

Christmas dinner planner



Dinner on _____ at _____ Guests: _____ Kids: _____

	DISH	QUANTITY FOR THE TABLE	MAKE AHEAD: WHAT AND WHEN
Appetizer			
Main			
Potato			
Vegetables			
Salad, bread			
Dessert			
Drinks			

GUESTS AND DIETARY NOTES (ALLERGIES, VEGETARIAN, GLUTEN-FREE)			

TIMELINE, DECEMBER 20 TO 25

- ☐ Sun, Dec 20 Head count, menu, list, gear check:
- ☐ Mon, Dec 21 Trip 1 (pantry, drinks, frozen):
- ☐ Tue, Dec 22 Sauces and glazes:
- ☐ Wed, Dec 23 Trip 2 (fresh, meat) and baking:
- ☐ Thu, Dec 24 Assemble, trim, set the table:
- ☐ Dec 25, a.m.
- ☐ Dec 25, p.m. Oven plan:
- ☐ Dec 26 Leftovers become:

GROCERY LIST BY AISLE

- MEAT COUNTER
- PRODUCE
- DAIRY AND EGGS
- BAKERY
- BAKING AISLE
- PANTRY
- DRINKS AND EXTRAS

Example: ham dinner for 8

Dinner on Friday, Dec 25 at 5:00 pm Guests: 8 Kids: 2



	DISH	QUANTITY FOR THE TABLE	MAKE AHEAD: WHAT AND WHEN
Appetizer	Cheese, grapes and spiced pecans	12 oz cheese, 1 cup pecans	Pecans toasted Dec 22
Main	Spiral-cut ham, brown sugar and Dijon glaze	8 lb bone-in, fully cooked	Glaze in a jar Dec 22; reheat 325°F, about 10 min per lb, to 140°F
Potato	Scalloped potatoes with Gruyère	4 lb potatoes, 1 quart cream	Assembled raw Dec 24, baked from 1:45 pm
Vegetables	Roasted Brussels sprouts with bacon	2 1/2 lb sprouts, 8 oz bacon	Trimmed Dec 24; 425°F for 20 min at 4:40 pm
Salad, bread	Winter greens, pomegranate, orange; cranberry sauce; rolls	Two 5 oz bags greens, 12 oz cranberries, 16 rolls	Cranberry sauce Dec 22; dressing Dec 24
Dessert	Pecan pie and apple pie	2 pies, 16 slices	Dough Dec 21, baked Dec 23; pecan pie in the fridge
Drinks	Red and white wine, sparkling cider, water	4 bottles wine, 2 cider, 2 bags ice	Bought on trip 1, chilled Dec 24

GUESTS AND DIETARY NOTES (ALLERGIES, VEGETARIAN, GLUTEN-FREE)			
1 Mom: no pecans, gets the apple pie	2 Dad	3 Aunt Linda: gluten-free, skips the rolls	4 Uncle Ray
5 Sam	6 Jess: vegetarian, extra potatoes and salad	7 Kid: Mia	8 Kid: Leo
Gluten-free: make the glaze without flour and check the ham label. Vegetarian: sprouts roasted on a separate sheet pan, bacon on the side.			

TIMELINE, DECEMBER 20 TO 25

☐ **Sun, Dec 20**

Head count confirmed (8). Menu locked, list written, thermometer and foil checked

☐ **Mon, Dec 21**

Trip 1: baking aisle, pantry, wine, cider, butter. Pie dough in the fridge

☐ **Tue, Dec 22**

Cranberry sauce, ham glaze, toasted pecans. Fridge shelf cleared

☐ **Wed, Dec 23**

Trip 2: ham, produce, dairy, rolls. Both pies baked in the evening

☐ **Thu, Dec 24**

Gratin assembled, sprouts trimmed, greens washed, table set

☐ **Dec 25, a.m.**

Presents and a light brunch. Drinks into the cold, platters out

☐ **Dec 25, p.m.**

1:00 oven 325°F; 1:45 gratin in; 3:15 ham in; 4:30 glaze; 4:40 sprouts at 425°F; 5:00 dinner; 7:00 leftovers in the fridge

☐ **Dec 26**

Ham sandwiches; bone into the freezer for black-eyed peas on Jan 1

GROCERY LIST BY AISLE

MEAT COUNTER

Spiral-cut bone-in ham, 8 lb; thick-cut bacon, 8 oz

PRODUCE

Potatoes 4 lb, Brussels sprouts 2 1/2 lb, greens 2 bags, pomegranate, cranberries 12 oz, 2 oranges, apples 3 lb, lemon, onions, garlic, thyme, grapes

DAIRY AND EGGS

Butter 2 lb, heavy cream 1 quart, Gruyère 8 oz, eggs 1 dozen, milk 1 pint, cheese board 12 oz

BAKERY

16 dinner rolls

BAKING AISLE

Pecans 3 cups, brown sugar 2 lb, maple syrup, vanilla, cinnamon

PANTRY

Dijon mustard, honey, red wine vinegar, olive oil, crackers

DRINKS AND EXTRAS

4 bottles wine, 2 sparkling cider, 2 bags ice, foil, shallow containers

Christmas dinner cheat sheet

How much to buy for 4 to 12, USDA reheating and roasting times, and a one-oven plan for dinner at 5 pm

HOW MUCH FOR YOUR HEADCOUNT

ITEM	PER GUEST	4 GUESTS	6 GUESTS	8 GUESTS	10 GUESTS	12 GUESTS
Ham, bone-in	¾ lb	3 lb	4½ lb	6 lb	7½ lb	9 lb
Ham, boneless	½ lb	2 lb	3 lb	4 lb	5 lb	6 lb
Rib roast, bone-in	1 lb; 2 guests per rib	4 lb, 2 ribs	6 lb, 3 ribs	8 lb, 4 ribs	10 lb, 5 ribs	12 lb, 6 ribs
Boneless roast or tenderloin	½ lb	2 lb	3 lb	4 lb	5 lb	6 lb
Whole turkey	1 to 1¼ lb	4 to 5 lb	6 to 7½ lb	8 to 10 lb	10 to 12½ lb	12 to 15 lb
Potatoes (mashed or gratin)	⅓ to ½ lb	1½ to 2 lb	2 to 3 lb	3 to 4 lb	3½ to 5 lb	4 to 6 lb
Each vegetable side	¼ to ⅓ lb	1 to 1½ lb	1½ to 2 lb	2 to 2¾ lb	2½ to 3½ lb	3 to 4 lb
Dinner rolls	2	8	12	16	20	24
Pie (9-inch, cut in 8)	1 slice	1 pie	1 pie	1 or 2 pies	2 pies	2 pies
Wine (750 ml)	2 glasses of 5 oz	2 bottles	3 bottles	3 or 4	4 bottles	5 bottles

Kitchen benchmarks from the Olivi guide, for adults, one main and three or four sides (The Old Farmer's Almanac party planner, the butcher's two guests per rib, NIAAA: five 5-oz glasses per bottle). Ham sandwiches on the 26th? Buy 8 to 10 lb for 8. Second pie at 8: for seconds. Self-serve buffet: add 10 to 15 percent.

USDA REHEATING AND ROASTING TIMES (oven at 325°F unless noted)

TYPE	CUT	WEIGHT	TIME	EXAMPLE	THERMOMETER
Ham, fully cooked (reheat)	Spiral-cut, whole or half	7 to 9 lb	10 to 18 min/lb	8 lb: 1 h 20 to 2 h 24	140°F
	Whole, bone-in	10 to 14 lb	15 to 18 min/lb	12 lb: 3 h to 3 h 36	140°F
	Half, bone-in	5 to 7 lb	18 to 24 min/lb	6 lb: 1 h 48 to 2 h 24	140°F
	Boneless, vacuum-packed	6 to 12 lb	10 to 15 min/lb	8 lb: 1 h 20 to 2 h	140°F
Ham, cook-before-eating	Whole, bone-in	10 to 14 lb	18 to 20 min/lb	12 lb: 3 h 36 to 4 h	145°F, rest 3 min
	Half, bone-in	5 to 7 lb	22 to 25 min/lb	6 lb: 2 h 12 to 2 h 30	145°F, rest 3 min
Beef roast	Rib roast, bone-in	4 to 8 lb	23 to 30 min/lb	8 lb: 3 h 04 to 4 h	145°F, rest 3 min
	Rib roast, boneless	4 lb	39 to 43 min/lb	2 h 36 to 2 h 52	145°F, rest 3 min
	Tenderloin, whole, at 425°F	4 to 6 lb	45 to 60 minutes in all		145°F, rest 3 min
Turkey	Whole, unstuffed	8 to 14 lb	2¾ to 3 h (8 to 12 lb), 3 to 3¾ h (12 to 14 lb)		165°F

Thermometer in the thickest part, away from the bone. For a spiral ham, USDA suggests wrapping it in foil and counting about 10 minutes per lb. Ham packaged in a USDA-inspected plant reheats to 140°F; leftover or repackaged ham to 165°F. Rib roasts over 8 lb are off the USDA chart: go by the thermometer. A frozen turkey thaws in the fridge at about 24 hours per 4 to 5 lb, so a 12-lb bird goes in on Monday, Dec 21.

DEC 25, ONE OVEN, DINNER AT 5 PM

1:00 pm	Scalloped potatoes out of the fridge. Oven to 325°F.
1:45	Potatoes in, covered with foil.
3:15	8-lb spiral ham in, lower rack, cut side down, in foil: about 10 min per lb, so 80 minutes.
About 4:30	140°F in the center: glaze, 10 minutes uncovered. Uncover the potatoes.
4:40	Ham and potatoes out. Oven to 425°F, Brussels sprouts in for about 20 minutes. Dress the salad.
4:55	Rolls in for 5 minutes while someone carves.
5:00	Dinner. By 7:00, leftovers in shallow containers in the fridge.

CHANGING THE MAIN

BIGGER OR SMALLER HAM

Keep 4:40 as the time it comes out and count back about 10 minutes per lb plus the 10-minute glaze: a 6-lb ham goes in around 3:30, a 10-lb one around 2:50.

RIB ROAST INSTEAD (8 LB, 4 RIBS)

In by 12:30 pm (top of the USDA range, 4 hours), first check at 3:30. Out at 145°F or more, to your taste, then rest under foil at least 3 minutes. The oven is free for the sides while it rests.

TURKEY INSTEAD (12 LB)

Into the fridge to thaw on Dec 21. On the 25th, in by 12:45 pm (12 lb sits between two USDA ranges: plan on 3¾ hours), first check at 3:30, out by 4:30 at 165°F in breast, thigh and wing, rest 20 minutes.

THE NUMBERS TO KEEP

2 hours

Max on the table at room temperature; 1 hour above 90°F. Then discard.

140°F / 40°F

Buffet: hot food at 140°F or above, cold at 40°F or below.

165°F

Leftover or repackaged ham, turkey, every reheated leftover.

145°F

Beef roasts and raw ham, then rest at least 3 minutes.

3 to 5 days

Spiral ham leftovers in the fridge; 1 to 2 months frozen.

3 to 4 days

Other leftovers in the fridge; 3 to 4 months frozen, for quality.