



# The Perfect Thanksgiving Menu

## APPETIZERS

### Cheeseball:

- Option 1 - Pineapple Cheeseball: [wellplated.com/pineapple-cheese-ball/](https://wellplated.com/pineapple-cheese-ball/)
- Option 2 - Cream Cheese Ball: [wellplated.com/cream-cheese-ball/](https://wellplated.com/cream-cheese-ball/)

### Fall Soup:

- Option 1 - Acorn Squash Soup: [wellplated.com/acorn-squash-soup/](https://wellplated.com/acorn-squash-soup/)
- Option 2 - Butternut Squash Apple Soup: [wellplated.com/butternut-squash-apple-soup/](https://wellplated.com/butternut-squash-apple-soup/)

**No-Cook Appetizers (optional):** mixed nuts, charcuterie board

## SIDES

**Cranberry Orange Sauce:** [wellplated.com/homemade-cranberry-sauce/](https://wellplated.com/homemade-cranberry-sauce/)

**Sweet Potato Casserole:** [wellplated.com/healthy-sweet-potato-casserole/](https://wellplated.com/healthy-sweet-potato-casserole/)

**Green Bean Casserole:** [wellplated.com/healthy-green-bean-casserole/](https://wellplated.com/healthy-green-bean-casserole/)

**Crockpot Mashed Potatoes:** [wellplated.com/crockpot-mashed-potatoes/](https://wellplated.com/crockpot-mashed-potatoes/)

**Cornbread Sausage Stuffing:** [wellplated.com/cornbread-sausage-stuffing/](https://wellplated.com/cornbread-sausage-stuffing/)

**Kale Brussels Sprouts Salad:** [wellplated.com/kale-and-brussels-sprouts-salad/](https://wellplated.com/kale-and-brussels-sprouts-salad/)

## MAIN EVENT

**Roast Turkey:** [wellplated.com/how-to-cook-a-turkey/](https://wellplated.com/how-to-cook-a-turkey/)

### Gravy:

- Option 1 - Make Ahead Mushroom Gravy: [wellplated.com/mushroom-gravy/](https://wellplated.com/mushroom-gravy/)
- Option 2 - Classic Turkey Gravy: [wellplated.com/turkey-gravy/](https://wellplated.com/turkey-gravy/)

## DESSERT

**Sweet Potato Pie:** [wellplated.com/old-fashioned-sweet-potato-pie/](https://wellplated.com/old-fashioned-sweet-potato-pie/)

## DRINKS

- Red, white, and/or rosé wine (try Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, and Provençal rosé); brut sparkling wine
- Beer: a mix of lighter and darker
- N/A beverages: sparkling waters and apple cider
- Rum Punch: [wellplated.com/rum-punch/](https://wellplated.com/rum-punch/)





# Thanksgiving Prep Timeline

## Start 2 Weeks Ahead for Less Stress

### Up to 2 Months Before

- Make and freeze your fall soup appetizer
- Make and freeze [Sweet Potato Pie](#)

### 5 to 6 Days Before

- Thaw the turkey, with enough time to allow for brining (1 day for a wet brine or 2 to 3 days for a dry brine)
- For every 5 pounds of turkey, plan on 24 hours thawing in the refrigerator (that's 3 days thawing for a 15-pound bird or 4 days for a 20-pound bird)

### Up to 5 Days Before

- Make [Make-Ahead Mushroom Gravy](#)

### 1 to 3 Days Before

- Brine the turkey ([wet brine](#) can be started 1 day before; [dry brine](#) needs 2 or 3 days)
- Set the table and set out any serveware you will need for appetizers and drinks

### Up to 2 Days Before

- Bake the cornbread for the stuffing; let sit uncovered at room temperature to dry out
- Bake the [sweet potato casserole](#) and [green bean casserole](#); let cool, cover with foil, and refrigerate
- Prepare and refrigerate the [cranberry sauce](#)
- Prepare the [kale brussels sprouts salad and dressing](#); refrigerate separately (wait to dress the salad until serving)

### 1 Day Before

- Assemble the [cornbread stuffing](#) to the point of baking, cover, and refrigerate
- Prepare the [mashed potatoes](#); let cool completely in the slow cooker, remove and cover the slow cooker insert, and refrigerate

### The Night Before

- Remove the soup from the freezer and let thaw in the refrigerator
- Chill white, sparkling, and rosé wines and other cold beverages (or place them in the garage or on the back porch to save space if you live in a cool area)

### The Morning Of

- Take care of last-minute items
- Assign someone to bartender duty (if needed) or make a batch cocktail like [rum punch](#)

### 4 to 5 Hours Before Serving (1 Hour Before Roasting)

- Remove the turkey from the refrigerator and let come to room temperature

### 3 1/2 to 4 Hours Before Serving (30 Minutes Before Roasting)

- Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F
- Stuff and tie the turkey; prepare the roasting pan

### 3 to 4 Hours Before Serving (Time to Roast the Turkey)

- Roast the turkey at 450 degrees F for 45 minutes
- After 45 minutes, reduce the oven temperature to 325 degrees F
- Roast the turkey for 1 to 1 1/2 hours more (a 14- to 16-pound turkey will need 2 to 2 1/2 hours total—when in doubt, check early. See [How Long to Cook a Turkey](#) for more)

### 1 to 2 Hours Before Serving (Around When Guests Arrive)

- Set out the cheeseball, crackers, and optional no-cook appetizers
- Return the slow cooker insert to the heating element; stir and turn the slow cooker to the “keep warm” setting; once the mashed potatoes are warm, stir again and add splashes of milk as needed to thin them
- Dress the salad, then return to the refrigerator

### The Last 30 Minutes of the Turkey Cook Time

- Remove the stuffing, sweet potatoes, and green bean casserole from the refrigerator; let stand at room temperature to take off the chill
- Return the insert to the slow cooker and turn on to heat
- Warm up the fall soup (use a slow cooker to save space)

### Let the Turkey Rest

- Allow at least 20 to 30 minutes; the turkey will stay hot, don't worry!

### While the Turkey Rests

- Reduce the oven to 300 degrees F; uncover and bake the stuffing
- Place the sweet potato casserole and green bean casserole in the oven to warm up (leave covered)
- Warm up the mushroom gravy or prepare [classic turkey gravy](#) with the turkey drippings
- Set out the cranberry sauce and salad
- Remove the pie(s) from the refrigerator and let stand at room temperature during the meal
- Serve the fall soup

### Carve the Turkey

See [How to Carve a Turkey](#) for details

**FEAST & BASK IN THE GLORY! YOU DID IT!**