

## **General prep work starts early for a great, easy and relaxed finish!**

Read through this entire list, including Thanksgiving Day – more than once, so you'll be able to anticipate what to do next and be prepared.

### **4 weeks before Thanksgiving**

Decide on a menu, guest list, time to eat, etc. Family style, buffet style (more complicated), etc. Delegate items (dessert/chairs, etc.) for guests to bring, if any. Prepare for guests to stay with you, if that applies – clean the rooms, bedding, bath necessities, etc.

### **3 weeks before Thanksgiving**

Do an inventory of what you'll need for decorating, setting the table, etc. Make a list of everything you'll need to buy and gather or make. Pick up as much as possible. Sometimes if you wait too long, the item you liked so much or need will be gone. Thoroughly clean frig, stove, counters, etc. Remove all clutter. You will need the space.

### **2 weeks before Thanksgiving**

Pick up any items still on your inventory list. Wash everything and make sure it's clean and ready to use.

### **10 days before Thanksgiving**

Make a detailed grocery shopping list, using your menu's for what you plan to serve. Go shopping for all the food ingredients you need, including the turkey.

**Sunday before Thanksgiving if turkey is frozen – Put turkey in roasting pan (to catch any drippings) and place in refrigerator to thaw.**

### **Monday before Thanksgiving**

Remove homemade cream style corn from freezer and place containers inside frig to thaw. Decorate!

### **Tuesday before Thanksgiving**

Make pies or desserts if you are providing dessert. Create a detailed time table for completing all your dishes so everything is ready about the same time. Check it 2-3 times to make sure you've included everything. Start from the beginning and mentally go through every step, what you'll need for each step, etc. Cooking dishes, utensils, food, spices, etc. If you are a new cook, allow extra time to get it done to keep your stress at a minimum.

### **Night before Thanksgiving**

Decide which steps you want to get done in advance. Setup the table. Arrange chairs, furniture to accommodate guests. Make sure guest bath is ready and has extra toilet paper that's easy to find. Finish preparing dessert, if you are doing that. Put drinks into coolers so they will be chilled.

Prepare onions, celery, etc. for making the dressing. Peel the potatoes for the mashed potatoes. Anything else you can prepare in advance only makes Thanksgiving Day that much easier for you, especially if you are new to this. (All prepped foods should be refrigerated overnight in air tight containers covered with water.)

Prepare brussel sprouts by cutting of the "root ends", removing any yellow or damaged outer leaves, cutting them in half, wash then dry thoroughly. Place in large covered air tight container on top of a wire rack to allow any water to drain through the night. Then they'll be all ready for a quick prep tomorrow.

Prepare desserts if you are making them. Prepare cranberry relish, place in serving containers and place in frig when done.

Designate a place for guests to put their coats, hats, gloves, purses, etc. Or someone to take them.

Prepare anything you can think of, using your menu ahead of time. It will make tomorrow that much easier for you!

Ok, here we go!! Try to rest. I get so excited so I know it's easier said than done. But try. 6:00 a.m. comes early!

## Thanksgiving Day Timeline

6:00 a.m. Time to get up. Follow directions for preparing turkey.

6:30 a.m. Eat an easy breakfast. It makes a difference in how you feel, your attitude, your patience level. Play relaxing music in the background if desired.

7:00 a.m. Turkey in the oven. Wash hands thoroughly. Clean up any mess from handling the turkey.

Begin preparing all your other dishes to be cooked in the order needed to be ready to put on the table at 2:15-2:30. For this menu that would be dressing, mashed potatoes, sweet potato with praline topping, oven roasted brussel sprouts, homemade cream corn will need to be reheated slowly (preferably in the microwave). Dinner rolls are the last item to be cooked.

10:00 a.m. Time to lay down and rest for an hour or so. Set an alarm so you don't oversleep!

11:00 a.m. Shower, hair and makeup, get dressed for the day. Apron to protect clothing.

12:00 noon Last minute check on the table, chairs, furniture, guest bath to make sure everything's in it place and ready.

1:00 p.m. Start cooking the following: Mashed potatoes, dressing, sweet potato praline, brussel sprouts prepared.

1:35 p.m. Crank oven to 400°. Start the oven roasted brussel sprouts. Heat cream style corn in microwave- may need to add a little water so check it occasionally.

2:00 p.m. Insert dinner rolls. Careful not to burn the rolls. Cook for 10-12 minutes or according to package directions. When done, remove. Lay a clean towel in a large bowl or on a large platter. Place cooked rolls on clean towel, wrap clean towel over rolls or cover with another clean towel to keep warm til serving.

2:10 p.m. Turn on **flameless candles** (preferred to real candles, accidents do happen). A great new invention!

2:11 p.m. Check on the dinner rolls. Remove from oven or cook another minute or two until golden brown.

2:15 p.m. Guests begin to arrive. Set up extra chairs that were brought, put desserts in frig or on counter, buffet, etc. until needed.

2:20 p.m. Time for your turkey to take center stage on the table. The turkey can be carved at the table after everyone is seated.

Begin getting side dishes in their bowls/containers. Bring everything to the table. If guests offer to help, let them know that bowls/containers on the table have a label under the bowl/platter for setup when they return.

Bring refrigerated items to the table now that are to be served with the meal. (Cranberry Relish, etc.)

Get drinks ready. Who wants what? Have a guest "take drink orders" and they are in charge of that task.

2:30 p.m. Time to call everyone to the dinner table.

Have someone say the blessing for the food and great company.

Take a look around at everyone's face and how happy they are. Take a deep breathe, relax. You're ready to eat and enjoy everyone's company!

You've done a great job that everyone will appreciate and remember the good time they had for years to come.

Desserts!!!

Clear the table and have fun!!

***You did it! Great job!! Congratulations!!!***