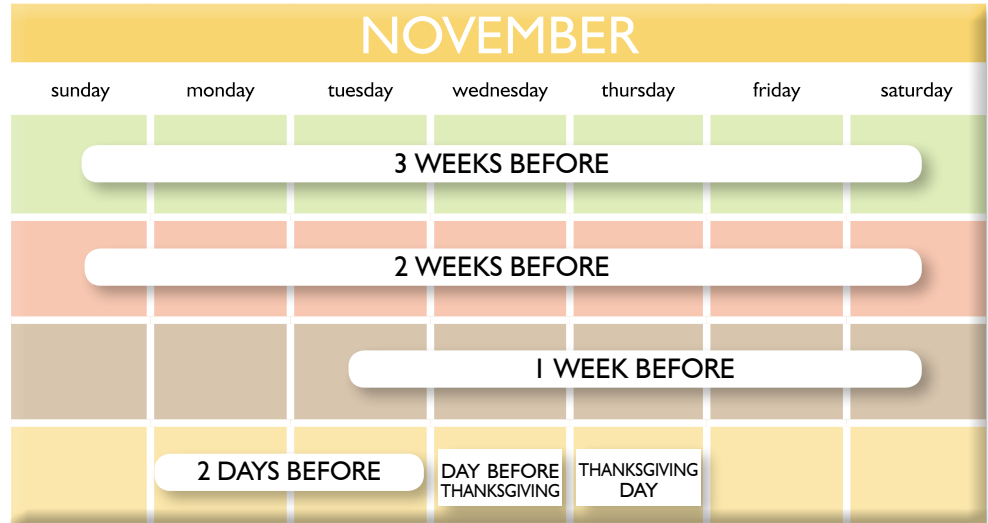


TIMELINE for Thanksgiving

Putting together a dinner like Thanksgiving is easier than you think. The secret is in the planning, and a little organization goes a long way to keep things running smoothly. This year, cover all your bases with this timeline—it'll help you pull off your best Thanksgiving feast ever!



3 WEEKS BEFORE

- Plan the menu
- Establish quantities needed for each dish
- Assign jobs and provide recipes to volunteers
- Start making the shopping list
- If ordering a fresh turkey, ORDER IT NOW
- Purchase all your Thanksgiving specialty items to avoid the seasonal rush and inventory depletion (canned pumpkin, ground sage, mincemeat, poultry seasoning, etc.)

2 WEEKS BEFORE

- Establish a cleaning schedule
- Check the table linens—clean and iron
- Check your inventory of plates, silverware, glassware, serving platters, casserole dishes and utensils
- Plan and design tablescapes, including place cards and the centerpiece
- Shop for staples (stuffing mix, broth, stock, canned sweet potatoes, etc.)

1 WEEK BEFORE

- If serving wine, purchase it now
- Select all serving dishes and utensils and label them with sticky notes
- Clean the refrigerator of all nonessential Thanksgiving foods
- If roasting a frozen turkey, start defrosting it
- Shop for perishables

2 DAYS BEFORE

- Set up all cooking equipment
- Begin setting the table or setting up the buffet if using



TIMELINE for Thanksgiving

THE DAY BEFORE

- Pick up the fresh turkey (if ordered)
- Dice onions, celery and other vegetables
- If you're brining the turkey, place it in the brine and refrigerate
- Bake the desserts
- Chill the wines and other beverages
- Prepare make-ahead recipes (cranberry sauce, green bean casserole, salad dressing, etc.)
- Make the centerpiece
- Set the table and put out the place cards
- Review the timeline to make sure you haven't forgotten anything

tips

Divvy up Dinner:

Not every menu item has to come from your kitchen. Let a few of your guests give you a hand and assign them recipes to bring.

Double-Check the Turkey:

Make sure you've allowed yourself plenty of time to thaw the turkey. Once thawed, it can sit in the refrigerator for a couple of days before roasting.

Label the Platters:

Set out all your serving platters and bowls and label each one with what it's to hold. This is a lifesaver 30 minutes before dinner!

Ask for Help:

From last-minute cleaning to setting the table to cooking, everyone will be happy to lend a hand. All you need to do is ask!

THANKSGIVING DAY

4 TO 5 HOURS BEFORE DINNER

- Prepare the turkey for roasting
- Begin roasting the turkey at a predetermined time (e.g., four hours before dinner)
- If you didn't stuff the turkey, prepare the stuffing for baking
- Peel and cut the potatoes, then chill them in the broth
- Prepare the appetizers

2 HOURS BEFORE DINNER

- Finish preparing all casseroles
- Place any food that will hold on the table (e.g., cranberry sauce, vegetable tray)

1 HOUR BEFORE DINNER

- Serve cocktails and appetizers
- Remove the turkey when it's done
- Bake the casseroles
- Begin any stovetop cooking

30 MINUTES BEFORE DINNER

- Carve the turkey
- Set out the refrigerated dishes
- Make the gravy
- Mash potatoes and hold in a double boiler
- Fill water glasses with ice

