

Holiday Documentation

It's helpful to keep this on a clipboard for easy paper shuffling or if someone is working on a recipe and needs to have it loose for a minute.

Equipment List

Aside from the usual pots and pans, here is some other useful and/or necessary equipment.

- Turkey Roasting Pan
- 2 cast iron skillets
- Dressing pan
- Immersion blender
- Food processor
- Half gallon sized pitcher
- Pie plates
- Casserole dishes
- Large stockpot big enough to hold the turkey
- Pepper Grinder
- Hand mixer
- Potato ricer
- Pecan cracking equipment
- Colander
- Rolling pin
- Crockpot
- Pastry Brush
- Meat thermometer
- Kitchen timer

Verify your inventory

- Foil
- Paper towels
- Trash bags
- Dishwashing detergent

Make sure your Crisco isn't rancid and your flour doesn't have bugs. Check the date on your baking powder. If you can't remember when you got it last, pick up a fresh can. If your sugar is hard as a rock, just get new sugar instead of fooling with it.

A month to two weeks before:

Pick up dry and canned goods and stuff that isn't going to go bad.

One week before:

Buy turkey and rest of ingredients. Put turkey in the fridge to thaw.

Turkey Tips:

If the turkey is whole, bake 2/3 of the time breast down, then flip over. Take out when thermometer reads 160. Final temp should be 170.

Roast at 325 for about:

- 10-18 lbs 3 1/2 to 4 hours
- 19-24 lbs 4 to 5 hours

A large toaster oven is helpful to bake pies, the rolls, and the smaller casserole dishes. Out of counter space? Plug it in elsewhere as long as you won't pop a breaker and it's not a fire hazard.

The gravy will always take about twice as long as you think it will.

Keep the mashed potatoes warm in a crockpot until time to eat.

Dark chicken broth made from roasted chicken wings is far superior to canned broth, if you have the time.

Deviled eggs make a nice snack while waiting for dinner.

A sugar bowl and creamer work well for the cranberry sauce and gravy, respectively.

If you're in doubt if you'll have enough butter, get another pound.

Grocery List

Numbers in parentheses refer to the recipe that specifically calls for that item.

Canned Goods

- (3b) 29 oz can Bruce's Yams
- (4) 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- (4) French's French Fried Onions
- (7) Mayonnaise
- (7) Mustard
- 2-3 cans chicken broth*
 Get 2 more cans if not making broth
- 3 cans cream of chicken soup
- (8b) Karo light corn syrup
- (8c) 16 oz can pumpkin (NOT pumpkin pie filling)
- (8c) Pet Milk

Dry Goods

- All purpose flour
- Self Rising White Lily Cornmeal
- Baking Powder
- Salt
- Sugar
- Small tub or sticks of Crisco
- Light brown sugar
- (6) Yeast (verify exp. date)
- (9) Semisweet chocolate chips
- (9) Graham crackers
- (3b) Package of regular sized Marshmallows

Dairy

- 2 dozen eggs
- 1 gallon milk
- 1 quart Buttermilk
- 2-3 lbs butter
- (3b + 9) 1 pint heavy whipping cream

Produce

- 3-4 yellow onions (or a bag of them)
- Carrots – bag
- Celery
- (3a) 6 Sweet Potatoes
- 2 bags cranberries
- 5-10 lbs white potatoes
- (4) Large (14-18 oz) bag frozen green beans
- (8a) 3-4 apples
- (8a) 2-3 firm pears

Meat

- Turkey (Publix has nice ones)
- Bacon
- Cheap chicken parts, like wings, for broth

Other

- Dinner rolls (if you're not making your own)
- Italian loaf bread
- Pecans

Spices

- Pumpkin Pie Spice OR
 - cinnamon
 - ginger
 - nutmeg
 - cloves
- (7) Curry powder
- (7) Paprika
- Vanilla
- Peppercorns
- Salt grinder

1. Country Cornbread

3 cups self rising White Lily cornmeal
1 1/2 cups self rising flour *
1 onion, finely chopped
4 eggs
3 cups buttermilk
6 Tablespoons Bacon Grease

1 cup self rising flour =
1 cup all purpose flour +
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder +
Pinch of salt

Heat the oven to 400.

Chop the onion. In a large bowl, combine the dry ingredients and mix with a fork. Throw in the onion and stir around some more.

In a pitcher, beat the eggs. Add the buttermilk and beat some more.

By now, the oven should be hot, so put a glob of bacon grease in each cast iron skillet and put in the oven.

Pour the contents of the pitcher into the dry ingredients and mix until it's not too lumpy. But don't mix too much or the cornbread will turn out tough.

By now the bacon grease should be hot. If it's smoking, pour it out and start over. Take the skillets out of the oven. Very carefully pour most of the bacon grease into the mixture and mix it a bit. Leave about a tablespoon in each pan.

Pour the cornbread mixture into the pans and put back in the oven. After about 12-15 minutes, swap them in the oven. When the cornbread is browned and cracked on top, after about 30-40 minutes total, it should be done. Listen for it "singing."

2. Aunt Bessie's Dressing

2 pans Country Cornbread
6 slices day old loaf bread
Italian loaf bread works well for this
3 stalks celery and an onion
2-3 cans cream of chicken soup
4 eggs
2-3 cups dark chicken broth

The night before, slice the bread and leave it on top of the fridge to dry out.

Crumble the cornbread and bread in a VERY LARGE bowl. This takes forever, so sit down at a table and get out of the kitchen.

Finely chop the celery and onion and saute in bacon grease.

In a pitcher, beat the eggs, 2 cans of the cream of chicken soup, and 2 cups of the chicken broth.

Pour the pitcher into the crumbs and mix. If it looks like it needs more liquid, which it likely will, add some more chicken broth and possibly some cream of chicken soup.

Pour into a big lasagna pan. At this point, if it's only going to be a few hours, cover with a clean dishtowel and put in a chilly place where the dogs can't get to it. Otherwise find a spot in the fridge.

Bake at 350 for 50 minutes to an hour or so. It's done when you can stick a butter knife in it and it's clean (but kinda greasy).

WARNING:

If you are not involved in the making of the cornbread or the dressing, do not antagonize the people who are by repeatedly asking when it's going to be ready. Otherwise they may smack you in the head with a cast iron skillet.

3a. Sweet Potato Souffle

3 cups sweet potatoes, cooked and mashed
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup butter, melted
1/3 cup milk

Topping: Crumble all this up with your clean fingers

1 cup brown sugar, packed
1 cup pecans, chopped
1/3 cup flour
1/3 cup butter, softened

Cook sweet potatoes:

Wash and dry about 5-6 sweet potatoes
Poke with a fork
Rub with Crisco
Bake on a cookie sheet at 375 for about an hour or until tender

Peel sweet potatoes and throw the ends away. Use a mixer to get the strings out (they'll wind around the beaters) or push through a sieve (a potato ricer works well). This is extremely messy and time consuming, so try to do it the night before.

Once you're satisfied the potatoes are relatively string and lump free, add the sugar, eggs, vanilla, butter, and milk. Beat until fluffy and creamy looking.

Pour the sweet potato mixture into a greased casserole. Scatter the topping on top, but not until right before it's going in the oven.

Bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes until bubbly.

3b. Lazy Ass Yams

If the sweet potato souffle is too much trouble, or if there's been some sort of sweet potato blight, this is a far quicker and easier alternative. You can always put pecans on top instead of doing marshmallows. Or hell, have both.

29 oz can Bruce's Yams, drained and mashed
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp cinnamon + 1/2 tsp nutmeg
OR pumpkin pie spice
1 tablespoon melted butter
1/4 cup cream (milk would probably do)
16 regular sized marshmallows

Blend together everything but the marshmallows. Cut 6 marshmallows in half and stir in. Pour into a greased casserole.

Cut remaining marshmallows in half and arrange on top.

Bake at 350 for 20 minutes until puffy and marshmallows are browned. Keep an eye on this so the marshmallows don't turn into charcoal.

4. Green Bean Casserole

If you don't like French Fried Onions, some toasted nuts like cashews or something like that would probably be good on this.

1 large bag (14 to 18 oz) frozen green beans
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1/2 to 3/4 cup milk
French's French Fried Onions

Thaw and drain green beans. Snap into smaller pieces if necessary. Fresh green beans are really pointless in a casserole.

Dump everything but onions in a casserole and mix together.

Bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Stir. Sprinkle some onions on top and bake for 5 minutes more until onions are golden and crunchy.

5. Cranberry Sauce

Make sure to do this the day before so it has time to "congeal."

Wash and sort cranberries. The bad ones will be mushy to the touch.

Put cranberries in a pot with 1 cup water and 1 cup sugar per bag. Simmer on medium low until they've all popped and it looks like jam.

Note: It is not necessary to make a simple syrup with the water and sugar first. Just cook everything in the pot all at once.

Note: Reserve 3/4 cups cranberries if making that pie

6. Rolls

A good recipe is on page 524 of Anna's Fanny Farmer Cookbook.

Here are just the ingredients and times, because if you've never made homemade yeast rolls before, the holidays are not a good time for a first attempt. Try to make the dough the day before and let rise in the fridge.

Mix and let cool to lukewarm:

4 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons salt
2 cups warm milk

Dissolve a packet of yeast in 1/4 cup warm water

Use about 5-6 cups of flour.

Set up rolls in two 8-9 inch cake pans. Brush with melted butter. Bake at 425 for about 12-15 minutes.

7. Deviled Eggs

First, count the eggs and make sure you have enough, plus a couple of extra, to cook all the food.

Boil a bunch of eggs and chill

Peel, cut in half, and mash up the yolks with some mayonnaise, mustard, salt, and curry powder.

Instead of glopping the yolk mixture into the egg white halves, put it in a ziplock bag, cut a tiny corner off a tip, and pipe the mixture.

Sprinkle with paprika

8. Pie Crust

9 inch basic pie shell
1 1/2 cup flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup Crisco
3-4 Tablespoons cold water

Top and Bottom crusts:

2 1/2 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup Crisco
6-7 Tablespoons cold water

8a. Anna's Apple Pear Family Gluttony Day Pie

2 cups thinly slice peeled apples
2 cups thinly slice peeled pears
3/4 cup fresh cranberries
1/3 cup granulated sugar
2 tbsp flour
1/4 tsp nutmeg or pie spice

Heat oven to 425. In large bowl, stir together filling ingredients. Spoon filling into crust. Cover with lattice strips in whatever fashion you deem appropriate.

Bake 10 minutes, reduce to 350, bake additional 20-30 minutes until edges are deep golden brown and fruit is tender.

8b. Pecan Pie

Use the recipe on the bottle of Karo Light Corn Syrup.

3 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 cup Karo Light Corn Syrup
2 tablespoons melted butter
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 1/2 cups (6 oz) pecans
9 inch unbaked pie shell

Beat eggs. Add everything but pecans and stir until blended. Stir in pecans. Dump into pie shell.

Bake at 350 for 55-60 minutes

8c. Pumpkin Pie

Use the recipe on the can of PET milk like Grandma Ruth always did. Do not use Carnation brand – it doesn't taste the same.

1 cup brown sugar
2 Tablespoons flour
2 1/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 egg
1 1/2 cups pumpkin (16 oz can)
1 tall can (12 oz) PET Evaporated Milk

Mix dry ingredients. Stir in egg. Throw in cans and beat until smooth. Pour into pie crust.

Bake at 375 for 50-55 minutes.

9. French Silk Pie

Crumb Crust

1 1/2 cup fine graham cracker crumbs
1/3 cup sugar
1/3 cup butter

Bake at 350 for 8-10 minutes

Pie Filling

1 cup whipping cream
6 oz semisweet chocolate chips
1/3 cup butter
1/3 cup sugar
2 egg yolks, beaten
3 tablespoons whipping cream

In saucepan, combine whipping cream, chocolate chips, butter, and sugar. Cook on low, stirring constantly, until melted.

Gradually stir half the mixture into beaten egg yolks. And by gradually, a little bit at a time – don't dump a bunch in there at once or it'll cook the eggs. Return the mixture to saucepan. That's called "tempering eggs."

Cook on medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is slightly thickened and thinking about bubbling.

Remove from heat and stir in the rest of the whipping cream. Maybe add some vanilla.

Transfer mixture to a mixing bowl. Let cool.

After it's cooled, beat until light and fluffy. Spoon into the crumb crust and refrigerate for several hours.

Checklist

Week Before

All groceries obtained
Turkey thawing

Day before

Turkey put into brine
Bread put out to get stale
Cranberry sauce made
Dough for rolls rising in fridge or cool spot
Chicken parts browned in oven
Chicken broth
Pecans shelled
Pie crust dough made and chilling
Eggs boiled for deviled eggs

Night before and/or morning of

Pies baked
Sweet potato topping made
Sweet potatoes baked
Cornbread made
Cornbread and bread crumbled
Deviled eggs made
Sweet potatoes set up (sans topping)
Green beans thawed and drained
Rolls set up in pans (morning of)

Day of (sort of in order)

- Turkey in at 325: Note time
- Potatoes peeled and in a pot full of water. They'll be OK like that for hours.
- Potatoes boiled and mashed and put in crockpot to keep warm
- Dressing set up
- Dressing in at 350: Note time
- If rolls aren't rising fast enough, put on top of stove
- Sweet potatoes and green beans set up
- Sweet potatoes and green beans in at 350: Note time
- First pan of rolls in toaster oven at 425
- Gravy making
- Table set

It's always a delicate balance trying to make sure everything is hot at the same time.

The turkey should stay warm enough on top of the stove, covered in foil. It needs to rest for a while anyway so you can get out gravy fixings.

The dressing should be OK for half an hour covered in foil while the sweet potatoes and green beans cook.

Go ahead and do the mashed potatoes while the turkey's in the oven. That way you're not jostling around next to everyone in the kitchen with a big pot of boiling water and they'll stay quite warm in a crockpot on low.