YOUR GAME PLAN FOR A STRESS-FREE HOLIDAY

Thanksgiving Checklist

Start early, do a little at a time, and actually enjoy the day.

★ = time-sensitive. Running behind? Don't skip these.

Three Weeks Before

- ☐ **Finalize your guest list (and ask about food allergies)** ★
- ☐ **Plan your menu, and decide what guests can bring** ★
- ☐ **Buy or order your turkey: 1 lb per adult, ½ lb per child (1½ lb and 1 lb for leftovers)** ★
- ☐ Check your tools: roasting pan with rack, oven-safe thermometer, serving dishes
- ☐ Clean out the fridge and freezer to make room

Two Weeks Before

- ☐ Make and freeze make-ahead sides like applesauce and cranberry sauce
- ☐ Make sweet potato casserole filling and topping; freeze separately
- ☐ Bake and freeze pies, or make and freeze pie crusts
- ☐ Oven check: list everything that needs the oven on Thursday. Won't all fit? Make one ahead or move it to the slow cooker or Instant Pot
- ☐ Buy wine, cider, and other drinks

One Week Before

- ☐ **Fill in your Dinner Timeline (page 2)** ★
- ☐ **Buy all non-perishable ingredients** ★
- ☐ Confirm you have enough plates, glasses, silverware, and serving dishes
- ☐ Grab leftover containers and foil
- ☐ Tidy guest spaces, bathrooms first

The Weekend Before: Start Thawing

- ☐ **Move a frozen turkey to the fridge. Allow 24 hours for every 4–5 lb.** ★

Turkey size	Move to fridge by
10–12 lb	Sunday
13–16 lb	Saturday
17–20 lb	Friday
21–24 lb	Thursday *(1 week before)*

Not brining? You get one extra day of wiggle room.

2–3 Days Before

- ☐ **Buy perishables: produce, herbs, and dairy** ★
- ☐ Wash and chop vegetables
- ☐ Make the turkey brine, cool it, and refrigerate

One Day Before

- ☐ Set the table, including serving dishes and utensils
- ☐ Make pies and desserts if you haven't already
- ☐ Make side dishes that reheat easily
- ☐ Make roll dough to rise overnight, or thaw frozen rolls

Night Before

- ☐ **Put the turkey in the brine** ★
- ☐ Lay out bread to dry for stuffing
- ☐ Move frozen make-ahead dishes to the fridge to thaw

Thanksgiving Day

- ☐ **Remove turkey from the brine, pat dry, and roast** ★
- ☐ Make and bake the stuffing
- ☐ While the turkey rests: make gravy, bake rolls, and reheat sides
- ☐ Set out appetizers and drinks
- ☐ Sit down and enjoy. You did it!

Your Thanksgiving Day Timeline

Start with dinnertime and work backward. Fill this in one week before.

1. **Dinner is at:** _____

2. **Turkey comes out of the oven:** _____
   1 hour before dinner. It rests 30–60 minutes under foil, then you carve.

3. **Turkey goes into the oven:** _____
   Subtract your roasting time (chart below).

4. **Turkey out of the fridge + preheat oven to 500°F:** _____
   1 hour before it goes in.

Roasting Time

30 minutes at 500°F, then about 10–13 minutes per pound at 350°F.

Turkey size	Total roasting time
12 lb	2½–3 hours
16 lb	3¼–4 hours
20 lb	3¾–4¾ hours
24 lb	4½–5¾ hours

Plan with the longer time. Your thermometer decides when it's done: pull it when the breast hits 160–162°F. Finished early? No problem. It can rest up to an hour under foil.

What Else Needs the Oven?

List each dish and when it goes in.

_____ at _____

_____ at _____

_____ at _____

_____ at _____

_____ at _____

Use the resting hour for: gravy, rolls, and reheating sides.

Thanksgiving Menu

Write down your must-haves first, then fill in who's bringing what.

Appetizers

WHO'S BRINGING IT

Main Course

WHO'S BRINGING IT

Side Dishes

WHO'S BRINGING IT

Salads

WHO'S BRINGING IT

Desserts

WHO'S BRINGING IT

Beverages

WHO'S BRINGING IT

Need menu ideas?

Scan for every Thanksgiving recipe on A Mind Full Mom: turkey, sides, make-ahead dishes, and desserts.

amindfullmom.com/real-food-3/thanksgiving