



Turkey Day Timeline: Preparing For Thanksgiving Checklist

As soon as you've finished the leftover Halloween candy, it's time to tackle the first Thanksgiving to-dos.

3 Weeks Until Thanksgiving

- Deep clean your kitchen, especially the oven, fridge and freezer.
- Clean the common areas of your home: the porch, living room and dining room.
- Tackle the guest areas next: guest rooms and guest bathrooms.
- Declutter and organize your entryway and coat closet.
- If needed, schedule a carpet cleaning and wash your home's windows.
- If you have a fireplace, ensure it's clean and order firewood.
- Polish silver and store it in a tarnish-resistant cloth or box.
- Create a guest list. When family and friends RSVP, ask about dietary restrictions and food allergies.
- Plan the big Turkey Day menu. If you want to use a new recipe, test it ahead of time.
- Create a grocery shopping list. For easy shopping, organize and order the list into the sections of your local grocery store: product, dairy, meat, bread, etc.
- If your guests plan on bringing items, make a list of what each person will contribute.
- Purchase extra containers for leftovers. Foil casserole dishes allow guests to take home leftovers without having to worry about returning your dishes.
- If you plan to order a turkey or ham, call ahead and schedule your order now.
- Make sure your shopping list includes SD cards for digital cameras and extra batteries.
- Plan your beverage menu. Inquire at local stores about bulk discounts for wine, beer and liquor. Provide soda, tea and water for guests who don't drink alcohol.
- Assign tasks to family members. Involve friends and family in planning and preparing for your Thanksgiving meal as much as possible to divide responsibility and reduce stress.

2 Weeks Until Turkey Day

- Shop for the non-perishable items on your grocery list.
- Gather serving dishes and assign each to a menu item with a Post-It note.
- Schedule an appointment with your hair stylist for a wash and blow-out the day before Thanksgiving.
- Create a music playlist to listen to during your Thanksgiving meal. Or create a station on Pandora.com or Spotify.com.
- Inventory your tableware and glassware to ensure you have enough for each of your guests. Mix and match styles to create a unique, charming tablescape or rent additional pieces from a party supply store.
- If you need to order or rent additional chairs, folding tables, serving dishes, warmers or linens, call the party supply store and reserve your rental now.
- Wash and press your table linens and napkins. If you're short on time, take them to your local drycleaner.



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- Plan your Thanksgiving décor. Check Pinterest for creative ideas. Schedule time to make decorations and place cards.
- Write a short toast or blessing to share with guests as you sit down to eat.

1 Week To Go Before Thanksgiving

- Decide on an outfit. Balance function with fashion. Select comfortable shoes and be sure you have an apron to wear in the kitchen!
- 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.
- Plan seating arrangements.
- Clear space in your refrigerator and freezer.
- Wipe down appliances, 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.
- 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.
- Prepare the brine for your turkey.
- Make or buy extra ice and store in the freezer.
- Order fresh flowers or gather seasonal greenery from your own garden.
- Schedule airport pick-ups and determine sleeping arrangements for overnight guests.
- Make final preparations for all the guest rooms. If an overnight guest is brining a baby or small child, ask a friend or neighbor to borrow a high chair, pack-and-play and other helpful items.
- Manage yard work and decorate the exterior of your home. Rake leaves, clear unnecessary clutter and hang a harvest wreath on your door.
- Make a schedule for baking and food prep work in the week ahead. Review recipe ingredients and grocery lists to ensure you'll have everything you need.
- 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

- Chill the wine and champagne.
- Finish shopping for food and pick up all your orders from butchers, bakeries and specialty food shops.
- Fill the table's salt and pepper shakers.
- If you're brining your turkey, put the bird in the brine and keep chilled in the refrigerator.



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- Prep ingredients for recipes.
- Prepare all the soups and desserts. Store in airtight containers.
- Tidy your home with some final light housekeeping. Focus on the guest bathroom, kitchen, living room and dining room. Dust and vacuum.



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1 More Day To Go

- Make all the side dishes, including the stuffing, that can be prepared ahead of time. For mashed potatoes, prep the potatoes and place in cold water in the fridge.
- Go to your hair appointment. You'll wake up the next morning with photo-ready hair.
- Disinfect the kitchen sink and countertops; run the disposal.
- Arrange flowers in vases. For an extra special touch, include a small bouquet in the guest bathroom.
- Hang fresh towels and put full rolls of toilet paper in the bathrooms.
- Spot clean the common areas of your home. Disinfect remote controls, phones, door handles and light switches. Empty trash bins.
- Charge your digital camera and assign one member of your family to be the photographer.
- Create a serving area for beer, wine, mixed drinks, desserts and coffee. Include corkscrews, cut lemons and limes, an ice bucket, glasses, coffee cups, dessert plates, forks, sugar and creamer.
- Go to bed early and get some rest.

Thanksgiving Day!

- Turn off your computer and unplug from email, texting and social media.
- If guests offer to help, put them to work! Guests can help pour drinks, answer the door, stow coats, refill ice, take photos or keep an eye on the kids.
- Prepare and roast the turkey — or fry, smoke or barbecue!
- Roast vegetables and heat the stuffing.
- Put condiments in dishes, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready.
- 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 help with cleanup.
- Clear the table, wash platters and return dishes to guests.
- Pack leftovers and store in the refrigerator.
- Hand-wash silver, china, crystal, knives and oversized serving pieces.
- Soak pots, empty kitchen trash and recycling bin.