

The Sensibly Homemade

Last Minute

Thanksgiving Planner

10 Days Before:

- Prepare your menu. Don't forget to include snacks/appetizers.
- Get a guest count, verify dinner time, and assign side dishes (if guests are bringing food). Great dishes for guests to bring include:
 - ◆ Cranberry sauce
 - ◆ Rolls
 - ◆ Pie or other dessert
 - ◆ Vegetable tray
 - ◆ Cheese and/or crackers

9 Days Before:

- Prepare seating arrangements. The morning of the holiday is not the time to remember that the folding table broke last summer.
- Are there enough chairs, plates, and silver wear? Make arrangements to borrow or buy what you need (hello, thrift store). If using disposable flatware, add it to the shopping list.

8 Days Before:

- Clean and organize your refrigerator to make room for food preparation and leftovers.
- Fill salt and pepper shakers or grinders and make sure there is enough butter to serve with food and for recipes (add butter to shopping list, mmmm, butter).

7 Days Before:

- Are any of the guests children who might like an activity to keep busy while waiting for dinner? Plan that now.

6 Days Before:

- Finalize shopping list and check it twice.
 - Do you have enough aluminum foil, parchment paper, plastic wrap, and toilet paper?
 - Do you have all the spices you need to season the turkey and make pies?

4-5 Days Before:

- Organize serving dishes and utensils.
- Do the shopping.
- If you've purchased a frozen turkey, begin thawing it in the fridge.
- Make a food preparation and oven schedule. Include things like:
 - When the turkey needs to go in the oven.
 - What temperature and cook time side dishes require.
 - Which dishes can be prepared in advance and frozen or refrigerated.

2-3 Days Before:

- Begin food preparation
 - Make pie crust, cranberry sauce, rolls, turkey brine (if using) and refrigerate.
 - Do prep like chopping onions and grating cheese and cubing bread for dishes that are made the day of.

The Day Before:

- Put thawed turkey in brine overnight (if using).
- Finish any pre-prep.
- Clean house.

The Day Of:

- Follow your food prep schedule.
- Enjoy your guests and food.
- Be thankful, have fun!

Further Tips

Are you providing all the food yourself?

- Go easy on yourself. Maybe rather than mashed potatoes and candied sweet potatoes and green bean casserole and glazed carrots, you could serve roasted veggies, and all in one dish.
- Short-cuts are totally cool and encouraged. Store bought rolls? Cool. Your stuffing is from a package? That's cool, too.