EAZY PEAZY MEALZ

Thanksgiving Make-Ahead Checklist

Friday, Nov 20 to Wednesday, Nov 25, 2026 · 8 guests

Seven recipes are finished before Thursday: rolls, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole and both pies, plus the two-day turkey brine.

Friday, Nov 20

- [ ] Shop trip 1: turkey, pantry items, and what Sunday's rolls and cranberry sauce need.
- [ ] Move the frozen turkey to the fridge. How to Thaw a Turkey allows about 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds, so a 16 lb turkey is ready by Tuesday.

Sunday, Nov 22

- [ ] Parker House Rolls: bake, cool completely, wrap in a double layer of plastic wrap and then foil, and freeze (up to one month).
- [ ] Cranberry Orange Sauce, doubled: simmer, cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours, then move to freezer bags and freeze.

Monday, Nov 23

- [ ] Shop trip 2: everything else on the list.

Tuesday, Nov 24 (two days before)

- [ ] Dry Brine Turkey: remove the neck and giblets, rinse and pat dry. Rub the salt and dried herb mix over the turkey, inside the cavities and under the skin. Wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Wednesday, Nov 25

- [ ] Turn the turkey over and refrigerate one more night.
- [ ] Move the cranberry sauce from the freezer to the fridge to thaw overnight.
- [ ] Slow Cooker Mashed Potatoes, two batches: low 5 to 6 hours or high 3 to 4 hours each. Leave out the final butter and refrigerate in an airtight container. Start early.
- [ ] Sweet Potato Casserole, two 9x13 dishes: bake the sweet potatoes at 425°F for 1 hour, assemble with the pecan topping, bake at 325°F for 30 minutes, then cool and refrigerate.
- [ ] Pumpkin Pie: bake (425°F, then 350°F), cool completely, and store covered in the refrigerator.
- [ ] Chocolate Pie: bake and cool the 8-inch pastry shell, make the filling, spoon it in and refrigerate at least 2 hours.