

Thanksgiving Decorations

Lots of options here too. If this is your first big feast, make it easy on yourself. Buy most decorations already made and all you have to do is set them where you want them. If you have experience hosting and preparing large meals for a group of people then knock your socks off. The sky, your imagination and budget are the limit. Remember you'll have to find a place to store everything, before and after the meal.

One year a very dear friend, actually my daughter's mother-in-law had terminal pancreatic cancer so I wanted to make it an extra special time for her and her family – her husband, children and their grandchildren and our family too. It was to be as very special a gathering as I could possibly make it. That was my goal. We knew it truly would be her last Thanksgiving here on earth. I was so excited to do this for her and her family.

That year I made a table runner. Making a table runner is very easy to do. I looked at several fabric stores until I found a fabric I really liked, not specific for Thanksgiving but for the fall, with fall colors and a little gold metallic highlight running through it. That way I'd get more use out of it in the long run rather than being usable for only one specific holiday. I found a gold ribbon that I folded in half to use as a border. It added just enough pizzazz without over doing it.

Unfortunately as it turned out, she was hospitalized shortly before Thanksgiving and not even sure she'd be out by Thanksgiving. She was released from the hospital Thanksgiving morning. They asked if I'd kindly make them a plate of food and have my son-in-law bring it by them after we'd eaten. I said it wouldn't be a problem.

It just didn't feel right to me for I felt like I was going to send them "my leftovers" and they'd have to wait until we were done eating, plus driving time to their house (another 15-20 minutes, provided you were not held up by a train in town). Not the special event I wanted it to be. But I understood she just physically couldn't make it to our house and up the stairs, not even to "eat and run". Her body had just been through so very much. I thought about it and decided that if she couldn't make it to a real Thanksgiving meal, then a real Thanksgiving meal would come to her, at her house and she could be in her jammies, comfy as could be. I told my son-in-law and daughter my plan, but it was top secret and I needed their help in getting it done. I decided to cook 2 turkeys and double side dishes that year. I'd box up a complete meal as soon as it was ready, a whole turkey dinner with all the trimmings, they'd take it to their house, have them rest in the living room while they set up a simple candle lit table and set everything out beautifully. We'd wait to begin our meal until they returned. Needless to say, it meant a lot to them. In fact, her husband called me, nearly in tears and slightly choking up and said, "How can I ever say thank you enough for what you've done for us?" I told him he just did. Those decorations were very simple, a couple of candles, a disposable thanksgiving tablecloth, matching napkins and a tablecloth they had on hand. And it meant so much. They used their own plates, glasses and silverware.

Another year, I used the same table runner under the turkey, and bought a decorative "string/wire" of foil colored cut-outs (small leaves and pumpkins, etc.) and winded it around the table where side dishes of food would be. I also scattered some small foil confetti around too, had a fall ribbon winding around and added a few small gourds, candy corns, and miscellaneous decorations. We had Thanksgiving/fall window clings on the windows with a turkey, pilgrims, Indians, horns of plenty, etc. I had votive candles in little glass "crystal" dishes around the table, so no one would get burned passing food, etc. and virtually no chance of them tipping over and starting a fire. The "crystal" made the candles seem to be more than they really were. It turned out very well. People really seemed to notice the little touches. And the grandchildren really liked finding the candy corns and eating them off the table after the meal was done and the dishes cleared.

I don't go overboard with centerpieces. I tend to be more casual. I'm not interested in "impressing" anyone. To each their own though. I understand others live to create center pieces. Good for them. But that's not me and never has been high on a priority list. I've been at events where you couldn't see the guests across the table from you without doing a contortion to see around the center piece because it was so big. I've seen them way too tall, above everyone's head, so small you didn't notice it.

When I'm having a huge crowd over, it's mostly family and close friends anyway. If it's Thanksgiving, usually the Turkey cooked to a golden brown perfection takes center stage and becomes my centerpiece, the focal point or highlight of the table.

In the end, it's your choice. Don't over stress yourself about decorations. Keep them sort of simple, especially when starting out. You can always try something else next time or add more!

