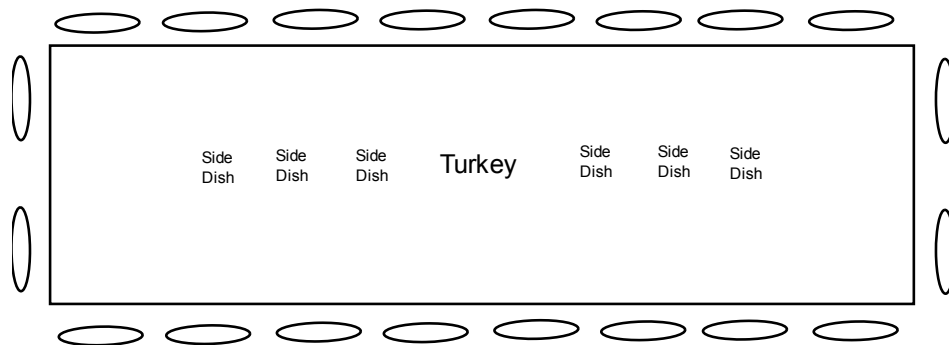


Thanksgiving Dinner Table, set up for Family Style Dining.

- This would be 2 tables put together, end-to-end. I like to set up the table completely the night before. Partly because I'm so excited, partly because there's no stress and I can play around with where to put things, gather and make sure I have everything I'll need.
- Allow enough elbow room for comfort while eating and for guests to be able to get up from the table as needed. I generally do a rough sketch on paper first.
- **Sitting:** I generally let guests sit where they'd like to. (You never know when someone is having a little tiff with each other or they'd like to sit near someone they haven't connected with for quite a while and want to catch up.) Saves you lots of time deciding on a sitting arrangement and making seating cards for everyone.
- My husband is always at the head of the table, usually with a grandchild next to him in a high chair. I am always near him, on the side and at the end of the table, next to the kitchen door in case I need to get in there.
- To aid in getting food to the table, I make a rough label (piece of paper ripped into pieces, labeled with a bold red marker) indicating where each dish is to go on the table. If guests help in getting the food on the table, they'll know where to put it at. A great help to you and it reduces interruptions asking where to put something.
- When I've had 20+ guests, quite often I have duplicates of each dish, especially gravy boats, toward each table end of the setup. It helps get food served much quicker so you can begin eating quicker and no one is waiting a really long time for a certain food to reach them.
- Always use glassware, plates, serving dishes that if they should get broken, it's ok. Accidents will happen and you don't want a guest to feel bad if something breaks. Their feelings are much more important than any stuff will ever be. No heart-breaking embarrassing moments.



If you wanted to serve buffet style (like in an all-you-can-eat restaurant), a sketch would be even more important to do to consider traffic flow, etc.

💡 When I was a teenager, someone on TV said how nice it was to be pampered with food ready to serve and eat when they arrived somewhere or very soon afterwards. No helping to get food prepared. Just a nice, relaxed almost ready to eat feast to enjoy soon after they arrive. That's always stuck with me and that's the way I like to "treat" my guests (including my family), by pampering them with a "no work needed here" kind of meal and celebration. Makes us a popular place for holiday gatherings!