

My Thanksgiving Countdown

One month out to Wednesday night, built for a **14 lb frozen turkey** and **dinner at 2:30pm on Thursday**.

ONE MONTH OUT

- ☐ Make a double batch of brioche dough, shape it into rolls, and freeze half for Thanksgiving and half for Christmas.
- ☐ Check your grocery delivery options: when holiday slots open and how far ahead you can build your cart. Set a reminder to book a slot the moment they open.

WHENEVER TURKEYS GO ON SALE

- ☐ Buy a frozen turkey and keep it in the freezer until thaw day. Stores usually stock them by mid-to-late October, with the best sales in the first two weeks of November.

THE FRIDAY BEFORE • 6 DAYS OUT

- ☐ Move the turkey to the fridge in a roasting pan on the bottom shelf. A 14 lb turkey needs about 3 1/2 days to thaw, leaving time to brine and dry it. A turkey thawed in cold water or the microwave must be cooked right away, so it can't be brined.

THE WEEKEND BEFORE

- ☐ Finalize your menu and grocery list.
- ☐ Book grocery delivery for Monday.

MONDAY

- ☐ Groceries arrive. Track down anything that didn't show up.
- ☐ Cut the stuffing bread into cubes and spread them on baking trays to dry. Keep the trays in the oven, then move them anywhere you have space when you need the oven.
- ☐ Make the cranberry sauce (Monday or Tuesday).

TUESDAY

- ☐ **9:45am:** start the turkey brine, 48 hours before it goes in the oven.
- ☐ Peel and chop the potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, and other root vegetables (Tuesday and/or Wednesday). Store them covered in water in the fridge.

WEDNESDAY

- ☐ Quick store run for fresh perishables, like milk.
- ☐ Finish all pies by tonight.
- ☐ Optional: assemble the stuffing and refrigerate it overnight.

My Thanksgiving Day Timeline

Dinner at 2:30pm. 14 lb brined turkey, carved in the kitchen.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ 7:45am | Take the turkey out of the brine. Pat it completely dry and return it to the fridge uncovered for crispier skin. |
| ☐ 9:15am | Adjust the racks so the turkey sits centered. Preheat the oven to 400°F. |
| ☐ 9:45am | Turkey goes in at 400°F. |
| ☐ 10:15am | Drop the oven to 325°F. Rotate the turkey legs every 30 minutes. |
| ☐ Morning | Assemble the stuffing if you didn't the night before. Refrigerate it. |
| ☐ 12:15pm | Frozen rolls out to thaw and rise at room temperature (60 to 90 minutes). |
| ☐ 12:45pm | Stuffing out of the fridge to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes. |
| ☐ 1:15pm | Turkey out when the thigh reads 180°F and the breast reads 165°F. Cover to rest. Raise the oven to 375°F. Stuffing and root vegetables in, both covered. Start the gravy from the pan drippings. |
| ☐ 1:30pm | Potatoes on to boil. |
| ☐ 1:45pm | Carve the turkey and hold the platter on keep warm. Green beans on. Uncover the stuffing. |
| ☐ 1:50pm | Uncover the root vegetables. Rolls in. |
| ☐ 2:15pm | Rolls out. Mash the potatoes. Set out the cranberry sauce. Give guests a 15 minute warning and ask someone to get drinks on the table. |
| ☐ 2:30pm | Eat! |

Times are estimates. If dinner lands within 30 minutes of 2:30, you're doing fine. Keep a few appetizers on hand for the wait.

Work Out Your Timing

List every dish on your menu and work backward from dinner. The shaded rows are examples from my menu.

Dinner time _____ **Turkey size** _____ **Guests** _____

1. For each dish, add its cook time and any rest or hold time, then subtract from your dinner time. That's when it starts cooking.
2. Subtract anything that has to happen first, like thawing, rising, or coming to room temperature. That's when you start.
3. Check the Cooks In column. Two dishes that need the same oven at different temperatures, at the same time, need a new plan.

[illegible]

Your Thanksgiving Countdown

Spread the work across the weeks before Thanksgiving. Fill in what happens when, using page 3 and my countdown as a guide.

Turkey to fridge _____ Brine starts _____ Grocery delivery _____

ONE MONTH OUT

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

TWO WEEKS OUT

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

THE WEEK BEFORE

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- ☐ _____

MONDAY

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TUESDAY

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WEDNESDAY

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- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Copy your start times from page 3, earliest first, and this is the only page you need on Thursday.

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