



Help..Iâ€™m Hosting Thanksgiving!

Description

Todayâ€™s post is by Organization Consultant and Founder of The Seana Method, Seana Turner. Seana is guest posting for me on how to prepare for the upcoming holidays. I felt this subject was best left to a professional. The guide below is for the Thanksgiving holiday, but could easily be adapted for Christmas if you are having guests at your house. I personally like to have a plan of action. It helps keep me focused on what tasks I need to get done and makes the holidays a little more joyful for all.

Seana is based in the New York City Metro Area and does consultations for residential and professional properties. She also offers great tips on organization and time management on her blog [The Seana Method](#). You can contact her [here](#).



Hosting Thanksgiving can be a wonderful time with friends & family. It can also be a bit stressful. Getting ahead of the game is what its all about.

The hardest part about hosting Thanksgiving “ or any large group meal- is timing. There is a lot to be done, and if you don’t plan ahead, it can be overwhelming. To ensure you get to enjoy the holiday, start NOW to ensure a smooth day.

THE HAPPY THANKSGIVING PLANNING GUIDE

Early November

Make hospitality decisions (if guests are staying overnight with you)

1. Who will sleep where (purchase air mattress?)
2. What sheets & towels will everyone use?
3. What supplies do you need to stock up on? (toilet paper, toothbrushes, shampoo)
4. What linens will each guest use?
5. How will they get to your home? Do they need an airport pick up?

Decide on your menu

1. What will you make?
2. What will others bring?
3. What special dietary needs do you need to accommodate? (gluten free, peanut allergy, etc.)
4. What food preferences do you want to respect (e.g. “Grandma drinks decaf” or “Dad always wants apple pie”)
5. What will you serve to drink? Where will you set drinks up?
6. Where will you keep perishables? (do you need a cooler with ice?)
7. What time will you serve?
8. Will you serve appetizers?
9. Will you serve from a buffet or from the table?
10. What will your centerpiece be?
11. Are children coming and where will they sit?

Prepare everything you can in advance

1. Polish silver

- 2.Clean crystal
- 3.Iron linens/tablecloths
- 4.Clean ovens (Thanksgiving brings â€œpeepersâ€)
- 5.Print out a copy of the place setting you will use (e.g. formal/casual) and tape it on the inside of a cabinet door so others can help

Mid November

Decide what you will wear (and make sure it is clean)

Start shopping for and prepping and food you can make in advance

- 1.Buy all shelf stable items
- 2.Buy wine/liquor
- 3.Make pie crust, bake cookies, etcâ€¦ anything you can freeze
- 4.Consider buying some extra plastic containers for sending leftovers home with guests.

Early Thanksgiving Week

Get a head start on the table set up

- 1.Who will sit where (extra tables? chairs?)
- 2.Make place cards and decide on seating, if applicable
- 3.Designate serving dishes for each item
- 4.Set out tablecloth & centerpiece
- 5.Display flowers
- 6.Grocery shop for perishables
- 7.Iron any clothing items for Thanksgiving day
- 8.Set up for overnight guests

Wednesday

Prepare dishes that can be refrigerated

- 1.Cranberry relish/sauce
- 2.Side dishes

3. Bake rolls
4. Dry bread cubes for stuffing (if you are using fresh)
5. Chop onions & other vegetables
6. Prepare salad ingredients and store in airtight containers
7. Pre-measure spices to make for quick prep
8. Chill white wine/champagne
9. Set table

Place settings

Stemware

Water glasses

Linens/napkin rings

Salt & pepper

Butter dish

Serving pieces (with notes for what will go inside each)

Candles

Centerpiece(s)

Serving utensils (spoons, spatulas, etc.)

Buy extra ice

Thursday (early)

1. Get turkey in the oven
2. Peel potatoes, boil and mash, then keep warm in a slow cooker
3. Prepare other side dishes (or main dishes, depending on your traditions)
4. Take a shower and a deep breath!

Thursday (just before serving)

1. Warm the rolls

default watermark

2. Dress salad
3. Uncork the wine
4. While turkey is sitting, make the gravy
5. Light candles
6. Fill water glasses
7. Take the "holiday photo" (plan time for this so food doesn't get cold)
8. Serve, enjoy and relax!

One final point: if you are hosting a crowd, enlist their assistance. Whether they want to bring a dish to share, help peel potatoes, keep the fire going, pick up guests at the airport, be in charge of the drinks, or take the traditional photo, *it helps if each person has something to do*. Even children can help with carrying cool items to the table, making place cards, or helping prep food.

Thanksgiving is busy, but shouldn't be stressful. And remember, planning ahead helps, but won't avert every eventuality. Once the holiday begins, lighten up, roll with the punches, and enjoy all you have to be thankful for.

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Author

queenie