

RRH Class: Make Ahead Holiday Foods Handout

Pre-Prep Hints

- Select your holiday recipes well in advance—2-3 weeks is a good target.
- Ensure your kitchen is well-stocked with the ingredients and equipment you will need.
- Analyze the recipes and determine if any can be successfully made several days or weeks in advance and held in the refrigerator or freezer until needed. Ex: Fruit pies like apple or cherry can be made but not baked and then frozen for up to 4 months.
- Many recipes that can't be made in their entirety in advance do have some parts that can be. Ex: Pie crust can be made and frozen for up to six months before using.
- Make a prepping calendar starting with the recipes that have parts or the entire dish can be held the longest in the refrigerator or freezer.
- The day before and the day of a holiday can be a very crowded oven use days, so unless you have 2 ovens (I don't), it is a good idea to think of some alternatives like a separate turkey roaster or the oven in your RV.
- Note that some recipes can be prepared in advance using more than 1 method, so use whichever one works best for your schedule. Ex: Fruit pies can be made and frozen unbaked for months ahead of time, or the crust can be made and frozen then used the day before to make and bake.

Pies

- Mix up piecrust recipe and freeze in 1-crust portions in baggies
 - *RRH Class: Apple Pie from Scratch* <https://youtu.be/NwYKy9yIHw>
 - *Favorite Pie Crust:* <https://youtu.be/oxLlaWg1Kj4>
- Can your own pie fillings
 - <https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can/canning-fruits-and-fruit-products/pie-fillings/>
- Pumpkin—make filling 3 days ahead and refrigerate.
 - Roll out one crust, fill with refrigerated filling and bake as usual
- Fruit pies
 - Make filling and chill or used canned filling
 - Take 2 crusts from freezer and thaw. Roll out bottom crust and fill with chilled filling. Top with second crust. Place in freezer on a level shelf. Once frozen, wrap in plastic wrap and place in plastic bag. Return to freezer for up to 4 months.
 - Take from freezer and remove plastic covering. Do not thaw. Cover top with foil and bake in preheated 450°F oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 375°F and bake another 15 minutes. Remove foil and bake for 50-60 minutes until done.
 - Note: While you can freeze the pie and then remove it from the pie pan so you can reuse the pan, it is a bit risky to do. To be safe you can purchase multiple foil pans for freezing several pies at once.
- Custard, cream (except those that call for serving as a frozen dessert), and meringue pies do not freeze well, so avoid doing that. You can make them and

refrigerate them up to two days in advance if you cover them lightly in plastic wrap. Meringue should be added to the pie on serving day.

- Raspberry Cream Pie (frozen) <https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a10217/raspberry-cream-pie/>
- Pam's Sour Cream Lemon Pie
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 1 cup milk
 - ¼ cup corn starch
 - 3 egg yolks
 - ¼ cup butter
 - 1 tbsp lemon zest
 - ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
 - 1 cup sour cream

Mix sugar and cornstarch together. Whisk together yolks, milk, butter, lemon juice and zest and stir in sugar and cornstarch. Heat over medium heat until thick. Cool. Stir in sour cream and pour into baked pie shell. Chill 2 hours. Serve topped with sweetened whipped cream if desired.

Side Dishes

Potatoes

- Mashed white potatoes

Make your mashed potatoes as usual but do use butter and milk or cream for some fat which helps maintain taste and texture when freezing. Place finished potatoes in an appropriate freezer or refrigerator container. Mashed potatoes are good up to a month in the freezer or 4 days in the refrigerator. Reheat using one of the following methods:

 - Slow cooker—remove from container and warm for about two hours on low setting.
 - Stovetop—Place frozen potatoes in a medium saucepan and stir over low heat until defrosted, then cover the pot and heat, stirring occasionally, until heated through.
 - Oven—thaw for a few hours then place in an oven-proof dish and bake covered at 350°F for 30-40 minutes.
 - Microwave—(my preferred method for refrigerated and for thawed frozen potatoes) Place in a microwave-proof container and cook in 1-minute increments until heated through.

Sweet Potatoes

- Sweet potatoes can be baked and refrigerated for 4 days ahead of serving day. Leave them, peels on, in the fridge until you are ready to make your dish.
- Here is a link for Pecan Sweet Potato Casserole that can be made 3 days in advance or frozen for longer before baking. It is really good!
<https://cookieandkate.com/sweet-potato-casserole-recipe/>

Cranberries

- Make your own home made cranberry orange sauce: *Water Bath Canning Cranberry Sauce* <https://youtu.be/HIOwNy8vD7E>
- Pam's Holiday Cranberry Cream Salad <https://youtu.be/fApK9JhPxYA> (includes the recipe)
 - Prepare the pineapple, cranberry, and sugar mixture as described in the recipe. After resting for the two hours, drain and refrigerate the mixture for up to three days until ready to add the whipped cream and marshmallows for serving the next day.

Green Beans

- For best results in holiday recipes use fresh or frozen green beans rather than canned varieties from the store.
 - This Slow Cooker Green Beans recipe can be made up to 2 days in advance and then reheated in the slow cooker, thus not needing any oven space on the busy cooking day.
<https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a44272253/slow-cooker-green-beans-recipe/>

Stuffing

- Practically everyone has a favorite stuffing recipe, and many folks are quite particular about which special ingredients they add for that secret unique flavor. For me, my secret ingredient is, and has been for years, to start with Pepperidge Farm Herb Seasoned Classic Stuffing Mix. That takes care of the bread, the seasonings, and most of the work! To that I add chicken broth, diced celery, onion, and butter. And that is it!
 - It is no longer considered safe to stuff a turkey with the stuffing to bake along with the bird. Too much risk of bacterial (botulism) contamination. Hence one more oven dish on a crowded oven day. The solution to that is to use a slow cooker, which I do. I also put the mix together a couple of days in advance, put it in a large baggie and keep it refrigerated until the moment I pour it from the bag into a preheated slow cooker. Regardless of the recipe you use, check often to ensure it doesn't dry out.

Breads

- *Refrigerator Rolls-Five Variations* <https://youtu.be/F6qD3b67e9s>
- Dinner rolls and variations
 - Using your favorite recipe or mine from the above video, make the dough and shape the rolls as desired. Do not allow them to rise, rather, freeze them on a baking sheet and once frozen, move them to a plastic bag. Use within one month.
 - Thaw them slowly by placing them on a baking sheet in the refrigerator overnight. Take them out of the refrigerator and allow to rise before baking.
- Overnight Blueberry French Toast for Christmas Morning
 - <https://www.southernliving.com/recipes/overnight-blueberry-french-toast-casserole>
 - *How to Make Challah Bread.* <https://youtu.be/PQfsdXnc04w>

Turkey

- While the turkey is most likely roasted on the day of the holiday, you can prep it the night before and put it in the fridge so all you must do is preheat the oven, remove the turkey from the fridge, place in the pan, and roast.
 - Turkey bags make it very easy to prep the day ahead. We have made a video on how we do a turkey in a turkey bag, but note the warning in the video description against roasting a stuffed turkey like we do in the video. Instead, you can place aromatics such as lemon slices, carrots, celery, and onions in the cavity. <https://youtu.be/9uCnVTbwyGY>

Sample of Our Basic Thanksgiving Menu

Food	Advance Prep	On the Day
Turkey	Prepped the night before and placed in the turkey bag in the fridge	Take turkey out of fridge and place in oven.
Gravy	None	Make gravy from drippings in the turkey bag while Jim slices the turkey.
Stuffing	Prep 2 days in advance and store in fridge	Cook in slow cooker 3-4 hours before serving time.
Mashed potatoes	Make 1 week in advance, freeze, and thaw in fridge the night before.	Heat in the microwave.
Sweet potatoes	Make casserole 4 days in advance and store in fridge in a baking dish.	Remove from fridge and place in oven 45 minutes before serving.
Green Beans	Make recipe in slow cooker 2 days in advance and store in fridge.	Heat on the stove in a saucepan.
Rolls	Make and freeze a month in advance. Remove from freezer night before and thaw in refrigerator	Remove from fridge and allow enough time for final rising. Bake in oven after turkey comes out.
Cranberry salad	Make first part of recipe as shown in video and store in fridge for 2 days. Night before serving, add marshmallows and fold into whipped cream. Refrigerate.	Remove from fridge and serve.
Pies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cherry—make a month in advance and freeze. 2. Pumpkin—make filling 3 days in advance and refrigerate. 3. Raspberry Cream—make day before and freeze Afternoon before—complete baking cherry and pumpkin.	Whip cream for pumpkin pie. Cut and serve.