

MAKE-AHEAD TIPS

FOOD SAFETY

FAMILY TIME

COLORFUL

HEALTHY
EASY

Turkey & Trimblings

101

*"The art of thanksgiving
is thanksgiving."*

— Wilfred A. Peterson



Sample Menu

Salad (If desired, your choice)
Roast Turkey
Green Vegetable
Mashed Potatoes* with Turkey
Gravy and/or Dressing
Cranberry Sauce
Assorted Relishes
Pumpkin Ice Cream Pie*

* Recipe included







UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln


BY ALICE HENNEMAN, MS, RD, EXTENSION EDUCATOR
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION IN LANCASTER COUNTY
444 CHERRYCREEK ROAD, SUITE A • LINCOLN, NE 68528-1507
(402) 441-7180 • lancaster.unl.edu/food

General Tip Sheet


VEGETABLES

-  Green vegetables add color to your meal and contrast nicely with red cranberries. Peas and green beans are two easy choices that many people like.
-  Frozen vegetables offer the advantage of being brighter green in color and letting you pour out as many as you like. Plus, if bad weather causes a change in plans, they keep frozen until needed.
-  Thoughts on serving green beans as your vegetable:
 - Add a special touch by choosing a french cut green bean (beans cut in thin strips).
 - Serve green beans with sliced almonds to add another special touch.
 - Either purchase frozen beans already mixed with almonds or make your own.
 - To make your own green beans with sliced almonds: Follow package directions for cooking green beans. Drain off liquid and if desired, add about ½ to 1 teaspoon butter or margarine and 1 tablespoon sliced almonds for each cup of beans.
-  Thoughts on serving peas as your vegetable:
 - Consider buying the frozen peas already mixed with pearl onions for an extra —and easy—festive touch. Prepare according to package directions.
 - Or, cook your peas with a small can of sliced (and drained) mushrooms. Follow directions on the pea package. Drain off liquid and if desired, add about ½ to 1 teaspoon butter or margarine for each cup of beans.







CRANBERRY SAUCE

-  A simple recipe for making cranberry sauce is the fresh cranberry sauce recipe frequently found on the package of cranberries that uses cranberries, sugar and water. You can make it the day before and store it in the refrigerator.




GRAVY

-  Consider purchasing a commercially prepared turkey gravy to save you time and “just-in-case” you’re new to making gravy and you’re not pleased with the results.

DRESSING

-  The ingredients for the stuffing can be prepared ahead of time. Keep wet and dry ingredients separated; chill. Mix wet and dry ingredients just before putting stuffing into a casserole or filling the turkey cavity. The stuffing should be moist, not dry, since heat destroys bacteria more rapidly in a moist environment.*
-  The safest way to cook stuffing is in a casserole in a 325 degree F oven. The internal temperature of the stuffing must reach 165 degrees F. (NOTE: Allow about 30 to 45 minutes for your stuffing to heat. Time will depend on amount, temperature of stuffing when put in the oven, etc.).*
 - You may be able to bake your stuffing in your oven while your turkey is standing and being carved.
-  If you choose to stuff your turkey:
 - Make sure it is stuffed loosely—about 3/4 cup of stuffing per pound of turkey.*
 - Cook the turkey immediately after stuffing.*
 - Use a food thermometer to check the temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and in the center of the stuffing. Even if the innermost part of the thigh has reached a safe internal temperature of 180 degrees F, the center of the stuffing inside the turkey may not have reached 165degrees F and can cause foodborne illness. Continue to cook the stuffed turkey until the stuffing has reached 165 degrees F.*
 - For quality, you may choose to let the turkey stand for 20 minutes to let juices set. If your turkey is stuffed, the temperature of the stuffing will also continue to rise during this time. Remove all the stuffing from the turkey immediately after standing time.*
-  Consider purchasing one of the commercial stuffings that can be made on top of the stove or in your microwave if you don't have much oven space for your stuffing.
 - Add extra pizzazz to a commercial stuffing by additions of one or more of the following: chopped nuts; raisins; canned sliced mushrooms; sauteed, chopped onion and/or celery.
-  Lower the calories in your stuffing by preparing it with chicken broth instead of water and omitting the margarine or butter. Or, reduce the margarine or butter requested in the recipe. If preparing your stuffing with commercial chicken broth, check the “Nutrition Facts” panel for sodium as some are much higher than others.
-  Refrigerate stuffing in shallow containers. Use leftover stuffing within 1 to 2 days for best quality (and safety).* * According to USDA (*Turkey Basics: Stuffing, November 2000*)

FOR MORE USDA TURKEY INFORMATION:

-  Turkey Basics: Safe Thawing — www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/tbthaw.htm
-  Turkey Basics: Safe Cooking — www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/tbcook.htm
-  Turkey Basics: Stuffing — www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/tbstuff.htm

Making Food Ahead of Time

 Unless food will be frozen, it's safest to start preparing most perishable foods no more than a day before a meal. For example:


- Assemble a vegetable casserole a day in advance and then bake the day of your dinner. Plan 15 to 20 minutes additional heating time for the refrigerated cold casserole.
- Cut fruits and vegetables within a day of your meal for salads and relish trays. Store all CUT fruits and vegetables covered, such as in storage containers or one-time use plastic bags, in the refrigerator. Store fresh cut produce above raw meat, poultry and fish and below cooked items. Avoid leaving cut and/or peeled fruit and vegetables at room temperature for more than two hours. This includes the TOTAL of preparation time and serving time.
- Keep cut fruits, such as apples, pears, bananas and peaches, from turning brown by coating them with an acidic juice such as lemon, orange or pineapple juice. Or use a commercial anti-darkening preparation with fruits, such as Ever-Fresh (TM) or Fruit-Fresh (R), and follow the manufacturer's directions. (NOTE: Bananas don't keep as long as the other fruits mentioned—cut close to serving time.) Cover and refrigerate cut fruit until ready to serve.
- Non-perishable foods such as cakes and cookies can be prepared a few days in advance and will still taste good. Or, they can be frozen for longer storage.

 Tips for handling meat:




- As a general rule, purchase fresh raw meat, poultry or seafood no more than 1 to 2 days before your holiday meal. Freeze for longer storage. These foods taste freshest if cooked the day of your meal.
- If you have frozen your meat, poultry or seafood, plan time for safe thawing in your refrigerator. Allow approximately 24 hours for each 5 pounds of weight. For turkey, make sure you remove the bag containing the neck and giblets from the body cavities.
- Prevent cross-contamination. Thaw or store a package of raw meat, poultry or fish on a plate on a lower shelf of your refrigerator to prevent its juices from dripping on other foods.
- If you prepare meat, poultry or fish the day before your meal, divide it into small portions. Then refrigerate in loosely covered shallow containers within 2 hours of cooking — limit depth of meat, etc. to about 2 inches. Cover tightly when cooled. On the day of your meal, reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165 degrees F until hot and steaming throughout.

 Preparing pumpkin pie ahead of time:

- A pumpkin pie is a form of custard and like custard must be kept in the refrigerator at 40 degrees F or cooler. Foods which contain eggs, milk, and a high moisture content, like custard and pumpkin pie, must be kept refrigerated. Bacteria love to grow in these types of foods. Avoid letting a pumpkin pie set at room temperature over TWO hours TOTAL time.
- Some commercial pumpkin pies can be left at room temperature; check the label on commercially baked pies for storage requirements. Some commercial pies that are purchased at room temperature may later need to be refrigerated.
- If you'd like to prepare pumpkin pie ahead, it's easiest and safest to freeze just the crust. Add the filling to the frozen crust just before baking and bake as usual. It takes just a few minutes to mix together the ingredients. Or purchase a frozen prepared crust. Usually the directions for frozen pie crusts recommend placing a baking sheet in your oven and preheating oven to the baking temperature given in your pie recipe, then placing the pie on the hot baking sheet and baking as usual.





 Save time by setting your table the day before your meal. Also, set out all food preparation and service utensils. Or, assign children or others to set the table before you eat.

If Your Food Gets Done Early or Your Guests will be Late

-  If you have hot foods in the oven, you may be able to hold them safely until your guests arrive. Put an oven meat thermometer in the thickest part of your roast or poultry, or center of your casserole. Adjust the oven temperature so that the food stays at an internal temperature of 140 degrees F or above. To prevent dryness, cover the dishes or wrap with aluminum foil.
-  For extended delays, it is safer to refrigerate the food and reheat it when your guests arrive. Food in shallow containers will cool rapidly to a safe temperature in the refrigerator. Do not worry about putting hot foods directly into the refrigerator because the thermostat will keep the unit running to maintain a safe temperature (40 degrees F or below). When your guests arrive, reheat food in a 325 degree F oven to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F, or until hot and steaming. Cold foods should be kept refrigerated until mealtime.
-  If you have prepared a turkey and you have determined it is safely done several hours before serving time:
- Remove the turkey from the oven and allow it to stand for 20 minutes.
 - If the turkey is stuffed, remove the stuffing, place it in a shallow container, cover and refrigerate.
 - Remove the legs, thighs, and wings. Carve the breast meat, and legs and thighs, if desired.
 - If you want to serve the meat cold, arrange the sliced turkey on platters or shallow containers. For carved turkey meat to be reheated, place the slices in shallow oven-safe baking dishes or pans. Cover and refrigerate the meat.
 - If you will be making gravy, pour off the drippings and refrigerate them. The gravy can be made at your leisure.
 - About thirty minutes before serving turkey to be heated, sprinkle with a little broth. Cover with foil and heat in a 325 degree F oven. The stuffing can be heated alongside the turkey.

(Source "No-Show" Guests Jeopardize Food, USDA, October 2001)

Leftovers

-  Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours or sooner.
-  Divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.
-  For best safety and quality, eat most leftovers within 1 to 2 days.
-  When serving leftovers, reheat them to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F, or until hot and steaming throughout.

Easy, Healthy Recipes

PUMPKIN ICE CREAM PIE

(Makes 8 servings)

1 can (15 to 16 oz.) pure pumpkin puree

1/4 cup sugar

1-1/2 to 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice, depending on how “spicy” a flavor you enjoy

1 quart (4 cups) vanilla ice cream or frozen yogurt, softened

1 package (9 ounces) 9-inch prepared graham cracker pie crust

Whipped topping, if desired

DIRECTIONS:

- ➔ Mix the pumpkin, sugar and spice until well blended.
- ➔ Quickly mix pumpkin mixture with the softened ice cream.
- ➔ Pour into crumb crust and freeze, uncovered, until firm —a couple of hours.
- ➔ When pie is frozen, cover with plastic wrap and then cover with freezer-quality foil or place in a freezer bag and squish out the air.
- ➔ Thaw pie slightly before serving. Top with whipped topping, if desired.

COOK'S TIPS:

- ☞ Pumpkin is a good source of beta-carotene, a nutrient that may help reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer and offers possible protection against heart disease.
- ☞ If you don't have pumpkin pie spice, for EACH TEASPOON of pumpkin pie spice, you can substitute a combination of:
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
 - 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
 - 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
 - NOTE: If you're missing either the nutmeg OR the cloves, you can increase the amount of the other spice to 1/4 teaspoon.
- ☞ Use nonfat ice cream or frozen yogurt and fat-free whipped topping for a lighter version.
- ☞ The online Good Housekeeping Web site (www.goodhousekeeping.com) advises “the best way to soften ice cream is to let it sit out at room temperature for about 15 minutes or in the refrigerator for 30.” Avoid repeatedly softening and refreezing ice cream as it gets icy.
- ☞ Be sure the package says it's a 9oz. pie shell.

BASIC MASHED POTATOES

(Serves 4 to 6)

2 pounds medium baking potatoes, washed, peeled and quartered (about 4- 6 potatoes)

1/4 to 1/2 cup milk (skim, 1%, 2% or whole)

2 tablespoons butter or margarine or as desired, room temperature

Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS:

- ➔ Place potatoes in a large pot with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil; then reduce to a heavy simmer and cook for 20 to 25 minutes or until tender. Remove pot from heat and drain potatoes. Re-cover potatoes in pot to keep warm.
- ➔ Heat milk in a smaller pan over low heat or in your microwave until hot; do not boil. (You can skip heating your milk but it will cool down your potatoes more.)
- ➔ Mash potatoes using a potato masher or an electric mixer on low speed just until lumps are gone. (Avoid overmashing or you'll have glue!) Add the butter or margarine. Slowly mix in enough milk until the mixture is smooth and creamy. Season to taste with salt and pepper.)

COOK'S TIPS:

- ☞ Baking potatoes work best for making mashed potatoes. Russet potatoes are the most common baking potato with Idaho potatoes the type frequently seen in stores. You may wish to weigh potatoes at the store to determine weight.
- ☞ Put potatoes in cool water while you're chopping them to keep them from turning brown.
- ☞ Make chunks of potatoes about the same size so they get done at the same time.
- ☞ If you want to peel your potatoes ahead of time, *Cooking Light* magazine (September, 2001) suggests the following to keep them from turning dark: "Dip the potatoes in a mixture of one quart water and three tablespoons lemon juice. Drain well, then cover and refrigerate until ready to use."
- ☞ Test if a potato is tender by checking if the blade of a small knife easily slides in and out.
- ☞ Drain potatoes in a colander to help assure removing excess water. Avoid lifting a heavy pot of hot water and potatoes: Place your colander over another bowl near potatoes. Transfer potatoes from the cooking pot to the colander with a slotted spoon. Dump hot water and return potatoes to pot.
- ☞ If your mashed potatoes tend to get lumpy, try putting them through a potato ricer after cooking. Then add the butter, hot milk, etc. and mix together. Consider "smashed" rather than "mashed" potatoes. You mash to remove lumps but don't attempt to have the potatoes perfectly smooth.
- ☞ Use white pepper if you don't want black flecks in your potatoes or omit pepper and let guests add their own.