



*Christmas Meal
Planning Guide*



Create Your Christmas Menu

Planning your holiday menu is the first step toward organizing a delicious and stress-free Christmas meal. Start with the main courses and build your menu around them.

Main Course: _____

Appetizers & Starters: _____

Side Dishes: _____

Desserts: _____

Drinks & Beverages: _____

Quick Tip: Incorporate family favorites alongside traditional Christmas dishes for a mix of familiarity and festive charm.



Menu Ideas:

Main Courses:

- Roast Turkey with Herb Butter
- Glazed Ham with Honey and Mustard
- Beef Wellington
- Baked Salmon with Dill and Lemon
- Roast Duck with Orange Sauce
- Stuffed Pork Loin with Apples and Cranberries
- Prime Rib with Garlic and Rosemary
- Roast Lamb with Mint Sauce
- Chicken Roulade with Spinach and Cheese
- Vegetarian Nut Roast with Mushroom Gravy

Appetizers & Starters:

- Shrimp Cocktail with Spicy Sauce
- Bacon-Wrapped Dates Stuffed with Goat Cheese
- Mini Crab Cakes with Lemon Aioli
- Spinach and Artichoke Dip with Pita Chips
- Prosciutto-Wrapped Asparagus
- Baked Brie with Cranberry Chutney
- Deviled Eggs with Smoked Paprika
- Stuffed Mushrooms with Sausage and Parmesan
- Mini Caprese Skewers (Tomato, Mozzarella, Basil)
- Charcuterie Board with Cured Meats, Cheeses, and Fruit

Side Dishes

- Creamy Mashed Potatoes with Garlic and Butter
- Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Balsamic Glaze
- Sweet Potato Casserole with Marshmallows
- Classic Bread Stuffing with Herbs
- Green Bean Almondine (Green Beans with Almonds)
- Scalloped Potatoes with Cheese
- Roasted Root Vegetables with Thyme
- Cranberry Sauce with Orange Zest
- Buttery Dinner Rolls
- Parmesan and Herb Roasted Carrots

Desserts

- Classic Yule Log (Bûche de Noël)
- Christmas Pudding with Brandy Sauce
- Gingerbread Cookies with Royal Icing
- Red Velvet Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting
- Apple Pie with Cinnamon and Nutmeg
- Chocolate Peppermint Bark
- Pecan Pie with Bourbon Whipped Cream
- Pumpkin Cheesecake
- Tiramisu with Espresso and Mascarpone
- Sticky Toffee Pudding



Grocery Shopping List

Meat and Poultry:

Produce:

Pantry Staples:

Dairy & Cheese:

Beverages:

Other:



Organize Your Cooking Timeline

The key to a stress-free Christmas meal is to plan a cooking schedule that makes sense. Here's how to break it down:

One Week Before Christmas:

- Finalize your menu and make sure you have all the ingredients.
- Prepare any freezer-friendly dishes, like soups or desserts, ahead of time.
- Clean your kitchen and clear out space in your fridge for upcoming ingredients.

Two Days Before Christmas:

- Defrost any frozen meat (like turkey or ham) if necessary.
- Chop vegetables and store them in airtight containers.
- Prepare make-ahead dishes like cranberry sauce, stuffing, or desserts.



One Day Before Christmas:

- Set the table or prep your dining space.
- Assemble any casseroles or sides that can be refrigerated overnight.
- Bake desserts like pies or cakes and store them at room temperature or in the fridge.

On The Day

- Follow your cooking timeline, starting with the longest-cooking dishes (such as roasting the turkey or ham).
- Heat up side dishes or appetizers just before serving.
- Serve drinks and appetizers as guests arrive and save dessert for later!



Delegate and Share Responsibilities

You don't have to do everything yourself! Delegating tasks will lighten your load and allow you to enjoy the holiday with your guests.

- **Delegate Side Dishes:** Ask family members or friends to bring a side dish, dessert, or drink. This not only helps take pressure off you but adds variety to the meal.
- **Set Up a Serving Station:** Designate an area for appetizers and drinks. This will allow guests to help themselves, making them feel at home while freeing you up for other tasks.
- **Clean as You Go:** Enlist a few family members to help clean up as you cook. This ensures that the kitchen stays organized and prevents a pile of dishes at the end of the meal.

Quick Tip: Set out snacks or small plates for early guests to keep them entertained while the main meal is cooking.



Setting the Table

A beautifully set table enhances the holiday atmosphere and creates a welcoming space for your Christmas meal.

- **Table Linens & Settings:** Choose a festive tablecloth or runner that complements your holiday decor. Add matching or complementary napkins, and set the table with your best plates and silverware.
- **Centerpiece Creation:** Create a simple yet elegant centerpiece with candles, greenery, and ornaments. If space is limited, opt for smaller centerpieces that don't obstruct guests' view across the table.
- **Place Cards:** If you have a large group, use place cards to assign seats. This helps avoid confusion and encourages conversation among guests.
- **Quick Tip:** Add small festive details like personalized napkin rings, holiday-themed place cards, or a small ornament at each place setting to make your table extra special.



Create a Christmas Beverage Station

A designated beverage station will keep drinks organized and allow guests to help themselves:

- **Hot Chocolate Bar:** Set up a hot chocolate station with marshmallows, whipped cream, chocolate chips, and candy canes. Include festive mugs to make it fun and cozy.
- **Cocktail & Mocktail Bar:** Set up a self-serve station with a few signature holiday drinks like mulled wine, spiced cider, or eggnog. Don't forget to provide non-alcoholic options for kids or guests who prefer mocktails.
- **Water & Soft Drinks:** Provide sparkling or still water, as well as sodas or juices, so everyone has plenty of options.
- **Quick Tip:** Keep extra mugs, glasses, and drink napkins available at your beverage station so guests can easily refill without needing to ask.

Plan for Leftovers



After the feast is over, it's important to have a plan for leftovers to reduce waste and make the most of the extra food:

- **Storage Solutions:** Use clear, airtight containers to store leftovers. Label them with the contents and date for easy identification.
- **Share with Guests:** Have extra containers or festive take-home boxes available so guests can take leftovers with them.
- **Creative Leftovers Recipes:** Plan some easy leftover recipes like turkey sandwiches, ham and cheese breakfast casserole, or cranberry sauce pancakes. This way, you can continue enjoying the flavors of Christmas without feeling like you're eating the same meal over and over.
- **Quick Tip:** Freeze any perishable leftovers within two days to extend their shelf life.