

Prep Timeline

What's true for almost every Thanksgiving is already written in. Add your own on the blank lines, check things off as you go, and notice how little is actually left for Thursday.

The thaw math

A frozen turkey thaws in the fridge at about 24 hours per 4–5 pounds. Count back from Thursday — a 16-lb bird goes into the fridge on Sunday. If you're behind: cold-water thaw at 30 minutes per pound, changing the water every 30 minutes.

My turkey _____ lbs ÷ 4 = _____ days, so it goes in the fridge on _____

TWO WEEKS OUT

- ☐ Finalize the menu (page 1) and the headcount
- ☐ Order a fresh turkey, or buy a frozen one now
- ☐ Check gear: roasting pan, meat thermometer, enough serving dishes and spoons
- ☐ Count oven racks and fridge shelves — that, not time, is the real limit
- ☐ Make pie crusts and freeze them
- ☐ Make rolls (or roll dough) and freeze
- ☐ Make turkey or chicken stock for gravy; freeze
- ☐ Shop the "buy now" list (page 4)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

ONE WEEK OUT

- ☐ Make cranberry sauce — it keeps 10+ days in the fridge
- ☐ Clear the fridge: eat the leftovers, toss the science projects
- ☐ Confirm who is bringing what, and in which dish
- ☐ Shop the "this week" list (page 4)
- ☐ Fill in the clock times on Thursday's countdown (page 3)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

THE WEEKEND BEFORE

- ☐ Frozen turkey into the fridge on your thaw date
- ☐ Cube bread for stuffing and leave it out to dry
- ☐ Pull out platters and serving spoons; sticky-note each one with the dish it's for
- ☐ Assign jobs: who carves, who does dishes, who brings ice
- ☐ Bake and freeze anything else that freezes well
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

MONDAY

- ☐ Peel and chop the hearty vegetables (onions, celery, carrots, squash); refrigerate
- ☐ Make the gravy base from your stock
- ☐ Move frozen pie crusts, rolls, and stock to the fridge to thaw
- ☐ Last run for anything that keeps all week
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

TUESDAY

- ☐ Dry-brine the turkey (it needs 1–3 days, so Tuesday is ideal)
- ☐ Shop the "Tuesday/Wednesday" list: cream, herbs, greens, ice
- ☐ Bake the pies that hold well — apple, pecan
- ☐ Make casserole parts: cheese sauce, crumb topping, sweet potato mash
- ☐ Chill the drinks
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

WEDNESDAY *assembly day*

- ☐ Bake pumpkin and other custard pies
- ☐ Assemble every casserole unbaked; cover and refrigerate
- ☐ Make mashed potatoes today; reheat Thursday with more butter and cream
- ☐ Make the stuffing or dressing; refrigerate unbaked
- ☐ Wet-brine the turkey if that's your method (12–24 hours)
- ☐ Set the table tonight, not tomorrow
- ☐ Put page 3 on the fridge
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____