

# THANKSGIVING MEAL PLANNING

## C O U N T D O W N

Thanksgiving  
is always on the  
last Thursday  
of November



**1<sup>ST</sup>**  
WEEK OF  
NOV

## Basics

### Plan for number of

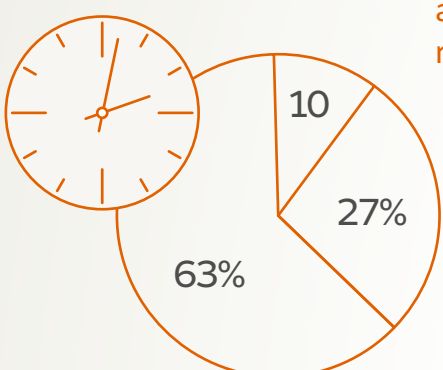
- Tables
- Chairs
- Tablecloths
- Napkins
- Plates
- Glasses
- Silverware
- Decor



### Choose time of day

Brunch, Lunch  
or Dinner?

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



**2<sup>ND</sup>**  
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



*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.

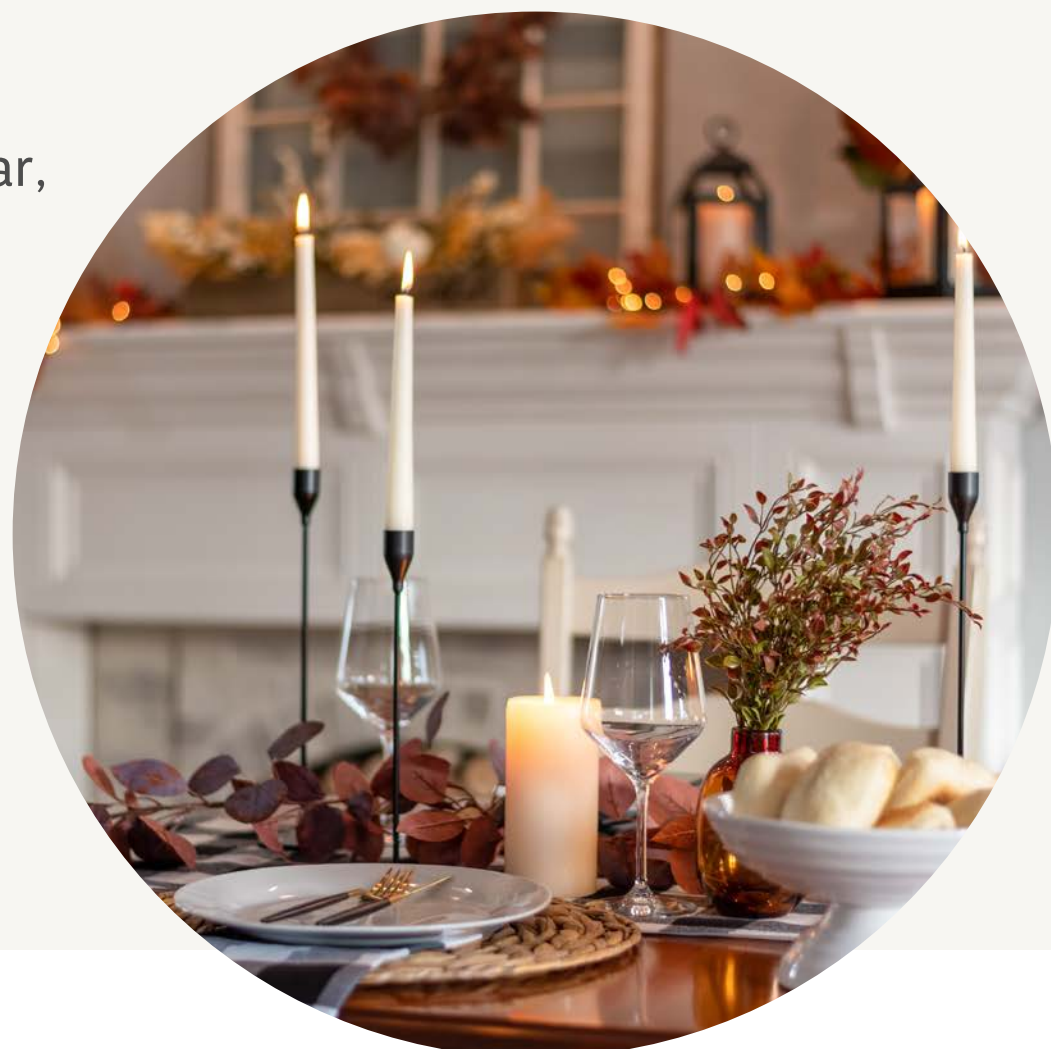


# Shop for Non-Perishables & Table Prep

**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

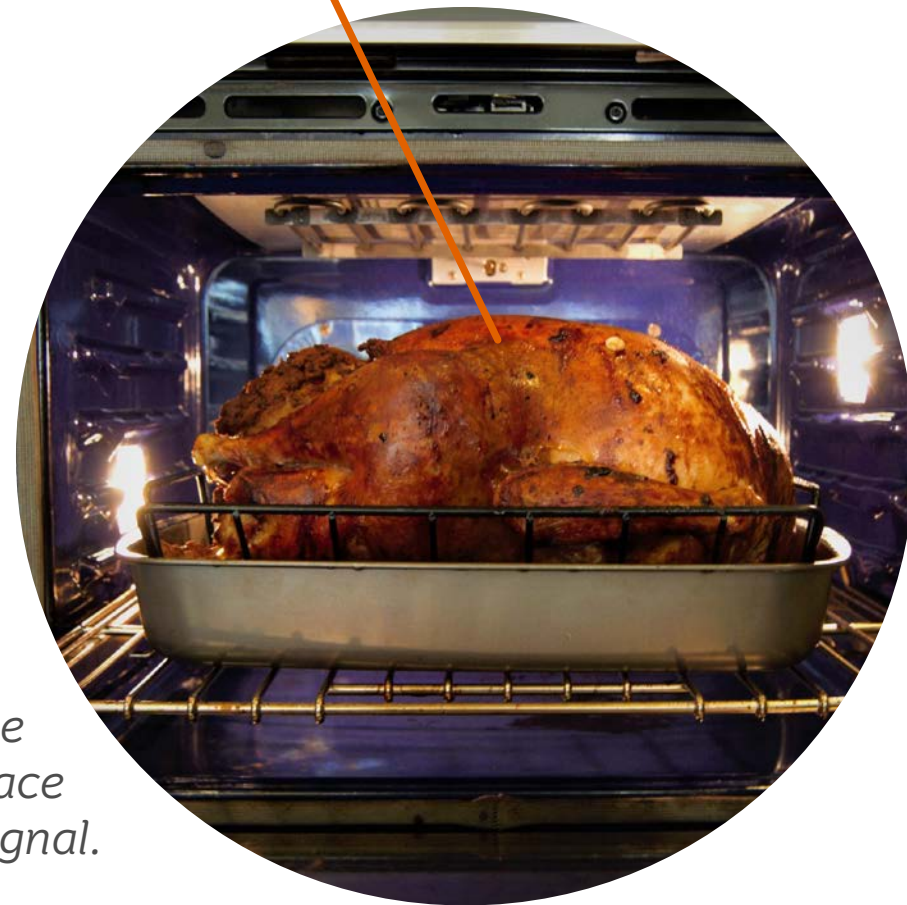
For a 13-15 lb turkey, preheat oven in the morning to 450°F and cook turkey for 30 minutes, then...

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...

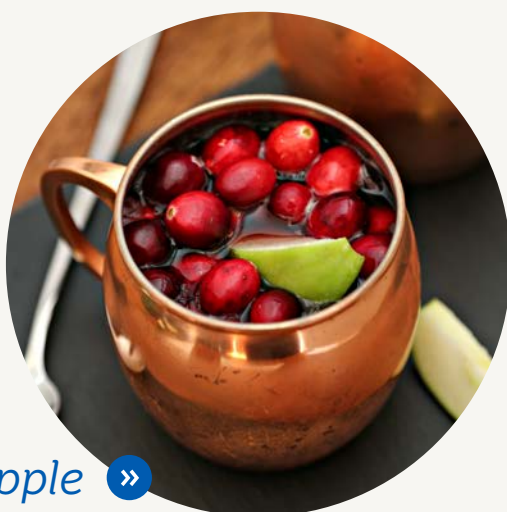
**Bread:** Set rolls out on counter to get to room temperature before baking unless otherwise specified. Bake when temperature is turned down for turkey. Reheat in oven right before serving.

**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!



» [Chocolate Swirl Pumpkin Pie](#)