

DATE & DINNER TIME

GUESTS (ADULTS / KIDS)

TURKEY SIZE

ALLERGIES & DIETS

MENU

DISH	WHO MAKES IT	MADE ON	QUANTITY

SEVEN-DAY COUNTDOWN

D-7	
D-6	
D-5	
D-4	
D-3	
D-2	
D-1	
Thanksgiving	

GROCERY LIST BY AISLE

MEATtrip

PRODUCEtrip

DAIRY & EGGStrip

BAKERYtrip

PANTRYtrip

FROZEN & DRINKStrip

Sample: Thanksgiving for 10

Thursday, November 26, 2026 · dinner at 3 p.m. · one oven

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DATE & DINNER TIME	GUESTS (ADULTS / KIDS)	TURKEY SIZE	ALLERGIES & DIETS
Thu. Nov. 26, 3 p.m.	8 adults / 2 kids	15 lb, frozen	1 vegetarian: stuffing with veg broth

MENU

DISH	WHO MAKES IT	MADE ON	QUANTITY
Roast turkey + pan gravy	Host	Thu (gravy base Sun)	15 lb, 1 qt
Herb stuffing, baked in a dish	Host	Prep Tue, bake Thu	9 x 13 dish
Mashed potatoes	Host	Wed	5 lb
Sweet potato casserole	Sam	Wed	4 lb
Green beans, crispy shallots	Host	Blanch Tue	3 lb
Cranberry sauce	Host	Mon	2 bags
Apple and kale salad	Priya	Thu	For 10
Dinner rolls	Priya	Bought Tue	2 dozen
Pumpkin pie + pecan pie	Grandma Jo	Wed	2 pies
Veggie tray, cheese board	Mike	Tue	For 10

SEVEN-DAY COUNTDOWN

D-7 Thu. Nov. 19	Confirm 10 guests and diets. Assign dishes with quantities. Check roasting pan and thermometer. Write the list in two trips.
D-6 Fri. Nov. 20	Trip 1: pantry, drinks, frozen turkey, stuffing bread, foil. Clear a fridge shelf.
D-5 Sat. Nov. 21	Cube and dry the bread. Roast the turkey wings and simmer the gravy base.
D-4 Sun. Nov. 22	Turkey from freezer to fridge, on a tray. Gravy base in the fridge.
D-3 Mon. Nov. 23	Trip 2: produce, dairy, herbs. Cranberry sauce. Text each guest their dish and quantity once more.
D-2 Tue. Nov. 24	Cook celery and onion for the stuffing, refrigerate with the broth. Trim and blanch the green beans.
D-1 Wed. Nov. 25	Mashed potatoes. Wash herbs. Set the table, one sticky note per serving dish. Grandma Jo bakes the pies.
Thanksgiving Thu. Nov. 26	10:00 turkey in at 325°F · ~2:00 out at 165°F, rest · stuffing + casserole in · 3:00 dinner · leftovers in fridge by 5:00

GROCERY LIST BY AISLE (HOST)

MEAT trip 1

- Turkey 15 lb (frozen)
- Turkey wings 2 lb (gravy base)

PRODUCE trip 2

- Potatoes 5 lb
- Green beans 3 lb, shallots 4
- Onions 3, celery 1 bunch, carrots 1 lb
- Fresh cranberries 2 bags, 1 orange
- Garlic 1 head, 1 lemon
- Sage, thyme, rosemary, parsley

DAIRY & EGGS trip 2

- Butter 2 lb
- Heavy cream 1 qt (potatoes, whipped cream)
- Whole milk ½ gal, eggs 6

BAKERY trip 1

- Plain sturdy loaf 1.5 lb (dries for stuffing)

PANTRY trip 1

- Chicken broth 2 qt, vegetable broth 1 qt
- Sugar for the cranberries, cornstarch
- Coffee

DRINKS & OTHER trip 1

- Ice, apple cider, sparkling water
- Heavy foil, shallow containers

GUESTS BRING their own shopping

- Sam: sweet potato casserole
- Priya: salad, rolls · Mike: tray, cheese
- Grandma Jo: both pies

Thanksgiving cheat sheet

How much to buy, USDA thawing and roasting times, and a one-oven plan for dinner at 3 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 26

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HOW MUCH FOR YOUR HEADCOUNT

DISH	PER GUEST	6 GUESTS	8 GUESTS	10 GUESTS	12 GUESTS	16 GUESTS
Whole turkey, bone-in	1 lb (USDA); 1.5 lb for leftovers	6 to 9 lb	8 to 12 lb	10 to 15 lb	12 to 18 lb	16 to 24 lb
Boneless breast or roast	About ½ lb	3 lb	4 lb	5 lb	6 lb	8 lb
Gravy	About ⅓ cup	2 cups	3 cups	1 quart	1 quart	1½ quarts
Stuffing (bread to buy)	About ¾ cup cooked	1 lb	1¼ lb	1½ lb	2 lb	2½ lb
Mashed potatoes	½ lb raw potatoes	3 lb	4 lb	5 lb	6 lb	8 lb
Sweet potatoes	⅓ to ½ lb	2½ lb	3½ lb	4 lb	5 lb	6½ lb
Green beans	¼ to ⅓ lb	2 lb	2½ lb	3 lb	3½ lb	5 lb
Cranberry sauce	¼ cup (two 12-oz bags for 10)	1½ cups	2 cups	2½ cups	3 cups	4 cups
Dinner rolls	1.5 to 2	1 dozen	1½ dozen	2 dozen	2 dozen	3 dozen
Pie (9-inch, 8 slices)	1 slice, a few seconds	1 pie	2 pies	2 pies	2 pies	3 pies
Heavy cream to whip	2 tablespoons	½ pint	½ pint	1 pint	1 pint	1 pint

Turkey: USDA FSIS. Every other line is a kitchen benchmark from the Olivi guide, sized for five sides and rounded up to what stores sell. A crowd that skips the salad eats more stuffing.

USDA THAWING AND ROASTING TIMES

TURKEY	FRIDGE THAW	FREEZER TO FRIDGE BY	COLD WATER	ROAST AT 325°F, UNSTUFFED
Breast, 4 to 8 lb	1 to 3 days	Mon, Nov 23	2 to 6 h	1½ to 3¼ h
8 to 12 lb	1 to 3 days	Mon, Nov 23	2 to 6 h	2¾ to 3 h
12 to 14 lb	3 to 4 days	Sun, Nov 22	6 to 8 h	3 to 3¾ h
14 to 16 lb	3 to 4 days	Sun, Nov 22	6 to 8 h	3¾ to 4¼ h
16 to 18 lb	4 to 5 days	Sat, Nov 21	8 to 10 h	3¾ to 4¼ h
18 to 20 lb	4 to 5 days	Sat, Nov 21	8 to 10 h	4¼ to 4½ h
20 to 24 lb	5 to 6 days	Fri, Nov 20	10 to 12 h	4½ to 5 h

Fridge (40°F or below): about 24 hours per 4 to 5 lb, in the wrapper, on a tray. A thawed bird keeps 1 to 2 more days there.

Cold water: about 30 minutes per lb, in a leak-proof bag, water changed every 30 minutes. Roast it right away; do not refreeze.

Still frozen on Thursday? It is safe to roast from frozen; count at least 50 percent more time.

Stuffing: USDA recommends baking it in a dish. A stuffed bird takes longer, and the center of the stuffing must reach 165°F too.

Done: 165°F in the thickest part of the breast, the innermost thigh and the innermost wing. Times are approximate; the thermometer decides.

THURSDAY, ONE OVEN, DINNER AT 3 P.M.

TURKEY	IN THE OVEN BY	FIRST CHECK
Breast, 4 to 8 lb	10:45 a.m.	12:15 p.m.
8 to 12 lb	11:00 a.m.	1:45 p.m.
12 to 14 lb	10:15 a.m.	1:15 p.m.
14 to 18 lb	9:45 a.m.	1:30 p.m.
18 to 20 lb	9:30 a.m.	1:45 p.m.
20 to 24 lb	9:00 a.m.	1:30 p.m.

Rule: out by 2 p.m., so in by 2 p.m. minus the top of the USDA range; first check at the bottom of the range. Done early, it waits under foil. The 15-lb sample on page 2 goes in at 10:00 and gets its first check at 1:30.

30 min before	Oven on at 325°F. Pat the turkey dry and season it.
12:00 p.m.	Mashed potatoes into the slow cooker on low, with a splash of milk. Vegetable tray out.
First check	Thermometer in three spots. 165°F everywhere, or back in.
About 2:00	Turkey out, tented with foil, rest 20 minutes (USDA) to 30. Oven up to 375°F: stuffing and sweet potato casserole in.
2:20	Gravy base into the roasting pan with the drippings, simmered. Green beans and shallots in a skillet.
2:45	Rolls in for 10 minutes. Someone else carves.
3:00	Dinner.
By 5:00	Leftovers in shallow containers, in the fridge, before the pie conversation runs long.

THE NUMBERS TO KEEP

165°F Turkey, stuffing center, and every reheated leftover.	325°F The lowest oven USDA allows for roasting or reheating turkey.	2 hours Max at room temperature; 1 hour above 90°F. Then discard.	3 to 4 days Leftovers in the fridge: the last sandwich is Monday, Nov 30.	2 to 6 months Frozen leftovers, for best quality.	1 year A frozen raw turkey, for best quality. It stays safe longer.
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