### **Turkey**

**First week in November**
- Pre-order a fresh turkey from your local grocer or online.
  - Don’t know what kind of turkey to get? Here are your main options:
    - **Natural**
      - No artificial ingredients.
    - **Heritage**
      - Purebred, old breeds of birds. Often juicier and more flavorful, but more expensive.
    - **Kosher**
      - These are pre-brined. (And kosher, duh.)
    - **Organic**
      - No antibiotics or animal by-products in feed.
      - Fresh and frozen.
    - **Self-basting**
      - Pre-brined. Read label to know with what.

**Weekend before Thanksgiving**
- If you didn’t pre-order a turkey, you’ll probably have to go with a frozen one. Get it soon.
  - Clean out the fridge. **You’ll need the space. (And it needs to be done anyway.)**
    - Do your knives need sharpening? Do it today before things get crazy.
  - Set the table.
    - Now might be a good time to make sure you have the numbers for the local ER and poison control center. Just saying.

### **Hosting**

**Two weeks before Thanksgiving**
- Plan the menu and guest list. **Be realistic.**
  - Pro tip: Aim for a later dinner time. Candles make every meal better. Plus, you think you’ll have plenty of time to clean, but you won’t, and candlelight goes a long way to hide the dust.
  - Make note of dietary restrictions of guests. Revise the menu and guest list. Read each recipe making sure there’s time and space to make everything. Seriously, be realistic.
  - Pro tip: Look for recipes that use the same oven temperature so they can cook at the same time.

**Weekend before Thanksgiving**
- Clean out the fridge. **You’ll need the space. (And it needs to be done anyway.)**
  - Go shopping with the first list.

**Monday**
- Start defrosting frozen turkey.
  - How long will it take to defrost a frozen turkey? Figure 1 day per 5 pounds in the refrigerator (e.g. 10 lbs=2 days, 20 lbs=4 days), or half an hour per 5 pounds in cool water (e.g. 10 lbs=5 hours, 20 lbs=10 hours). Be sure to change the cool water every half an hour.
- Clean the house.
  - Yeah, we thought that was funny too. Just make it look presentable. Fresh flowers help. And don’t forget the candles.
  - If you need it, start making ice.

**Tuesday**
- Pick up fresh turkey.
  - Set the table.
    - Assemble casseroles, stuffng, etc. and store in the fridge uncooked. Bake sweet potatoes today for final prep tomorrow.
  - If you have one oven, bake your pies today.

**Wednesday**
- If you’re brining, today’s the day.
  - If you still don’t have a turkey, you might be running out of options. Here are some ideas:
    1. Turkey parts. They cook faster.
    2. Frozen game hens. They’re smaller, so they defrost and cook faster.
    3. A cooked ham. (Not a frozen ham!)
    4. How about a Tofurkey?
- Set the table.
  - Now might be a good time to make sure you have the numbers for the local ER and poison control center. Just saying.
  - Assemble casseroles, stuffing, etc. and store in the fridge uncooked. Bake sweet potatoes today for final prep tomorrow.
  - If you have one oven, bake your pies today.

**Thanksgiving morning**
- Time to cook that bird.
  - How long will it take to cook? Roast 13-15 minutes per pound at 325° or until thigh registers 165°-170°.
  - Tune into Turkey Confidential, 2 hours of live culinary triage on the day you need it most!
  - Chill the wine.
  - If you have two ovens (lucky!), bake your pies today.

**During dinner**
- Just starting to think about dinner? Yikes! Call around for reservations. Maybe it’s time for a traditional Chinese takeout meal.

**End of the day**
- Turkey freezes well, so strip the bird, refrigerate what you can use in the next 5 days, and freeze the rest. Freezing dries the turkey a bit, so keep some broth or gravy as well.
  - Be thankful.

### **Sides**

**Weekends**
- Need some unique sides?
  - We’ve got a ton, including vegan options, at splendidtable.org

**Weekdays**
- Make two shopping lists.
  - The first is for things you’ll need in advance, and the other for fresh items to be purchased the day before the meal.
  - Check for staples: cream, butter, coffee, spices, flour, corn starch, canned stock, etc.

- Go shopping with the first list.

- Prepare things that can be chilled and stored.
  - Cranberry sauce, soups, appetizer dips, etc.
  - Get better after a few days in the fridge.

- Go shopping with the second list.

- Warm the desserts in the oven and make coffee.

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For more help, visit splendidtable.org & tune into your local public radio station for Turkey Confidential on Thanksgiving.