



THANKSGIVING PREP TIMELINE

GET AHEAD

The key to Thanksgiving is mise en place—or everything in its place—the rule by which chefs live and work.

With a little pre-planning and an organized To-Do list, you can get ahead on your Thanksgiving prep, for a holiday that is perfectly relaxed.

Follow along with our timeline to see how we get ready for the big day, starting now!



TWO WEEKS BEFORE THANKSGIVING

- Plan your menu. Take note of any hard-to-find ingredients or required tools (check your thermometer!) and start sourcing them now.
- Make turkey/chicken stock for gravy, stuffing, vegetables, soups, and other sides. Make at least 2 quarts, and freeze it in containers or zip-top bags.
- Order your turkey, if purchasing from a local farm or specialty store. Some farms will sell extra gizzards or turkey necks to use for gravy.
- Make pie dough. Freeze the dough wrapped tightly in a few layers of plastic wrap. Small discs will be easiest to roll out later.

ONE WEEK BEFORE THANKSGIVING

- Buy your turkey, if getting frozen from the grocery store. Leave it in the refrigerator to start defrosting.



WEEKEND BEFORE THANKSGIVING

- Make cranberry sauce
You can freeze it, but it will store just fine in the refrigerator tightly covered.
- Transfer frozen pie crust and stock to the refrigerator to defrost.
- Select serving dishes for all of your menu items. Use sticky notes to label them so helpful Thanksgiving guests can fill them before dinner.
- Shop for wine and other beverages. Remember to include a festive non-alcoholic option, like sparkling apple cider or cranberry ginger ale.

TUESDAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING

- Salt or brine your turkey, and refrigerate. If salting your turkey, leave it uncovered on a rack fitted into a baking sheet to help dry the skin, which will help make it extra crispy.
- Make your gravy. Store it covered in the refrigerator.
- Cook the aromatics or any meat-components for your stuffing. You'll combine these ingredients with the bread and herbs on Thanksgiving.
- Roll out your pie dough and fit it into pie plates to chill in the refrigerator.



WEDNESDAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING

- Blanch any vegetables for roasting. Cool them and store in a covered container or zip-topped bag.
- Make your pies. Let them cool at room temperature.
- Prepare any make-ahead appetizers, like stuffed mushrooms or dips.
- Set the dinner table, if you can.

THANKSGIVING MORNING

- Make your mashed potatoes. Keep them hot over a water bath or in a crock-pot, if possible.
- Remove the turkey from the refrigerator. Start roasting, allowing for at least 20 minutes per pound for cooking and an hour to rest and carve.
- Assemble your stuffing and other sides. Wait to bake or finish while the turkey is resting.
- Chill wine and other drinks.