



CountryDoor® Thanksgiving Dinner Countdown

checklist

There are a great many meals that can be thrown together on a dime, but Thanksgiving dinner is not one of them. Planning is the key to a successful meal, so we've pulled together a Thanksgiving Planner and timeline to help you stay on top of all the elements that will create your annual meal.

5 WEEKS AHEAD

- Nail down your theme. First start by closing your eyes and envisioning how the gathering looks. Will it be big, boisterous and casual? Or intimate, elegant and sophisticated? Will it be a potluck or a white tablecloth affair? Once you know the kind of ambiance and mood you want to set, then it's time to start making lists.
- Start with your invitation list. Keep in mind how many people you plan to seat at your tables. Get those invitations out quickly and early, and ask for responses to be prompt. Knowing how many people plan to attend and if they are bringing a dish will be key to your planning the weeks ahead.
- List out the logistics. It's easy to think mostly about the food, but don't forget about all those other elements of the day. Will you need to rent chairs? Do you have enough china or serving platters? Do you need to buy a gravy boat? How will you keep dishes warm?
- Draft your Thanksgiving menu. Start with those must-have items that everyone will expect for Thanksgiving dinner. Will it simply not be the same if Aunt Betty doesn't bring her homemade rolls? Or who will make the family's favorite pumpkin pie recipe? Run your list by a trusted cohort to make sure you haven't missed something. Then, hang that list on the refrigerator door or somewhere that you will see it often. It will help ensure you don't forget anything later on. Looking for a few new recipes to try out? Check out our Thanksgiving Recipes for some ideas and a few of our customer favorites!
- Get your Thanksgiving décor out. Take inventory of what you have and determine if you want to add or replace any of your décor. It's nice to refresh from year to year with a new door wreath, floral arrangement or a fresh set of seasonal table linens.

4 WEEKS AHEAD

- Order your turkey. If you have your heart set on a specific kind of turkey – fresh, organic, heritage, kosher, pre-brined or a specific size – then be sure to put your order in early. After all, your turkey is the star of the show. And word to the wise – be sure to check that your turkey can fit in your oven. You don't want that to be a surprise Thanksgiving morning!
- Make a cooking plan. Dissect that menu you made last week and come up with a plan for when you will cook what and when. This will save you from waiting until the last minute to make everything. Use this plan to make a list of perishables for that grocery store trip that you will make on Monday of Thanksgiving week.



3 WEEKS AHEAD

Clear out the clutter. Use this as an excuse to declutter cupboards and clear out your pantry of outdated items. All this cleaning makes room for the supplies you'll be buying at that first store trip, and it lets you see what you already have on hand.

Make the first store run. It may feel early, but it's absolutely the right time to buy nonperishable items and gear. Here are a few items to get you started: aluminum foil, plastic wrap, candles, cocktail napkins, guest towels and soap, paper towels, flour, sugar, spices. Have some exotic ingredients on your list? Take a special trip to a specialty store now, so you're not stressing out the week of Thanksgiving.

2 WEEKS AHEAD

Clean out your freezer. Toss anything in your freezer that has freezer burn or is suspect. You will be able to use the newly made room for anything you can make ahead of time.

Cook now. What can you cook now and pop in the freezer so that it will be already done Thanksgiving week? Good candidates include: bread dough, turkey stock and pie dough, just to name a few.

Get crafty. Will you be making your own centerpieces or napkin holders? How about writing out name place cards? Take care of any non-perishable Thanksgiving table decorations now, when you have the time rather than waiting until things get more hectic.

10 DAYS AHEAD

Do a deep clean. Now is the time to give the house a good cleaning. Get your guest rooms ready with fresh sheets, press table linens, polish the silverware, pull out serving pieces and decorate with your Thanksgiving décor.

5 DAYS AHEAD

Move a frozen turkey to the fridge. If you opted for a frozen turkey, now is the time to move it from the freezer to the fridge so that it can have plenty of time to defrost. It takes about five hours per pound to defrost, so an average size bird will take a few days. Going for an extra large turkey? Be sure to factor in a few extra days.

Clean out the fridge. Clear out anything you don't need out of the refrigerator to make room for all the dishes and ingredients you will need extra room for this week. Take time to clean shelves and drawers too – you'll score extra points with your mother in law.

Make the sauce. Cranberry sauce, that is. It's one of the easy dishes you can make several days in advance and it will keep beautifully in the fridge for days. Check that menu plan and see if there are any other recipes that offer that kind of advance notice as well.
Monday Before Thanksgiving

Make the big grocery store trip. This is the trip where you will buy all your perishable items. Be sure to double-check your list before you head out the door. Don't forget to pick up some disposable plastic containers to send home leftovers with your guests.



THURSDAY BEFORE THANSIVING



- Defrost. Remember all that advance cooking you did? Move all those items out of the freezer and into the fridge so they will defrost in time.
- Prep ice. Now that you have more room in the freezer, send someone to the store for several bags of ice. You will need them!

WEDNESDAY BEFORE THANSIVING

- Bake pies
- Prepare make-ahead sides that can be reheated tomorrow
- Set the table
- Do final prep on any Thanksgiving décor
- Brine the turkey overnight in the fridge
- Prepare a hearty breakfast casserole to pop in the oven tomorrow morning
- Chill beverages

Happy Thanksgiving

Wishing you a happy and bountiful holiday.