

## **Mama Knows Thanksgiving**

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Thanksgiving is one of family favourite holidays. And a huge part of this holiday is the food that is shared with family and friends.

There are number of ways you can prepare your special feast and most of you will probably choose the traditional one: Roast turkey with stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, pumpkin pie....

Or you can choose an alternative – not so traditional way to go. That could mean still having the traditional turkey – but cooked just a little bit differently and matched with non traditional dishes.

In this book, I am offering you to choose which ever one will appeal the most to you – you will have all the instructions and direction to make sure your Thanksgiving dinner is a total success.

## Planning Your Thanksgiving Dinner

As with all special dinners, organization and planning is a key:

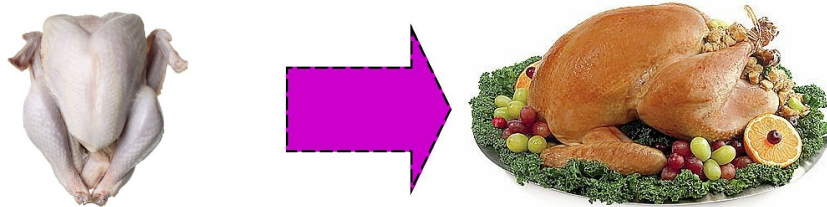
- Make a list – at least one – and make sure you use it! Great idea is to actually have a book dedicated to special events. Your notes may be a valuable tool in the future.
- Write or print out recipes you are going to use – along with all the tips . And then make your shopping list. The trick of course is to make sure you bring your shopping list with you when you go to get your groceries! (I am only saying this because I am notorious for making a detailed lists and having to return home to get them)
- Take the time to pull out dishes, cutlery, glasses, napkins and decorations you are planning on using. Add what you need to purchase to your list – or make a list #2 – for items you can't get at a supermarket and have to visit specialty or department stores. Really good idea is to review your serving dishes – you can use coloured sticky notes to mark which dish you will use to serve which dish. You don't have to leave these out – you can put them back into your cupboards with the stickies in them. Believe me, it will be a great help the day of your Thanksgiving dinner.
- If you are starting your planning well ahead of time, you may want to do a “test run” on a recipe you are not sure about to see how it turns out. You may avoid unpleasant surprises.
- Another tip i can give you is to set your festive table the day before your Thanksgiving dinner. It will give you the chance to re-arrange things you are not quite happy with, add special touches and avoid possible rush the day of the dinner.

Most of all – relax! This holiday is all about getting together with friends and family and celebrate

! If you are relaxed – even if things are not perfect – everyone attending will still have a good time.

So – give thanks and enjoy your holiday!

## How to cook a turkey



That famous bird is the star of your Thanksgiving so selecting it and cooking it the easiest and safest way – especially if this is your first Thanksgiving dinner – is of the utmost importance. First – decide if you want to go with fresh, unfrozen turkey or a frozen one. Remember that a free-range and large turkeys will be bit tougher and have stronger flavour. If you decide to go with frozen turkey, plan ahead so that you can thaw it properly. Then decide if you want to stuff it or not. It is not a problem to cook the stuffing outside of the bird – it is actually more and more recommended by food experts. Make sure you have an accurate meat thermometer to get your turkey properly and fully cooked.

### Step-by-step guide to cooking turkey:

- 16- to 24-pound dressed turkey, fresh or frozen (allow 1 pound per serving for birds 12 pounds or under, and 3/4 pound
- Kosher salt and ground pepper
- Dried herbs and spices of choice: sage, thyme, garlic powder, onion powder
- Dressing (stuffing) of choice, optional
- Vegetable oil

If you buy frozen turkey, the safest way to thaw it is in the refrigerator. You can also thaw it in cold water or in the microwave.

### To thaw turkey in the refrigerator:

Keep the turkey in wrapping you bought it in, place in a pan and leave in the refrigerator for 24 hours for each 5 lbs. of weight. That would mean you need to leave large turkey defrost in your refrigerator for about 5 days – something you need to take into consideration when purchasing it. Remember that giblets and neck are usually packed in the neck and body cavities of frozen turkeys. You can take them out near the end of thawing period – it will speed up the thawing process and you can use them to make turkey stock for your gravy.

To thaw turkey in cold water:

First thing you need to make about is that the turkey is in a leakproof package. It will prevent bacteria form getting to the meat and also prevent poultry tissues from absorbing water – that would ruin the meat. You will need to change the water about every 30 minutes and you

will need to calculate about 30 minutes per pound of turkey. And make sure that you start cooking the turkey right after thawing in the cold water.

#### **To thaw in the microwave:**

If you decide to use this method, you will need to remove the turkey from the wrap it came in. Consideration has to be given to the fact that most plastic wraps and other packaging materials are not designed for microwaving and may contain chemicals that would transfer into the meat. The best approach here is to actually consult manufacturer's instruction and start cooking immediately after defrosting.

To refrigerate fresh turkey:

A whole turkey purchased fresh (not frozen) may safely be refrigerated up to 2 days before roasting.

#### **To prepare the turkey for roasting :**

- Do not stuff your turkey, until you are ready to start cooking it.
- Rinse the outside and inside of the bird under cold, running water.
- Cut away and discard any fat.
- Place the turkey on layers of paper towels and make sure it drains well.
- Pat outside and inside dry and sprinkle the cavity with salt and pepper.
- To do the stuffing part, stand the bird on its tail in a large bowl and using a tablespoon, stuff the neck cavity first.
- When done, pull the neck skin over the dressing and fasten it to the body with a metal skewer.
- Then turn the bird, place neck end in the bowl and stuff the cavity loosely with your dressing. It is important to stuff the dressing fairly loosely – it will expand during cooking.
- Then remove the turkey from the bowl and place, breast side up on a clean working surface.
- Pull the legs close to the body and tie the ends together with cotton string.
- Then fold the wings under the bird – it will provide a platform for roasting.
- When the turkey is prepared like this, place it – again breast side up on a wire rack in a shallow roasting pan and brush all exposed parts with vegetable oil.
- Then sprinkle with your choice of herbs, spices, salt and pepper.
- Before placing in the oven, you will need to insert a meat thermometer.
- Make sure you insert it into one of the inner thighs near the breast, making sure the tip of the thermometer is not touching a bone. Many commercially prepared turkeys are packed with a disposable thermometer, which is inserted into the breast. This thermometer should pop when the bird is done – but – I definitely recommend using proper meat thermometer – it is a lot more reliable. The additional benefit is that you can actually watch when the turkey is close to being done – and that will help with preparation of rest of your meal.

**To roast the turkey:**

- Preheat the oven to 325 F.
- Cover the turkey with extra-heavy aluminum foil – leave space between the bird and the foil – that means lightly tucking the foil around the front, back and sides of the bird. Do not add water to the pan, and roast the turkey until your thermometer reaches 180 F and juices run clear.
- Roasting time will vary depending on the bird and your oven as well. That is why it is important to use reliable meat thermometer. When you insert thermometer into the dressing, it need to read 165F for food safety.
- Remove the aluminum foil about 30 minutes before the turkey is done to complete the browning.
- When your turkey is cooked, remove it from the oven, place it on a serving platter or carving board; cover loosely with aluminum foil and let stand for at least 10 minutes before carving.

Many variables can affect the roasting time of your turkey:

- If the turkey is partially frozen, it will need longer cooking
- The depth and size you the pan you are using will affect heat circulation to all areas of the bird
- The use of foil tent for the entire cooking time will slow cooking down
- Turkey placed in a dark roasting pans will cook faster than in a stainless steel or aluminum one
- When you use the pan lid, it will speed up the cooking
- Stuffed turkey will take longer to cook than one without stuffing
- The position of your oven rack can affect cooking and heat circulation
- If your turkey or the pan you will use is too large, it will block heat circulation and affect cooking

# Traditional Thanksgiving Dinner

## Basic Bread Stuffing:



### Ingredients:

Enough for an 8 to 10-pound turkey.

- 1/4 cup finely chopped onions
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/3 cup butter
- 4 cups bread cubes
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon ground sage
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- turkey or chicken broth

### Directions:

- Sauté onion and celery in the butter until softened.
- Combine onion mixture with bread, pepper, eggs, salt, sage and poultry seasoning in a large mixing bowl.
- Stir in broth until well moistened.

Stuff the inside of your turkey and close off the opening

- Or, bake in a greased covered shallow casserole at 325° for about 35 to 45 minutes.
- Take the cover off the last 5 minutes to brown.

## Apple Pecan Stuffing



### Ingredients:

- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups dry wheat bread cubes, about 8 slices
- 2 medium apples, peeled, cored, and finely chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 teaspoon ground sage
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

### Directions:

- In a small saucepan, combine chicken broth, celery, onion, butter, and salt.
- Bring to a boil; reduce heat, cover, and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 5 to 7 minutes.
- In a large mixing bowl, combine bread cubes, chopped apples, chopped pecans, sage, cinnamon, and pepper.
- Pour broth and vegetable mixture over the bread cubes.
- Gently stir to moisten.
- Spoon into a greased 1 1/2-quart casserole. Bake, covered, at 350° for 25 to 30 minutes.
- May also use as a stuffing for an 8 to 10 pound turkey.

## Bread and Oyster Stuffing



### Ingredients:

- 1 pound white bread slices, dried in a 250° oven for 1 hour, about 10 to 12 cups
- torn
- 3/4 cup butter or margarine
- 2 cups finely chopped celery
- 2 cups finely chopped onion
- 1/2 cup milk, scalded
- 16 ounces oysters, drained
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

### Directions:

- In a large skillet, sauté onion and celery in butter until tender.
- Tear the dried bread up into a large bowl; sprinkle with warm milk then toss.
- Add onion and celery mixture and the drained oysters.
- Stir gently to mix ingredients together. Sprinkle with lemon juice, poultry seasoning, salt and pepper.
- Mix thoroughly but gently.

Makes enough stuffing for a 14 pound turkey.

- This stuffing may be cooked in shallow baking pans, covered with foil, for about 25 minutes at 325°.
- Remove foil to brown just before serving.

## Basic Turkey Gravy



### Ingredients:

- Pan drippings
- Flour
- Water

### Directions:

- Pour the turkey or chicken pan drippings into a 2 cup measuring cup and skim the fat off.
- Put about 1/4 cup of the fat into a saucepan and stir in 1/4 cup of flour (all purpose).
- Add enough water to the drippings (throw the rest of the fat away) to make 2 cups of liquid.
- Pour the 2 cups of liquid into the flour/fat mixture.
- Cook, stirring, until thickened and bubbling.
- Cook for about 1 minute, stirring.
- Add salt and pepper to taste.

This recipe makes about 2 cups of gravy.

## Basic Old-Fashioned Giblet Gravy

### Ingredients:

- giblets from 1 turkey or chicken
- 4 cups cold water
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups pan drippings or chicken broth
- 1/2 cup milk or half and half
- 1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper
- 2 hard-cooked eggs, chopped

### Directions:

- Remove liver from giblets and refrigerate.
- Place giblets in saucepan, cover with 4 cups cold water and bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat and simmer for about an hour.
- Now add the liver and simmer for another 30 minutes.
- Drain in a colander, allow to cool, chop and set aside.
- Melt butter in a heavy saucepan and stir in the flour.
- Cook and stir for 3 to 5 minutes, or until butter barely begins to turn golden.
- Slowly stir in drippings or chicken broth and milk or half and half.
- Continue cooking and stirring until thickened.
- Season with salt and pepper.
- Stir in hard cooked eggs and chopped giblets and serve.

## Mashed Potatoes



### Ingredients:

- 3 pounds potatoes
- water to cover
- salt
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup milk
- 6 tablespoons butter, room temperature
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

### Directions:

- Peel potatoes and cut into large pieces.
- Cover and cook in boiling salted water for 15 to 20 minutes, or until they are tender.
- Drain potatoes.
- Put potatoes through a ricer or mash in a large mixing bowl until no lumps remain.
- Add milk in small amounts, beating after each addition, until desired consistency is reached.
- Add butter, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and pepper, beating until mashed potatoes are light and fluffy.

## Cheddar Cheese Mashed Potatoes



### Ingredients:

- 4 large baking potatoes, about 2 pounds, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup heated milk
- 2 tablespoons butter, room temperature
- 4 ounces shredded process American cheese
- 4 ounces shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- pinch ground red pepper or springs of parsley

### Directions:

- Cook potatoes in boiling water until tender, about 15 minutes.
- Drain well.
- Put potatoes back in saucepan; stir over low heat until dry, about 2 minutes.
- Remove from heat.
- Mash, adding about 1/2 cup milk and the 2 tablespoons butter.
- Add grated cheese and seasonings.
- Beat with a spoon, adding remaining milk until desired consistency.

## Cream Cheese Mashed Potatoes



### Ingredients:

- 8 to 12 medium baking potatoes, (about 3 to 4 lbs)
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 8 ounces sour cream
- 6 to 8 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 to 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

### Directions:

- Peel and quarter potatoes.
- In a large saucepan, cook potatoes in enough water to cover for 20 to 25 minutes or until tender.
- Drain off liquid. In a large mixing bowl, combine the potatoes, cream cheese, sour cream, butter, garlic powder, and pepper.
- Beat the mixture with an electric mixer till fluffy.
- Turn mixture into a buttered 2-quart casserole or baking dish.
- Top with the shredded Cheddar cheese.
- Cover and bake in 350° oven for 45 minutes.
- Uncover and bake for 15 minutes longer

## Easy Brown Sugar Glazed Carrots



### Ingredients:

- 16 ounces baby carrots
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/3 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 cup water
- dash salt
- pepper, to taste

### Directions:

- In a medium saucepan, combine the baby carrots with remaining ingredients.
- Stir to blend ingredients. Bring to a boil over high heat.
- Reduce heat to medium and continue boiling (uncovered) for about 20 to 25 minutes, or until carrots are tender and the liquid has evaporated.

## Green Beans with Sour Cream and Bacon



### Ingredients:

- 4 cups cooked green beans (fresh, frozen, or canned), reserve cooking liquid
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 slices bacon, cooked crisp, crumbled

### Directions:

- Drain cooked green beans, reserving 1 cup liquid; keep beans warm in serving dish.
- In a saucepan, sauté onion in butter; stir in flour.
- With the saucepan over low heat, gradually stir bean liquid into the flour and butter mixture.
- Stir in sugar, vinegar, and chopped parsley.
- Continue cooking, stirring constantly, until sauce is thickened.
- Add sour cream.
- Pour sauce over beans and top with crumbled bacon.

## Old Fashioned Pumpkin Pie



### Ingredients:

- 1 -1/4 cups pumpkin puree, canned or fresh
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon all-purpose flour
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup evaporated milk, undiluted
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 unbaked pastry shell (9-inch)

### Directions:

- Combine pumpkin, sugar, salt, spices, and flour in a medium mixing bowl.
- Add eggs; mix well.
- Add evaporated milk, water, and vanilla; mix well.
- Pour into pastry-lined pie pan.
- Bake at 400° for 15 minutes; reduce heat to 350° and bake about 35 minutes longer, or until center is set.

## **Gourmet Thanksgiving Menu**

- ❖ Salad of Greens, Fennel and Tangerines with Honey-Lime Vinaigrette
- ❖ Roast Turkey with Pan Gravy Wild Rice and Mushroom Dressing
- ❖ Potatoes Gratin with Caramelized Onions
- ❖ Cranberry Relish
- ❖ Roasted Green Beans With Walnuts and Marinated Button Mushrooms
- ❖ Caramel Pumpkin Custard
- ❖ Pumpkin Lace Cookies

## **Salad of Greens, Fennel and Tangerines with Honey-Lime Vinaigrette**



### **Ingredients:**

- 12 cups torn mixed salad greens
- 1 small fennel bulb
- 2 seedless tangerines or small navel oranges
- Honey-Lime Vinaigrette:
  - 1/2 cup tangerine juice
  - 1/4 cup canola oil
  - 2 tbsp minced shallot
  - 2 tbsp lime juice
  - 2 tbsp (liquid honey
  - 1/2 tsp dijon mustard
  - 1/4 tsp salt

### **Directions:**

- Place greens in large salad bowl.
- Halve and core fennel bulb; slice paper-thin (using mandolin if available).
- Place over greens. Peel tangerines; cut off white pith and cut out segments from membranes.
- Place over fennel bulb.

Honey-Lime Vinaigrette: In small bowl and using whisk or hand blender, whisk together tangerine juice, oil, shallot, lime juice, honey, mustard and salt.

## Roast Turkey with Pan Gravy



### Ingredients:

- 1 Spanish onion or 2 onions
- 2 stalks of celery
- 1 large carrot
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon of fresh chopped sage
- 4 springs of fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 5 crushed peppercorns
- 1 turkey – 12 – 14 lbs.
- 2 tablespoons of butter, melted
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon of salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of pepper

### Pan gravy:

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of flour
- 6 cups of turkey stock
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon each salt and pepper
- 1 teaspoon of lemon juice

**Directions:**

- Dice onion, celery and carrot into small pieces. In a skillet, heat up oil and sauté vegetables until lightly browned. – That will take about 7-8 minutes on medium heat. Let cool, then mix in sage, thyme, bay leaf and peppercorns. You can make this ahead and refrigerate the mixture for up to 8 hours.
- Pat turkey dry inside and out. Stuff body cavity with vegetable mixture and close cavity shut with a skewer. Tie legs together and tuck wings under back.
- Lace turkey, breast side up on a greased rack in roasting pan. Brush with butter, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and roast at 375F oven for 1 hour.
- Remove foil, roast, basting with drippings every 20 minutes, until meat thermometer, inserted in the thickest part of thigh registers 185F – that should take about 1 – 1-1/2 hours.
- Remove skewers. Spoon vegetable mixture and juices into a bowl; set aside. Lift turkey onto warmed platter, tent with foil and let stand for at least 15 minutes – up to 30 minutes.

**Pan Gravy:**

Meanwhile, skim all but about 2 tablespoons of the fat from pan juices ; whisk flour into pan. Place pan over medium heat, cook for 2 minutes, stirring and scrapping up any brown bits from bottom of the pan. Gradually whisk in stock. Add vegetable mixture to pan juices along with salt and pepper. Bring to boil and boil, stirring constantly, until reduced by half – about 15 minutes. Stir in lemon juice, adding a little more to taste. Strain into warmed gravy boat.

**Turkey Stock:****Ingredients:**

- Turkey neck, gizzard and heart
- 1 onion, quartered
- 1 stalk celery with leaves chopped
- 1 clove of garlic
- 3 springs of parsley
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper

**Directions:**

- Chop neck into 5-6 pieces, cut gizzard and heart in a half
- Place in large sauce pan and cover with 8 cups of cold water.
- Bring to boil and skim off foam.
- Add onion, celery, garlic, parsley, cloves, bay leaf, salt and pepper.
- Cover and simmer over
- low heat for 2 hours.
- Strain.

## Wild Rice and Mushroom Dressing



### Ingredients:

- 1 cup of wild rice
- 1/3 cup of butter
- 2 cups of cubed crustless bread
- 1 cup of sliced shiitake mushrooms caps, cremini and oyster mushrooms
- ½ cup of diced sweet red pepper
- 2 tablespoon of chopped fresh sage
- ½ teaspoon of each salt and pepper
- 1-1/2 cups of chicken stock
- 2 eggs beaten

### Directions:

- In large saucepan of boiling salted water, cook rice covered until tender and split – about 40 minutes. Drain and place in a large bowl.
- Meanwhile, melt all but 2 tablespoons of the butter.
- Place bread in bowl and drizzle with butter, tossing to distribute evenly.
- Spread on rimmed baking sheet and toast in a 450F oven, tossing once until golden – about 8 minutes.
- Add to rice.
- In skillet, heat remaining butter over medium heat; sauté mushrooms just until browning at edges, about 7 minutes.
- Add to rice mixture along with red pepper, sage, salt and pepper and mix well.
- Stir in stock and eggs.
- Spread in greased 13 x 9 inch glass baking pan; cover with foil and bake at 375F for 45 minutes.

## Potato Gratin with Caramelized Onions



### Ingredients:

- 2 cups of whipping cream
- 4 cloves of garlic, slivered
- 3 peppercorns
- 2 springs of fresh thyme
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- 1 spanish onion or 2 onions, finely sliced
- 3 large Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of shredded Gruyere cheese

### Directions:

- In saucepan, bring cream, garlic, peppercorns, thyme and salt to boil, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.
- Remove from heat and set aside.
- Meanwhile, in skillet, heat oil over medium-low heat cook onion, stirring often until light brown.
- Slice potatoes as thinly as possible.
- Layer one quarter of the potatoes in greased 8 inch square glass baking or casserole dish, top with one third of the onion and one quarter of the cheese.
- Repeat twice.
- Top with remaining potatoes.
- Strain cream mixture over potatoes, shaking casserole to distribute evenly, sprinkle with remaining cheese.
- Bake at 300F oven until tender and knife inserted in bottom pierces potatoes easily. – 1-1/2 to 2 hours.

## Cranberry Relish



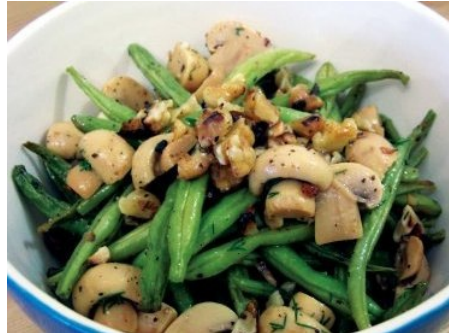
### Ingredients:

- 1 orange
- 1 package of fresh cranberries (12 oz.)
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
- ¼ cup of maple syrup
- Pinch of salt
- Granulated sugar – optional

### Directions:

- Remove rind from orange.
- Chop rind and place in food processor.
- Working over food processor to catch juice, cut off white pith; cut between membrane and pulp to release fruit into food processor.
- Add cranberries, jalapeno peppers, maple syrup and salt; blend until fairly smooth.
- Let stand for at least one hour.
- Add up to 2 tablespoons of sugar if desired to sweeten.

## Roasted Green Beans With Walnuts and Marinated Button Mushrooms



### Ingredients:

- 2-10-oz cans button mushrooms, drained
- 1 -1/2 pounds green beans, washed and ends trimmed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3/4 cup small walnut pieces, lightly toasted
- Sea salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### Mushroom Marinade

- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped dill (or 1 tsp. dried)
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt

### Directions:

- In a mixing bowl, combine the marinade ingredients and whisk to combine.
- If using dried dill, rub it between your fingers before adding to release the flavour.
- Add the button mushrooms and stir to thoroughly coat them.
- Marinate for at least 6 hours or overnight, remembering to stir the mixture several times to evenly soak the mushrooms.
- Preheat your oven to 400°F.
- In a large baking pan, toss the green beans with the olive oil and spread out in a single layer.

- Roast in the oven for 45 minutes, turning them over twice during cooking with tongs or a spatula. When done, remove the green beans from the oven and pierce with the tip of a knife to test - they should be tender but not mushy.

## Caramel Pumpkin Custard



### Ingredients:

- 1 small butternut squash (about 1 lb)
- 2-3/4 cups granulated sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 cup 10% cream
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1-1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- Pinch salt

### Directions:

- Cut squash in half lengthwise; scoop out seeds.
- Place, cut side up, on foil-lined rimmed baking sheet.
- Bake in 425°F oven for 25 minutes.
- Turn over; bake until soft and fragrant, about 20 minutes.
- Let cool for 10 minutes.
- Scoop out flesh and place in food processor; purée until silky smooth.
- Meanwhile, in small saucepan over medium-high heat, stir 1 cup of the sugar with 1/2 cup water until dissolved.
- Reduce heat to medium; cook, without stirring but brushing down side of pan with brush dipped in cold water, until amber, 10 to 12 minutes.
- Immediately divide among eight 6-oz ramekins or custard cups, swirling to coat bottoms and 1/2 inch (1 cm) up sides.
- Set aside.
- In large bowl, whisk together 1 cup of the squash purée, eggs, yolks, cream, milk, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and remaining sugar until smooth.
- Strain through sieve into large measuring cup; pour into prepared ramekins.
- Place ramekins in large roasting pan; pour in enough boiling water to come halfway up sides of ramekins.
- Cover with foil; poke several holes in top.

- Bake in centre of 350°F oven until centres no longer jiggle, about 45 minutes.
- Uncover and bake for 5 minutes longer.
- Remove from water; let cool.

## **Pumpkin Lace Cookies**



### **Ingredients:**

- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup corn syrup
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds
- Pinch ground ginger

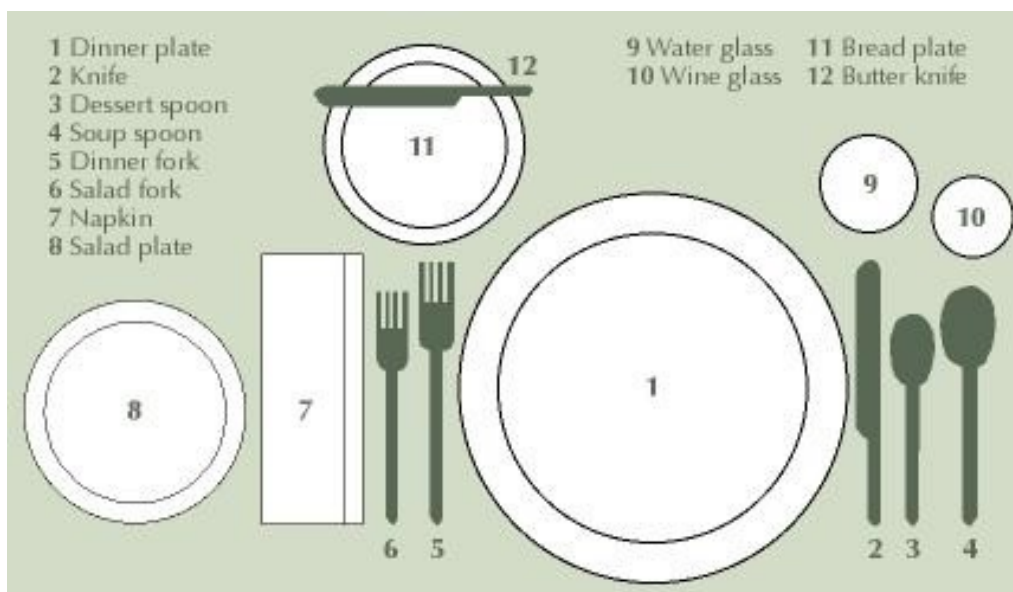
### **Directions:**

- In small saucepan, bring sugar, butter and corn syrup to boil over medium heat; remove from heat.
- Whisk in flour, pumpkin seeds and ginger.
- Baking no more than 6 at a time, drop by scant tablespoonfuls about 3 inches apart, onto parchment paper-lined baking sheet.
- Bake in centre of 350°F oven until slightly darkened, about 10 minutes
- Let stand on pan on rack for 2 minutes to firm; transfer to rack and let cool.

## How to Set Your Dinner Table



It is quite possible that you have often wondered where to put what on your dinner table. And lots of times—you might do what I do—just put utensils, dinnerware and glassware where it looks good and where there is space for it. After all—you want to include some decorations, napkins, place cards and of course—serving dishes with all the food! Here is a chart for you to make it easy. I found that this is actually very helpful and uses table space effectively:



## **Tips for Planning Your Thanksgiving Table**

1. Decide how many guests you will be serving
2. If you will have guests who don't know each other, create table setting with name place cards
3. Arrange your guests logically – meaning : if you know that one person is shy, sit them next to a person who is easy going. And remember – the cook should sit closest to the kitchen
4. If you have young children attending your dinner, seat them next to their parents
5. Make sure you know if any guests have dietary restrictions – i.e. allergy to nuts
6. After you have determined your menu, you will be able to figure out what dishes, glassware, utensils and serving dishes you will need.
7. Decide on your colour scheme. This may start with picking your tablecloth and napkins. I usually pull out what I have and lay it out on my dining room table. It might surprise you how many things you would see that will create an interesting colour match and give you more decorating ideas
8. Next – decide if you want a centerpiece. The kind of centerpiece you will be looking for will be one that will least obstruct everything else you need to place on the table. It is much nicer if you can leave your selected centerpiece on your table during dinner – especially if it has candles. But sometimes you will need to move it to place your serving dishes on the table. But either way – it is a good idea to give this some thought ahead of time.
9. Give yourself enough time to decide on other table decoration – ones that will complement the overall table setting and your centerpiece.
10. If you have children, involve them in making the decorations or even participating in gathering materials and putting together the centerpiece. They will take pride in being helpful and their behaviour at the dinner will show it!

## **Tips for Setting Your Thanksgiving Table**

It is really a good idea to set your table day before your dinner – it will give you a chance to take your time and make changes – plus – it will avoid any rush the day of your special dinner. And that means avoiding stress, which is always a good thing!

1. Place your selected tablecloth (or placemats if that is what you decided on) on the table. If the tablecloth is thin, put a pad under to prevent damage from heat.
2. If you are serving a seated meal, the tablecloth should hang about a foot over the edge of the table. If you are setting up a buffet table, the tablecloth should hang to the floor.
3. Next – place dinner plates in front of each seat, about one inch from the edge of the table.
4. Then – start laying out your silverware. You can follow the chart provided for you on previous page and remembering that utensils should be positioned one inch from the table edge, evenly spaced.
5. Determining how and where to place the napkin will depend on whether you will be using it as a part of your decor. If you will tie a decorative ribbon or use special napkin rings, you may want to lay the decorated napkin over the dinner plate on an effective angle.
6. Water glasses go about 2 inches above the knife to the right and to the right of them, you place your wine glasses.
7. If you are planning on serving coffee or tea, place the cup and saucer to the right of the setting. I find that it is easier and saves table space to have a separate table set for coffee, tea, dessert places and dessert serving platters. Again – this will largely depend on space you have available and on your choice.
8. Bread plate with small butter knife should be set about 2 inches above the forks.
9. Any condiments you will need should be positioned where they can be easily reached.

## Table Centerpieces



You can purchase bouquets of fall flowers at your local market—or if you can't get to one, silk flowers will do as well. Use a simple bowl to arrange them for an effective centerpiece (using florist foam to stick them in works the best). And if you choose to use fresh flowers like mums, soaking the foam with water will keep them fresh for days! Add small versions of your centerpiece on each place setting or a single flower with each napkin.



This is a very effective and totally easy to make centerpiece! Just put some cranberries into a nice glass dish, place tea lights in them—and there you go!



Tall glass jar or hurricane lamp can become a great centerpiece by adding some fall leaves in it. If you can't get nicely coloured leaves, get silk ones—one stem of them will do wonders!

### Table Decorations

Here are a few ideas you can easily make and use for your festive Thanksgiving table settings!





## Table Settings Ideas



## Festive Thanksgiving Tablecloth



I love the look of this simple-to-make and totally in-expensive decoration! Anyone can follow the easy instructions, using colourful fall leaves of various sizes and shades. The result is a simple and elegant tablecloth that will have your guests admire your creativity!

### Instructions How to Make Fall Leaf Sheer Tablecloth:

- You will need to go outside to collect colourful leaves. But what a great idea is to do this with your children!
- Pick leaves that are not dried out.
- Place them between sheets of waxed paper and then between couple of heavy books. You will need to let them dry out this way so they end up being nice and flat. It should be OK after 2 days and up to a week.
- Put plain white tablecloth on your table. You will need to iron out any wrinkles and make sure that it is placed on the table the way you want it to stay.
- Arrange your leaves over the tablecloth in a pattern you like and when you are happy with the layout and design, place a little piece of double-sided tape on the underside of each and press down onto the white tablecloth. This is obviously done so that the leaves don't move when you use the table for your dinner.
- Lay sheer tablecloth over the leaves. The sheer tablecloth should be from material that you can see the leaves through – consider looking for sheer curtain panel in a second hand store – that worked for me!
- Set your table as usual or as you have planned for your special Thanksgiving dinner.

## Games Children Can Play

### Feed the Turkey



#### Here is what you will need:

- large box
- brown craft paper
- construction paper
- poster board
- yellow fabric
- beans
- rubber bands
- markers
- Glue

#### Instructions:

- Remove the flaps from one end of the box leaving an open space.
- Cover the box with brown craft paper
- Use either cardboard or Bristol board paper to create your "turkey" – you can draw the eyes and the beak and if you want, create feet and glue them under the front of the box. Or if you have children working with you, have them cut out the eyes, beak and feet from construction paper along with shapes to make the colourful tail.
- The tail gets cut from various colours of construction paper or poster board and glued to the back of the box. Next, cut out an opening under the beak large enough to throw a bean bag in.
- The best shape is a triangle to accent the beak or make it round. If you anticipate that most children, who will be playing the game are younger, make the opening larger to make it easier for them to throw the bean bag in.
- Now cut out several 7" in diameter circles from the yellow fabric. Fill center with beans. Gather edges together and wrap tightly with a rubber band.

#### How to Play:

- Have the children stand back, then take turns tossing the "kernels of corn" into the turkey's mouth. See who can get the most in!
- Give prizes to winner – and they don't have to be big ones – as long as the winner is rewarded. And as far as prizes go – always, always have extras on hand. There is nothing more upsetting than not having a prize for a child who deserved it!

## Pumpkin Patch Game



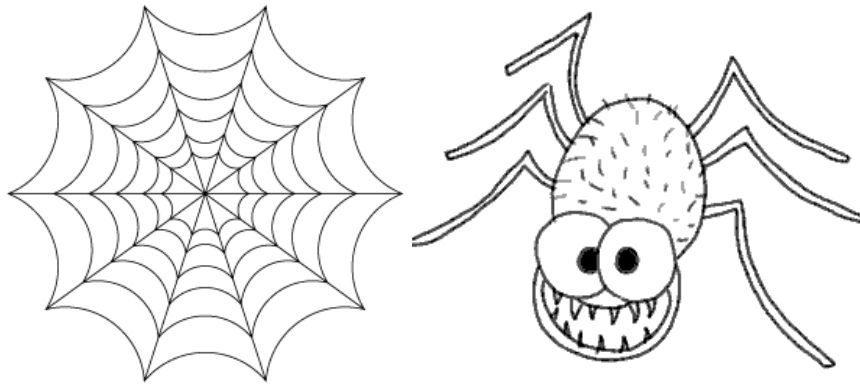
### Here is what you will need:

- Small party bags filled with candies
- Coins (you can get the chocolate ones)
- Tags for bags
- Music

### Instructions:

- Put numbers on each bag tags before attaching them to bags. (Keep the numbers low – the children will be “buying” the pumpkin bags with their coins)
- Give each child a handful of coins.
- Create a “pumpkin patch” on your floor
- Start the music and have children walk around the pumpkin patch.
- When the music stops, each child picks up a pumpkin bag and checks what number is on the tag. If the child has enough coins they can “buy” the pumpkin bag.
- Continue this until children are out of coins – but tell them they can combine their coins and share the candies they “buy”. You will have fun watching them figure out how much money they need to buy out all the bags.

## Spider Web Spin



### Here is what you will need:

- large sheet white paper
- black permanent marker
- spider cards
- double sided tape
- blind fold

### Instructions:

- Draw a large spider web with black marker on the white paper.
- Draw the funny looking spider cartoon on small cards and write each child's name on it
- Put a piece of double sided tape on back of each card before the child starts playing
- Use same instructions as Pin the Tail on the Donkey.
- Blind fold child and spin them around three times.
- Give them spider cut out and have them try to place the spider in the middle of the web.
- The child who places their spider closes to the centre gets the prize.

## Special Thanksgiving Prayer

*This is one I really like – it focuses on what is really important – having each other,  
friends and family alike*

### Thankful for Each Other

Dear Lord,  
As we gather together around this table  
laden with your plentiful gifts to us,  
we thank You for always providing  
what we really need  
and for sometimes granting wishes  
for things we don't really need.  
Today, let us be especially thankful  
for each other--for family and friends  
who enrich our lives in wonderful ways,  
even when they present us with challenges.  
Let us join together now  
in peaceful, loving fellowship  
to celebrate Your love for us  
and our love for each other.  
Amen.

*By Joanna Fuchs*

