

Ideas

Seasonal | Celebrating Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Meal Checklist & Easy Timeline

Plan and organize your Thanksgiving dinner with this helpful ingredient checklist and timeline. Includes a printable checklist for shopping in store or through Walmart Grocery.





Tick-tock, Turkey Day is coming! But don't worry: just a little planning and organization will help you pull off the [Thanksgiving celebration](#) without a hitch. So don't worry about sweating the details—we've done it for you!

First, use our Thanksgiving shopping list to help check your pantry and organize your food shopping trips. Then check out our simple Thanksgiving timeline, which will guide your shopping and prep so that everything gets done right and at the right time.

Thanksgiving shopping list

Every [Thanksgiving meal](#) is unique but this list covers most of the basics. **Use the blank spaces to add in other ingredients you need.**

Meat and poultry

- [Turkey](#)
- [Sausage](#) (for stuffing)
- [Bacon](#)

Ham, smoked

Produce

Vegetables

Brussels sprouts

Broccoli

Carrots

Celery

Chives

Collard Greens

Garlic

Green beans

Green onions

Mushrooms

Onions

Potatoes

Squash

Sweet potatoes

Yams

Fruit

Apples

Cranberries

Lemons

Oranges

Canned goods and pantry

Condensed milk, sweetened

Cranberry, canned

- [Cranberry, canned](#)
- [Fried onions](#)
- [Green beans, canned](#)
- [Macaroni](#)
- [Maple syrup](#)
- [Olive oil](#)
- [Pumpkin, pureed](#)
- [Stock: chicken](#)
- Stock: turkey
- [Stuffing mix](#)
- [Vegetable oil](#)
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Baking

- [Almonds, sliced](#)
- [Baking powder](#)
- [Baking soda](#)
- [Brown sugar](#)

Cornbread mix

Cornmeal

Flour

Pecans

Sugar

Vanilla extract

Dairy, refrigerated and frozen

Butter

Buttermilk

Cheese

Eggs

Heavy cream

Ice cream

Milk

- Pearl onions
- Peas, frozen
- Pie crust, refrigerated
- Puff pastry, frozen
- Whipped cream
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Spices and herbs

- Allspice
- Cayenne pepper
- Cinnamon
- Cloves
- Garlic powder
- Ginger, ground
- Gravy mix
- Nutmeg

Onion powder

Paprika

Pepper

Poultry seasoning

Rosemary, fresh

Sage, fresh

Salt

Thyme, fresh

Bakery

Apple pie

Bread cubes

Bread loaf, for stuffing

Pecan pie

Pumpkin pie

Rolls

Sweet potato pie

Beverages

Coffee

Ice

Juice

Soft drinks

Sparkling cider

Sparkling water

Beer

Cocktail mixers

Spirits

- Wine
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Thanksgiving Dinner Printable Checklist

Figured out all your shopping needs? Organize your shopping list by dish using our [printable Thanksgiving dinner checklist](#). This list offers spaces for all the traditional Thanksgiving dishes, and room to add your family favorites. Use it as an alternative shopping list or as a checklist for step to be completed.

[Printable Thanksgiving Dinner Checklist](#)

Simple Thanksgiving timeline

1. Planning day

When to do it: At least two weeks before Thanksgiving

What to do:

- Plan the size of your turkey based on your guest list. Allow for 1.5 pounds per person. If feeding a group of 15 or more, consider buying two smaller turkeys instead of one large

consider serving two smaller turkeys, instead of one large turkey.

- Make a list of necessary baking supplies and canned goods you can buy early and keep in the pantry.
- Make a list of frozen foods you can buy early and keep in the freezer.
- Make a list of dishes you can make ahead and keep in the freezer (think: pie crusts). Buy ingredients for those, too.
- Review your cooking and baking supplies to make sure they're in good shape, and ingredients are fresh. First time host? Read our [First Thanksgiving kitchen and table checklist](#) for what you'll need.

2. Shopping trip #1: stock up

When to do it: At least one week before Thanksgiving

What to do:

- Buy your nonperishable foods and frozen foods for the meal. These are items you can store in your pantry or have room for in your freezer.
- Buy frozen turkey (if buying thawed turkey you can wait until the “fresh” trip, below).

3. Defrost frozen turkey day

When to do it: It varies, but usually starts the Sunday before Thanksgiving, and no later than Monday morning.

What to do:

- Move your turkey(s) from the freezer to the fridge to thaw.
- Allow 24 hours in the fridge for every four pounds of turkey. For a popular size 15-pound turkey that would mean nearly four days of thawing. So, to have a thawed bird on Thursday morning you should start the thaw on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.
- Add additional time to allow for brining, if you plan to do that.

4. Shopping trip #2: Fresh items

When to do it: The week of Thanksgiving

What to do:

- Buy your fresh ingredients such as green veggies, fruit, bread, meat and cheeses.
- Buy anything you forgot to get on your prep trip or what you might have used up in the meantime.

5. Prep day

When to do it: The day before Thanksgiving

What to do:

- Defrost pie crusts and assemble pies. Bake the homemade pies and desserts. (Pies really are better the day after you make them.)
- Chop veggies, store and refrigerate in baggies. Grate cheese. Any kind of prep you can do ahead saves time.
- Prepare any sides (such as casseroles) that will keep in the freezer or fridge and can be cooked or reheated on Thanksgiving.
- Set the table in the evening.

6. Thanksgiving!

When to do it: Thanksgiving Day

What to do:

- Let the turkey come to room temperature and then cook it.
- Chill white wine.
- Cook turkey until the temperature at the thickest part (generally the thigh) reads 165 degrees.

- Prepare fresh sides.
- Make sure to let the turkey rest for 30 minutes prior to carving.
- Warm rolls and pre-made sides like casseroles.
- Whip cream for pies.
- Give thanks.
- Eat your delicious Thanksgiving meal.
- Serve dessert and coffee.

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