Spot clean the common areas of your home. Focus on the guest bathroom, kitchen, living room and dining room. Dust and vacuum.
- After all of the cooking prep and cleaning, empty the trash bins.
- Create a serving area for beverages, desserts and coffee. Include cut lemons and limes, an ice bucket, glasses, coffee cups, dessert plates, forks, sugar and creamer.
- Make sure your camera and cell phone are fully charged and ready for tomorrow.
- Go to bed early and get some rest!

Thanksgiving Day!

- Turn off your computer and unplug from email, texting and social media. But DO have the Macy's Thanksgiving parade on. ☺
- If guests offer to help, put them to work! They can help pour drinks, answer the door, hang up coats, refill ice, take photos or keep an eye on the kids.
- Have a designated space for toys and games for the kiddos.
- Prepare and cook the turkey.
- Heat the stuffing, casseroles, and rolls.
- Put condiments in dishes, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready.
- Prepare veggie platters and place on bowls of ice to keep them fresh.
- Prepare gravy and any other last minute items.
- Put ice and a pitcher of water on the table.
- Enjoy your delicious food and the company of family and friends!

Cleanup

- Let everyone who wants to pitch in to help with cleanup. After all, many hands make light work!
- Clear the table, wash platters and return dishes to guests.
- Pack leftovers and send them with guests or store in the refrigerator.
- Hand-wash silver, china, crystal, knives and oversized serving pieces.
- Soak pots, empty kitchen trash and recycling bin.

*And above all, enjoy time with your guests and be thankful
for a wonderful day!*