



Holiday Meal Planning

By Mary McDougall

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I first shared this planning schedule with you in 2004 and I heard from quite a few people who used this schedule and shopping list for a successful Thanksgiving last year. Since I plan to use this same schedule, and mostly the same menu, myself again this year I am including it in this 2007 newsletter.

We usually have a large crowd of friends and family with us every year to celebrate, and my menu doesn't vary much from year to year. Many of the recipes that are a tradition in our home I have shared with you over the past several years, either in one of the cookbooks or in a newsletter. The following recipes will be part of our holiday meal again this year. The starred (*) items are ones I suggest for a basic meal plan, and then add as many more dishes as you feel your Thanksgiving dinner needs to fit your celebration.

MENU:

* Golden Gravy (newsletter October 2003)

Success Tip: This may be made a day ahead of time and reheated slowly on the stovetop, stirring frequently.

Rich Brown Gravy (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Brown the onions and flour a day or two ahead of time, then cover and refrigerate. Finish the recipe as directed, realizing that it will take a bit more time for the liquid to heat through.

Whole Wheat & Sourdough Rolls with Elephant Garlic Spread (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Order your rolls from Whole Foods or a bakery about one week early, then pick them up the day before the holiday. Make the garlic spread one or two days ahead of time and refrigerate until serving.

* Cranberry Sauce (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Make two to three days ahead of time and refrigerate until just before serving.

* Green Beans

Success Tip: Trim beans the day before and store in the refrigerator. Wash just before steaming. I usually serve these plain with a bit of salt and pepper.

Brussels Sprouts with Creamy Caesar Salad Dressing (newsletter July 2003)

Success Tip: Trim these a day or two before cooking and store in the refrigerator. Wash before cooking. Most people like these best with some type of a sauce, although Heather and I like them plain with only a bit of salt. Make the dressing one to two days ahead and store in the refrigerator. Pour a small amount of the dressing over the cooked Brussels sprouts and toss just before serving.

* Pumpkin Pie with Vanilla Cream Sauce (newsletter October 2003)

Success Tip: Make the pie and the sauce one day ahead and refrigerate until just before serving. We like this pie best chilled. If you like warm pumpkin pie, you will need to make this just before serving. The crust can be prepared one day early and refrigerated. Mix the filling ingredients together, cover and refrigerate overnight, then pour into the crust and bake. The vanilla sauce should be served chilled over the pie.

Wicked Chocolate Pie (newsletter October 2004)

Success Tip: Make this one day early and refrigerate. The toppings may be made two days ahead, if desired. This needs to be served chilled.

SHOPPING TIPS:

Shop for the non-perishable items about a week ahead of time. These are the canned and packaged products, such as vegetable broth, canned pumpkin, flour, silken tofu and any dried herbs and spices that you may need. Potatoes, sweet potatoes and garlic can be purchased ahead of time as long as you have a cool place to store them (not the refrigerator). Choose the menu items that you want to include for your Thanksgiving feast, then look through the recipes. Check over this shopping list as you go through the recipes, and make sure you also have the pantry items available. Shop for your perishable items no more than 2 days before the holiday, if possible.

SHOPPING LIST

The following shopping lists are for the complete menu above. You will have to adjust the items needed depending on what you plan to prepare.

CANNED AND PACKAGED PRODUCTS

These may be purchased ahead of time and stored in your pantry or refrigerator.

- 4-5 boxes (32 oz.) vegetable broth
- 2 cans (15-16 oz.) pumpkin
- 1 jar (12 oz.) applesauce
- 3 containers (32 oz.) soy or rice milk
- 1 jar (8 oz.) pure maple syrup
- 5 packages (12.3 oz.) Lite Silken Tofu-Extra Firm
- 2 cups non-dairy chocolate chips
- 1 bag (16 oz.) Sucanat
- 1 jar (16 oz.) Wonderslim Fat Replacer
- 1 bag (16 oz.) frozen raspberries
- 1 cup unsalted roasted cashews
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 1 container (32 oz.) orange juice
- 1 jar (4 oz.) capers

FRESH INGREDIENTS

The first nine ingredients may be purchased ahead of time. Buy the fresh vegetables and bread products the day before, if possible.

- 4 onions
- 1 bunch celery

1 head garlic
 2 heads elephant garlic
 5 pounds potatoes
 3 pounds yams or sweet potatoes
 1 bag fresh cranberries
 1 small pumpkin (to serve the soup in-optional)
 1 medium-large pumpkin
 Bagged organic baby greens
 2 pounds green beans
 2 pounds Brussels sprouts
 1 large loaf whole wheat bread
 6-8 whole wheat or sourdough rolls

PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED

These are used in several of the recipes and are things that you probably already have in your pantry. Check over this list and purchase anything that you don't have.

Tabasco sauce
 Curry powder
 Soy sauce (at least 1 cup)
 Tahini
 Vanilla
 Whole wheat flour
 Unbleached white flour
 Cornstarch
 Salt
 Black pepper
 Golden brown sugar
 Sugar
 Dijon mustard
 Pumpkin pie spice
 Cinnamon
 Ground ginger
 Ground cloves
 Parsley flakes
 Sage
 Marjoram
 Thyme
 Bay leaves
 Poultry seasoning
 Rosemary
 Soy Parmesan cheese
 Lemon juice

TIME SCHEDULE

1 week ahead: Shop for non-perishable items and some of the perishable foods listed above.
 Order rolls from bakery.

3 days ahead: Make salad dressings.
 Make cranberry sauce.

2 days ahead: Shop for vegetables and whole wheat bread.
 Make Creamy Pumpkin Soup.
 Bake sweet potatoes or yams and prepare Maple Mashed Sweet Potatoes.
 Make Elephant Garlic Spread.
 Make Creamy Caesar Salad Dressing.
 Make the raspberry sauce and the almond topping for the chocolate pie.

1 day ahead:

Pick up the pre-ordered rolls.
Make the pumpkin pie and vanilla sauce.
Make the chocolate pie.
Trim the green beans and Brussels sprouts.
Make the Golden Gravy.
Partially make the brown gravy.
Cube the bread and allow to sit out overnight

Thanksgiving
(Morning):

Peel potatoes and place in cold water to cover.
Clean out pumpkins.
Make stuffing mixture and stuff pumpkin.

Thanksgiving
(Afternoon):

Take sweet potatoes and soup out of refrigerator.
Place pumpkin in oven and bake as directed.
Cook potatoes and mash.
Wash vegetables and cook.
Finish brown gravy and slowly reheat Golden Gravy.
Reheat mashed sweet potatoes.
Finish soup and heat.
Place baby greens in bowl. Serve with dressings.
Heat rolls and garlic spread.
Don't forget the cranberry sauce.