

Kate’s Party Meal Schedule

Three Weeks Ahead

* Confirm guest list/numbers
* Confirm any special dietary needs of guests
* Place any orders if necessary

Two Weeks Ahead

* Decide on menu, collect recipes. List all shopping needs for menu. Make sure you select some dishes that will taste good at room temperature, so you won’t have to worry about your hots getting cold, or your colds melting. Also make sure you can make some of them ahead and either freeze or refrigerate.
* Assign any cooking projects to family or friends that have offered to help
* Pick up any alcohol and other beverages, or delegate this to your non-cooking guests.
* Shop for all non-perishable goods on your list now. You can buy flour, sugar, canned pumpkin, stuffing cubes, paper plates, etc. all before the crowds appear.

One week ahead:

* Shop for heartier vigies now like butternut squash, carrots, potatoes, parsnips and turnips.
* Buy heavy cream if needed – stores run our the night before big holidays!
* If necessary, wash and iron linens if going fancy. Dig out your roasters and platers and any serving dishes hidden away in closets or on high shelves. Make sure you have what you need, ask for volunteers to bring what you are missing.

Three Days ahead:

* Take our any frozen meat (if cooking a turkey, make sure you have room in fridge.
* Clean the house – especially the kitchen. I love starting with a clean slate. I also love putting non-cooking people in charge of rest of the house if you are so lucky to have extra help.
* If you are having lots of guests, you may want to set up tables/chairs and guest bedrooms to make sure you have plenty of room. At least got through this mentally, you may need people to bring folding chairs or blow up mattresses.

Two days ahead:

* Make pumpkin pies, rolls and cornbread for stuffing (if necessary). If making other pies, you can make the dough for crust (or make sure the Pillsbury rolled dough is thawed). Apple or pecan pies don’t do as well in advance, so suggest saving those for closer in.
* Make things that can sit for two days in fridge, like soups and cranberry sauce.
* Assemble casseroles (like sweet potato or green bean); they can be stored uncooked in the fridge and baked on day.

One day ahead:

* Wash all serving dishes and set the table. Something feels really good when you go to ben this night and you look at this already done – trust.
* Make sure you have place for guests coats/bags/boots.
* Do any remaining baking, including apple or pecan pies.
* Buy salad greens and parishable veggies. Wash lettuce now, dry well and store by packing them in paper towels in a plastic bag in fridge.
* Calculate your cooking time and cooking order for tomorrow. Plan the day.

This means figuring out what can/can’t be cooked along with turkey in the oven, either in terms of temperature or spce. Plan to cook those things before or after the turnkey is done, or on the stovetop while cooking. Better yet, cook some today so they only need to be re heated.

* If making mashed potatoes/cauliflower or turnips, can cook them all today and store in fridge soaking in water, covered, in fridge overnight.
* If you have guests, I like to make a breakfast casserole for the morning, along with yogurts and fruit so that no one has to really be in the cooking space tomorrow.

Day of:

* Start with having a good breakfast and maybe a 15 min yoga or light exercise.
* Prep stuffing (if making turkey – stuff)
* Prepare your vegies for cooking – clean, peel and chosp. Cover the ready to go vegies and put in fridge.
* Mash pot/caul/turnips and prep, they can be reheated.
* Once meat is in the oven you should have a little time to relax and enjoy your guests.
* Just before meat is done, check your plan and go for it.
* Have fun, eat, drink and be merry!