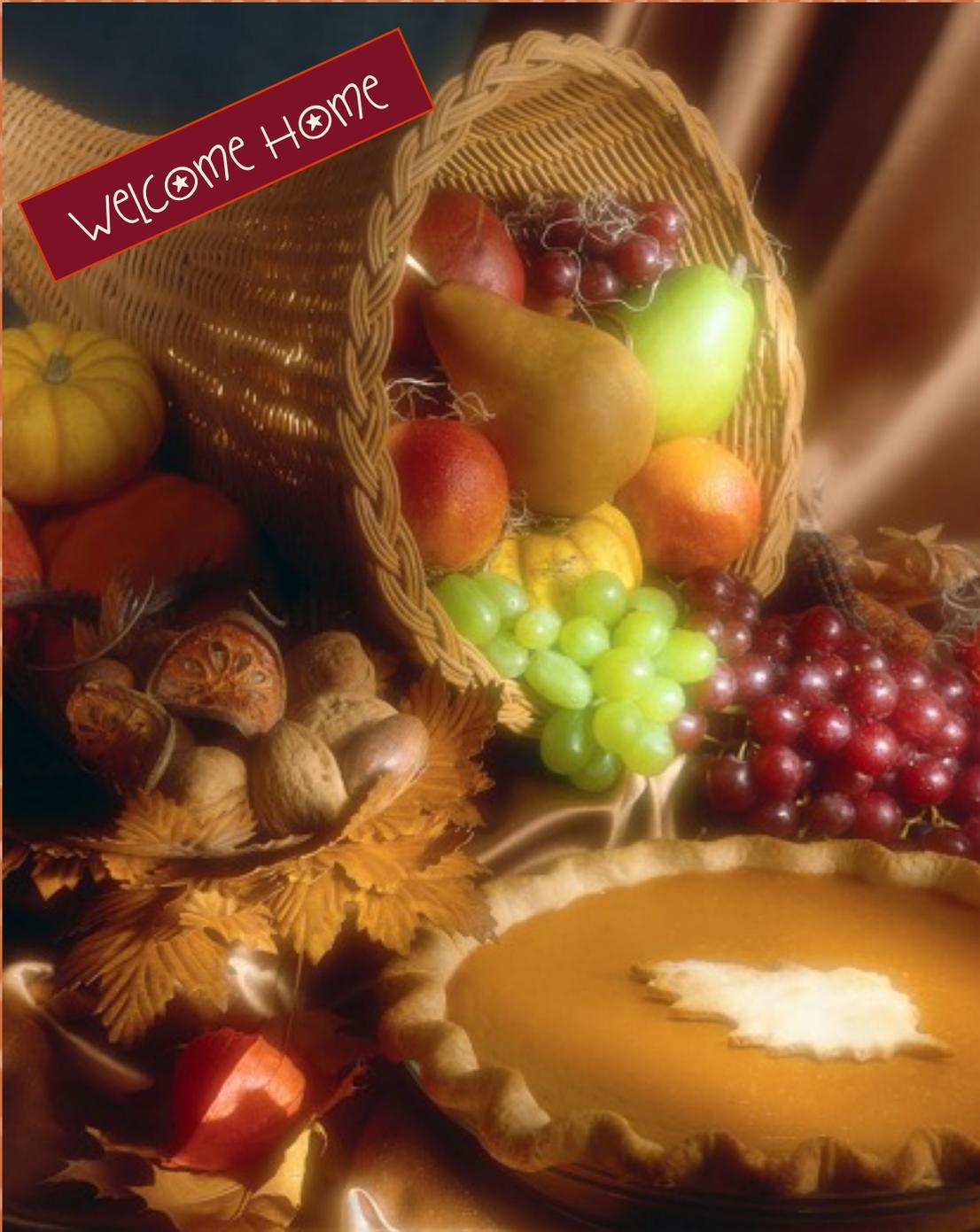


SIMPLE JOY



Welcome Home

Thanksgiving Edition
November 2016



Simple Joy

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Welcome to Simple Joy! November is here & that means the Holiday season is in full swing. It's easy to get overwhelmed this time of year so we are here to help you reduce stress this Holiday season!

This month, we prepare for Thanksgiving. We offer a series of articles, tips & recipes to help you get more joy out of Thanksgiving!

We also share ways to find all the additional information we have to offer to make this Thanksgiving (& Christmas) the least stressful & more joyous ever!

From our house to yours, a very blessed Thanksgiving to you & your family!

Hugs & Blessings!

Jean Ann

THANKSGIVING THOUGHTS FROM JEAN ANN



Entertaining is a wonderful way to share special events with friends and family. Unfortunately, entertaining often causes us an incredible amount of stress. There is something about an upcoming party that makes our heart beat harder and our blood rush faster. The planning, the shopping, the preparations as we work to get everything just right! SIGH!

We often bring stress upon ourselves as we prepare for any celebration. We want things to be “perfect.” Well, Honey, it’s time to take your focus off perfection and put it on entertainment. Any event you host is not about the menu or decorations or music or all the rest. It is all about your guests. It is your responsibility to insure each one of your guests enjoys themselves. The quickest and easiest way to do this is by following the first rule of Simple Joy entertaining:



Attend Your Own Party!

In order to attend your party, you need to find low stress ways to put your event together so you have energy left once your celebration begins. This not only applies to events and occasions that occur throughout the year but also to big holidays... like Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving can be a real bear. It falls in the middle of the work week. It is food focused so only so much can be done ahead of time.

And it is a family event where others have certain expectations that can put pressure on us.

I offer you help in the form of advice, ideas and tips to make your Thanksgiving preparations easier and enjoyable. It is time for you to enjoy yourself when you entertain. You work hard for it and you deserve it.

It is also time to return to the basics. Too often we spend too much money trying to create elaborate events. This year, it's time to focus on tradition. If you and your family haven't developed traditions over the years, this is the perfect time to begin. Take time before you begin your Thanksgiving planning, take a moment to determine ways to introduce traditions into your Thanksgiving.

Then, begin planning. Hold your head up. Stay calm and remember, today's disaster is next Thanksgiving's funny story! Celebrate! It's all a Simple Joy!



A Thankful Attitude

Shaunna Privratsky

Happy people are thankful, right? We've all heard the saying, "Money doesn't buy happiness" and perhaps nodded our heads in agreement, or inwardly disagreed. But the pursuit of happiness, just like the pursuit of money, can be a difficult and frustrating journey.

Happiness is tied in part to money, but not necessarily in having loads of it. Many studies have concluded that once people earn enough to pay the bills and live comfortably, they are happy at first, but become dissatisfied and constantly reach for more.

So the happiness quotient could be tied to what "enough" means to you. If you grew up poor, meaning every day was a struggle to meet basic needs, then you would be happy with less. But if your background was affluent, then nothing less than the best will satisfy you.

If money is taken out of the equation, then happiness could be tied to circumstances. Good things happen to you; you're happy. Bad things strike, and you are sad, right? Not necessarily. Virtually everyone has had something bad occur in their life, and most have suffered at least one significant tragedy. Why do some people emerge smiling, and others slog through life with permanent frown wrinkles?



My two younger brothers had a set of toys called *Weebles*. The jingle went; “*Weebles* wobble but they don’t fall down.” Even if you threw them, pushed them over, placed heavy weights on them, those figures popped back up, due to their round, weighted bottoms.

I equate happiness with *Weebles*. When you adjust your attitude to one of gratitude, you can learn to be happy in virtually any circumstance. There is an art to it; you can’t just wake up and say, “I’ll be happy today, even though I’m \$6,000 in debt, laid off and the car just died.” Learning to be happy is a process that anyone can master.

Take the example above. Paying off the debt would put you in a better frame of mind, right? So take the steps necessary, which will probably include finding a job or source of income, living below your means and putting all extra money towards debt. Once you take control of the situation and begin working to make it better, you can find happiness.

Another step to take on the journey to happiness is learning to be grateful. Be thankful for your health, for your loving family, for friends and neighbors, for a good job if you have one, for the roof over your head and the clothes you wear. Be grateful for a perfect summer day or the corner of your yard where you can plant a garden to feed your family. Look for the silver lining in every negative situation. It's there, whether it is a tiny flash or a rich vein you can mine for years. I'm not just a sappy Pollyanna who goes around singing happy thoughts and rainbows. I've lived it.

When my husband suffered a brain injury due to medical mistakes, my world went dark. I lost all of our financial security, our future plans, and the personality of my soul mate. I got in return a load of debt, no income coming in, a disabled husband that needs constant care and supervision and two kids struggling with the loss of the Dad they knew.

Was I depressed, sad, angry, frustrated, and afraid? Yes. I honestly thought I would never be happy again. Even when our financial problems eased up, mostly due to my efforts of paying off the credit card debt and improving our credit score, I felt a rock-bottom sadness.

What finally brought me out of my despair was finally acknowledging that I couldn't change what happened. Yes, it was terrible and yes, all our hopes and dreams were shattered. But there wasn't any law saying we couldn't make new dreams. There wasn't anyone telling me I couldn't change how I reacted. I slowly changed my attitude, and in changing how I looked at things, I felt a weight lifted from my spirit.

Happiness cannot be bought, sold, bottled or stored away. You can't demand happiness, or tell someone else to just be happy. You can't even make yourself be happy if you are not. But you can change your attitude and how you react to circumstances. Look for the positive and concentrate on what is good in your life. Imitate a *Weeble*, and bounce back from adversity.

When you think about finances, how often do you focus on feelings? Emotions rarely come to mind when discussing cold, hard cash, but they play a large part in how and why we spend. Even our successes and failures can be tied to emotions.

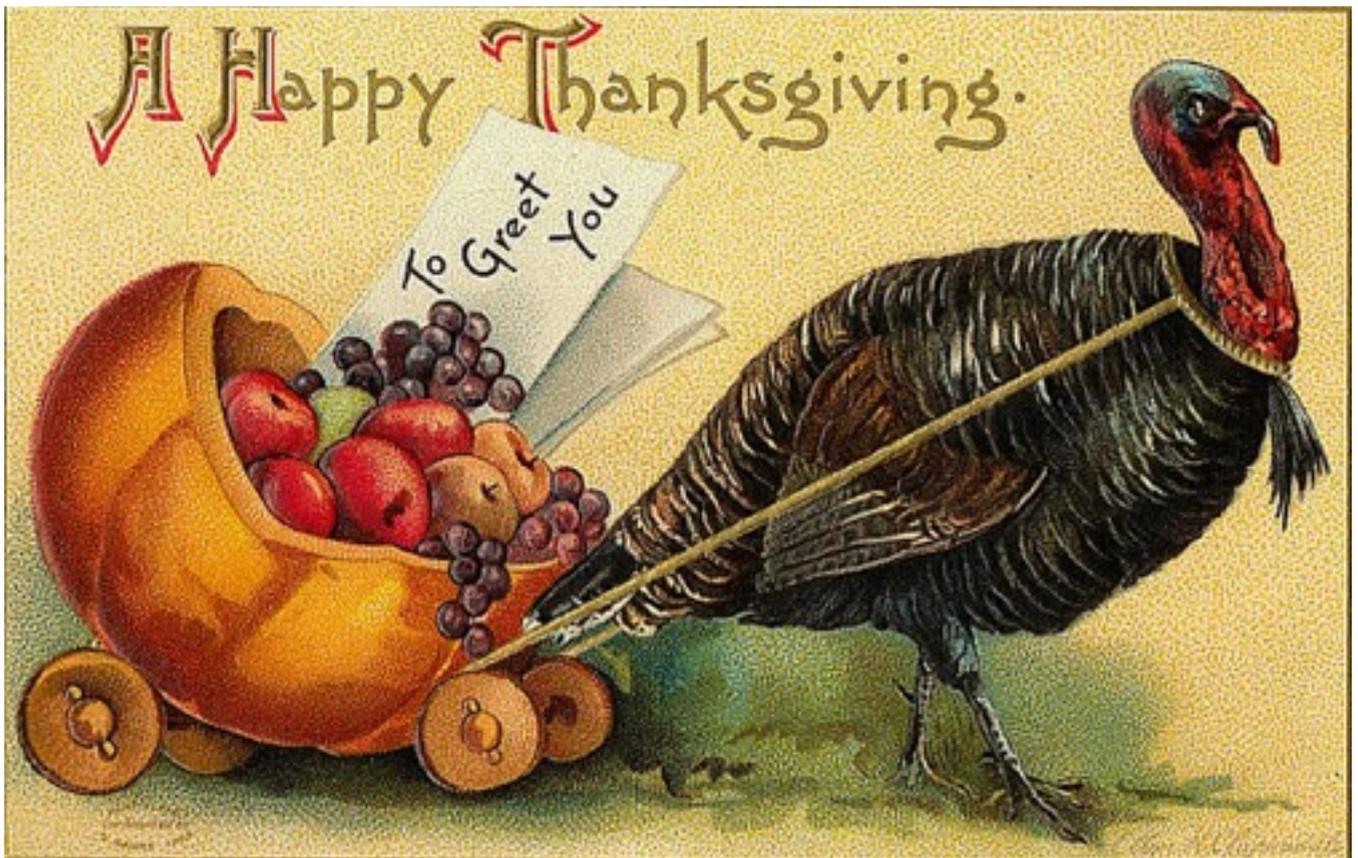
The past may be the roots of your ingrained emotional response to money. If you grew up in a household with limited resources, your overwhelming feeling about money might be fear. You might worry that you won't have enough, that you will never succeed, that lack of money will always be your burden.

Or perhaps you come from a comfortable background, where money was plentiful. You may unconsciously feel entitled, that money is your due. This emotion can also develop to justify overspending. "I deserve this. I work hard."

Maybe you feel guilty when you spend money. This may be caused by not knowing how much you can spend. Without a plan or a budget to guide you, you feel out of control and fearful, leading to guilt. Or you feel like you don't deserve nice things, that you should be content with the bare necessities.

How you learned about money management also forms your feelings about money. If your parents taught you the basics of good spending, you experience pride, success and happiness when you are a good steward of your finances. But if you observed poor spending habits and living beyond your means, you may feel guilt and despair when your finances spiral out of control.

Spending habits are also tied to emotions, whether we acknowledge them or not. Advertisers play on our emotions by promoting how good you'll feel when you buy their product. They imply you will be smarter, prettier, cooler or richer, all things we unconsciously desire.



Feelings can overcome our best intentions. You want to save 10 percent of your paycheck, but you spot a fabulous dress you just have to have. Or you discover there is a newer version of the \$400 phone you just bought, and you feel you need it for your business. Or you come across a bargain, and even though you don't really need the item, you know you'll never find it at that low of a price again.

Once you acknowledge that feelings and emotions are tied to our finances, what can you do to overcome them? First, find out where the emotion is coming from. Is it based on your upbringing? Next, plan what you can do to change it. Then act on your plan.



The best way to combat negative emotions is with knowledge. Sit down and figure out exactly where you are with your finances. You may even want to enlist some help. You won't be able to move forward if you don't know where you are at.

Next, set some goals. You should set long term and more immediate goals. Create a realistic budget that fits your current situation. You should strive for living a bit below your means, so that your expenses are less than your income.

Now plan how you are going to achieve your goals. Write down steps you can take to erase debt, pay down a mortgage or save for retirement. Don't forget to include ways to combat setbacks. Build in rewards once you reach a goal. Also add in some entertainment and fun spending, so that you don't feel deprived and start the emotional cycle all over again.

Once you realize how emotions are tied to your finances, you can overcome them. When you create goals, a budget and a plan, you are putting yourself in control of your emotions and your future. Then you can bask in a feeling of financial wellbeing. With a thankful attitude, happiness will surprise, surround you and fill you up with abundance.

MAKING THANKSGIVING PREPARATIONS A SIMPLE JOY



You read that right! You can make preparing for Thanksgiving a joy and if not a joy, you can at least make it much easier. Let's face it, Thanksgiving is tough for women. We already have full schedule, in fact, overflowing schedules. Suddenly this major Holiday falls in the middle of the week, a workweek for many of us. Even worse, the focus of the Holiday is a large meal. You might be able to purchase some of the food early but you

can't prepare it early. Much of the work must be done at the last minute. What's a woman to do?

I say, work smarter, not harder. Do the majority of your work while sitting at a table with a pencil and paper. Taking time to develop a plan can save you time, energy and sanity. I have developed 5 steps to make your Thanksgiving preparations simpler:

1. Invitation

You always want to begin plans for any party by creating your guest list. Most people begin by deciding what type of event to host: sit-down dinner, buffet, cocktail party, etc. Next, they create a menu. THEN they begin their guest list. Odds are, they end up with too few or too many people for the type of event they have planned. If you want to place all your focus on the event, I suggest you become a caterer or party planner. As a hostess, your focus should be first, last and always on your guests!

Begin by making a preliminary guest list. Then, make a few phone calls so you have a rough idea how many people are coming to your event. Once you have a general idea how many people will be sitting at your Thanksgiving table, you are able to begin working on your menu.

2. Input



I know many women think they have to do all the work for Thanksgiving (or any big family event) by themselves. WRONG! Your entire family should help prepare for Thanksgiving. One way to encourage them to help is to get their input on the menu. When your family helps create a menu for an event, they have ownership in the preparations. When they suggest a dish or item they would like included in the menu,

you can suggest they prepare the dish. Thanksgiving is a family event. Everyone should take part in preparing the meal. The “family” part of the meal is not just when everyone sits down to eat. The entire event should involve the whole family.

3. Inventory

Once you have determined who is coming (even if you only have a rough idea) and decided what to serve, you need to create a list of EVERYTHING that goes into preparing your meal. When I say EVERYTHING, I mean all the ingredients you need to

make each dish. Once you have your list, you should inventory your pantry, frig and freezer. Determine which items you already have and which items you need to purchase. Begin a new list, a shopping list that you can carry with you whenever you go to the store. Oh, and speaking of the store, you are allowed to take company with you. I personally like going to the store alone. I spend less money and less time. However, I do make certain someone is at home to help me bring in the groceries and put things away.

You should have a variety of lists. One with your menu, one with all the items needed to prepare your meal and your shopping list. Carry your menu and shopping list with you at all times. If you run into anyone attending your dinner and they ask if they can bring anything, pull out your lists and assign them an item. Make a note who is bringing or doing what so you have no duplicates. You can also follow-up just before Thanksgiving to remind them.

4. Information

During the weeks before Thanksgiving, I study the grocery ads like I am writing a government report. I like to get the best prices on everything I buy. In addition, many items that never go on sale the rest of the year are offered at incredible prices before Thanksgiving. I like to stock up on basics, like canned vegetables, coffee, chicken broth. I use these items throughout the year. I also buy at least 6 turkeys, storing them in my chest freezer. We eat them throughout the year.

Anyway, I study each and every store ad, comparing the sale items to my shopping list. I create a new list each week with the name of each store, the items I want and the sale price. I also make a note if there is a coupon to go with the item. I plan my weekly shopping trip carefully. I don't like to waste time or gasoline. I make a circuit that covers the shortest distance so I best use my time.

Not to be Captain Obvious, but you want to be sure to include your regular grocery items on your list. I hate having to run out for something like bread or cereal. Don't become so consumed with an upcoming special event that you completely overlook the everyday things.

By taking more time in the planning stage, enlisting the help of your family and studying the store ads and coupons carefully, you can ease your stress this Thanksgiving season. That's a Simple Joy for the entire family.





Join Jean Ann & the Infamous Mr. D every (Thursday) at (8:00 pm ET, 7:00 pm CT, 6:00 pm MT, 5:00 pm PT) for A Life of Simple Joy podcast! Each week, Jean Ann offers information, tips, recipes & more on a specific topic. Mr. D is hosting the chat & answering phones. LOOK OUT! Be sure to stop by with your questions or tips or just to chat with Mr. D!

During November, they are focusing on Thanksgiving. Each week, she discusses ways to beat Thanksgiving stress.

November Schedule

- 11/3 Thanksgiving Planning
- 11/10 Thanksgiving Cleaning
- 11/17 Thanksgiving Cooking/Last Minute Tips

<http://www.talkshoe.com/tc/65346>



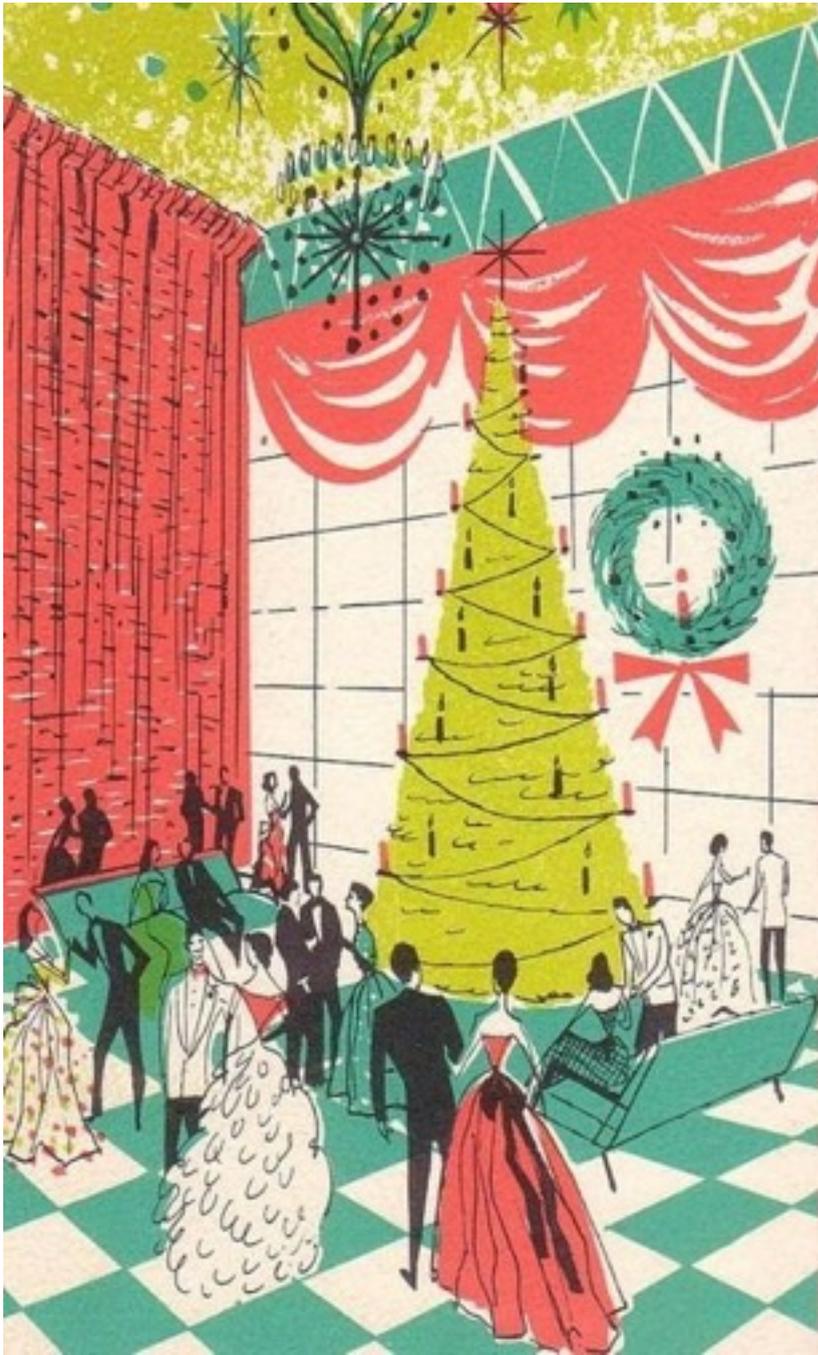
HAPPY HOLIDAY HOSTING

Shaunna Privratsky

Holiday parties are festive, fun and bring together friends and families. But hosting one can become a nightmare. From the decorations to the last goodbye, there are so many things that can go awry; it is enough to make you pull a Scrooge and order takeout the entire holiday season.

Put down that phone! Here are some easy hints on getting organized, picking the right menu and easy entertaining.

1. The first step is to make lists. Start a holiday notebook. Write down guest lists, a menu, shopping lists for food, decorations and other party necessities. Being organized is half the battle.
2. Simple = stress-free. Keep it simple with a few well-planned dishes instead of tons of unusual or fussy foods.
3. Keep your guests in mind when planning the menu. Ask about food allergies and preferences like vegetarian diets, low-cholesterol, or sugar-free diets.
4. Bite-size is best for easy appetizers. If serving a dipping sauce, provide individual serving containers to avoid “double-dipping.”
5. Ready at room temperature. If you don’t want to be constantly running back to the kitchen to heat things up, serve at least half of the food at room temperature or rent food warmers.
6. Preparation is key. Do as much as possible ahead of time. Decorate, set the tables, add extra seating, cook ahead as many dishes as you can and your night will go much smoother.
7. Be generous. It is better to have too much food and beverages than not enough. You can always send leftovers with guests or freeze them for an impromptu gathering another time.
8. Stick with the season. Fruits and vegetables in season are cheaper and fresher, so use them in your dishes and even decor for a festive look.



9.The decor sets the theme of your party, but don't be overwhelmed. Simple ideas are votive candles tucked in pine branches nipped from a wreath or tree, a bowl of pinecones, or even elegant candles on a simple white or clear plate. Add extra bling with a gold doily or a bowl of bright Christmas ornaments.

10.Invite them right. Be specific about appropriate dress, the extent of food and beverages and the duration of the party. Setting these guidelines makes it easier for people to plan to have a wonderful time at your get together.

11.Buffet style is best. It gives guests the freedom to help

themselves and there is little for you to do, other than to replenish the food. Bring full platters instead of just adding items to a half-empty plate.

12. Make sure there is plenty to drink, whether it is alcoholic or not. Provide at least a few beverage choices for guests and plenty of glasses. Most liquor stores offer free ice with a purchase, so don't forget to stock up.
13. Music puts people at ease and helps the conversation flow. Depending on the crowd, soft jazz or classical music competes less than other types of music. This will set the tone for the evening, so choose your music in advance.
14. Fill your home with the scents of the season. Make a large pot of apple cider on the stove, complete with cinnamon sticks. Have mugs and a ladle ready.
15. Add a drop of peppermint oil to a burning candle. The minty smell will permeate the place and add a touch of spice.
16. Warm up a batch of gingerbread and add it to the buffet treats.
17. Keep track of everything in your holiday notebook. Note what worked, what didn't and ideas on doing things easier next time. Yes, I said next time.

Oh, no! Company is on the way and you haven't had a chance to decorate. You search frantically for some snowman napkins or some leftover garland, but you come up empty. Before you start flinging Christmas-themed tissues around the room, take a deep breath and read these tips. Don't worry - it is never too late to decorate.

Here are ten simple ways to get your home in the holiday spirit in a hurry. I've also included a bonus tip for each idea if you have a little more time. Most, if not all, can be accomplished with the things you have around your house.

1. Cut a few pine branches from the tree and place in a large vase, an old tin bucket or a big pitcher. Take the lower or hidden branches to avoid bare spots. Place in the center of the table.

Bonus tip: Wrap the container with a cheerful ribbon.

2. Gather five to seven candles, preferably all in the same color for more impact. Red, ivory, white, gold or silver are festive holiday colors. Arrange on a fancy platter or large plate.

Bonus tip: Sprinkle Christmas potpourri or pinecones around the edge of the plate. Another option is a layer of sugar, to simulate snow.

3. Fill a large glass vase or clear jar with tiny Christmas balls. Pick a single color or mix and match.

Bonus tip: Place one ball by each plate with a personalized tag. Let them take it home as a parting gift.

4. Take a tall, cylindrical vase and put candy canes all around it. Hook the short end over the edge and let the long side dangle.

Bonus tip: Put about a half pound of sugar into two bowls. Add a few drops of red food coloring to one bowl and stir until the sugar turns red. Now layer the white and red sugar in the vase to form stripes.



5. Place three matching presents in the center of the table. You can use the presents from under the tree, or wrap some empty boxes if you have time.

Bonus tip: Use matching tags as place settings.

6. Take one of your large pictures down and wrap it in fancy paper. Re-hang.

Bonus tip: Put a fancy ribbon over mirrors and doorways.

7. Turn the lights off and eat by candlelight and Christmas lights. For some extra dazzle, take a clear string of lights and wrap it around the centerpiece on the table. Make sure you unplug it when you're finished.

Bonus tip: Replace a few light bulbs in your lamps with colored bulbs. Red lends a cheery glow, while blue or green is very mellow.

8. Scatter a few holiday rugs around. Doorways, the foot of the stairs, in front of the sink, in the guest bedroom and bathrooms are all great places for a cheerful rug.

Bonus tip: Pick up deeply discounted rugs and welcome mats during the after Christmas sales so you'll be ready for next season's festivities.

9. Put out a bowl of pinecones. Spray with non-stick spray, and then sprinkle with sugar. It will look like snow.

Bonus tip: Simmer a small pot of apple juice or two cups of water and a cut up apple on the stove. Add a generous sprinkle of cinnamon. Your home will smell like an apple pie baking.

10. Set up a manger scene in an unexpected place like the dining room table, on the television stand or the coffee table. It will remind you and your guests of the true reason for the season.

Bonus tip: Have the youngest child tell the Christmas story.

The next time you are crunched for time, just try some of these quick ideas. Even when you're in crisis mode, it is never too late to decorate. Hey, isn't that your doorbell?

Now that your guests have arrived, where do you put them? Most of us don't have enough space to designate a whole room for guests. Yet, even if you have many uses for the “spare” room, you want an inviting space for your visitors. You don't have to spend a fortune to have the best for your guests.

First of all, there should be a sleeping area. Look for furniture that does double duty. For example, futons combine seating and sleeping into one package. Forget the old lumpy mattresses of the past. Today's futon has graduated into many sophisticated styles and comfort levels.

A similar type sofa is the *Klick-klack* bed. It is available in a range of colors and fabrics to fit any décor and budget. The lines are sleek, the concept is simple: you select the position you want and click it into place.

A sofa-sleeper has all the practicality of comfortable seating, as well as a pull out bed. These come in all sizes, including twin, to fit any size room. The mattresses are sturdy and ensure a good night's sleep for your guests.

Air mattresses can transform any open area into an extra bedroom. Most have built in air pumps that automatically inflate and deflate the mattress to the desired firmness. Add sheets, blankets and pillows and it is off to dreamland. One drawback is that it might be more difficult for some people to get up from such a low bed. The solution: the stores have air mattresses with built in feet, to raise the bed to normal height.

To make your guest feel at home, provide a space for their belongings, whether it is a spare dresser, some closet space with lots of empty hangers, or a table they can tuck their suitcases under.

A lamp near the bed is a plus, so that they don't have to have the main light on at all times. Make sure there are shades or curtains for privacy and to block out light. If you provide a television, put the remote in plain sight, with a copy of the current TV guide.

Now that you have provided the basics, here are some simple ways to add some flair to your guest room. Even if the room is not primarily for guests, a cohesive décor will give it that welcoming feel. Find a theme for the room, whether it is a soothing color



scheme, an extension of your home's décor, or based on a collection.

This could be the space you could have some fun with color. Try creating a focal point by painting one wall a vibrant color. Place the largest piece of furniture, probably the bed, futon or sofa-sleeper, against this wall. Flank it with nightstands or small tables. A simple wooden chair will do as well.

Add some artwork. You could make a collage of several similarly framed photos, or create your own masterpiece with a piece of canvas and some paint. You can frame it quite inexpensively at craft stores like *Michael's*.

Perhaps your guest room doubles as a storage area. To make it more inviting, organize your storage into shelves, cabinets or built-ins. To hide the clutter and add instant glam, hang some curtains or a coordinating sheet from the ceiling. I screwed two bike hooks into the ceiling, put two drapery panels onto a closet rod, and hung it in front of our pantry shelves.

Maybe your "spare" room is your hobby area. Organize it all into a nice cabinet, desk or dresser. Your space will be nice and neat for the next time your guests arrive, or when you want to start a new project.

A few finishing touches will add that special touch. A vase of fresh flowers, a small basket of trial size toiletries, even a bowl of fresh fruit all say: I'm glad you came. Try these decorating tips on for size. Remember: only the best for your guests.

With these tips, holiday hosting can be a wonderful experience. All it takes is organization, a plan and the desire to spread cheer. Here's to your next hassle-free holiday party!





7 STEPS FOR A LOW-STRESS THANKSGIVING

I always say the best way to reduce the stress of entertaining is by planning. When you take the time to plan your event and work out all the details, you are able to enjoy your celebration even more. To help you, I have 7 steps to take to make your celebration a stress-free zone:

Simplify

Make things easier on yourself. This does not mean you have to cut back to bare bones. It does mean taking the time to plan the holiday. Take time to sit down with pencil and paper to organize everything. It is as easy as 1-2-3.

Your Guest List

Plan your guest list first. Whenever you entertain, you should place your focus on your guests, not the event. When you focus on the people, everything else falls into place. If necessary, make a few phone calls just to give you a rough idea how many to plan for.

Your Event

Once you know how many people are coming to dinner, more or less, you can determine the type of event you will have. If you plan to have 15 people for dinner and your table only seats 10 then you need to plan a buffet. Create an event that fits your guest list, not the other way around (have I said this enough yet!) Part of this process is creating a to-do list. This list needs to contain everything that must be done to prepare for the day. I mean everything. Once this list is made up, put it in your purse where you can easily refer to it.

Your Menu

Next, you should plan your menu. I like to begin with a 20-pound turkey. Even if we only have a few people over, I make lots of turkey. I know it never goes to waste in my house. If necessary, I plan on 2 turkeys. Keep your menu simple. Make fewer dishes in larger quantities. Stick with the basics. Remember, this is not the time to try something new and complicated. You have enough to do without causing yourself undo stress.

Shopping

Every year, I go to the grocery store a day or two before Thanksgiving to find people loading carts with items for their Thanksgiving dinner. Avoid doing this! Once you have your guest list and your menu, take the time to make your shopping list. List everything you need to make dinner. Mashed potatoes need milk so add milk to the list. Rolls need butter so add butter.

Once the list is completed, put it in your purse. Ten days or more before Thanksgiving, go to the store and buy everything you need for your menu. That is everything except the fresh items. You can go to the store to buy the fresh items 2 days before Thanksgiving. If you should forget anything, pick it up as soon as possible. You will rest easier if you know everything is on hand.

Share

Why should you have all the fun? Share that fun with others. In other words, delegate some of your duties to other people. Who are these wonderful people? Well, they are your family and even your guests. What do you mean you can't ask your guests to help? Of course you can! In fact, I guarantee they probably ask if they can have the privilege of helping you. Stop and think. When you ask someone to come over, what do they always say? "What can I bring?" or "How can I help?" What do we always say? "Oh, that's all right." No, it's not. You can not be expected to do all this yourself.

When help is offered, take them up on it. If they didn't mean it, well, that's their problem. What do you tell them to do? Remember the to-do list and grocery list in your purse? Pull them out and assign them a task. "Say could you bring some ice?" "Would you mind coming a bit earlier to help me finish up the meal?" "Aunt Mary, everyone loves your pies. Would you bring a pecan pie for dessert?" You can also flat out ask someone to do something. "Honey, I need you to buy the wine for dinner."

Schedule

Set up a calendar to schedule preparation and cooking. You want to spread tasks out so everything is not being done at the last minute. Remember, you want to have energy to enjoy your party with your guests. In order to accomplish this, you should pace yourself.



Break your to-do list down so the tasks are spread out over a couple of weeks. By doing one or two chores everyday, you can slowly but steadily get everything done without collapsing from exhaustion. You also need to create a cooking schedule. If you only have one oven and your meal requires baking a number of different dishes, you need to choreograph your cooking schedule. Keep in mind your turkey needs at least one hour to cool before you can slice it. This gives you 60-90 minutes before dinner to still cook dishes in the oven.

Set Up

This can be done the day before. Yes, the day before. When I host an event at my house, I set the table, sidebar, bar, in fact all my serving areas the day before. No way, you say?

Yes, definitely, way! I completely set the table, serving dishes and all and then cover it with a clean sheet. I set up my serving areas and either use a sheet or tea towels to cover the area. This is then one less thing I have to do on Thanksgiving.

Serving

I bought a small folding table a few years ago at Target. It is about 4 x 2'. I set it up by my end of the table with a decorative cloth. On this table, I place the side dishes. We have a large plate of turkey at each end of the table, rolls and butter at each end, salt and pepper and gravy at each end. this puts everything within reach of everyone at the table. It also stops the table from becoming overly crowded. If you do a buffet, consider setting up two of everything, one on each side of the table to make serving faster and easier.

Smile

Everything is ready, the house looks great and you are ready for your guests. Oh, there's the door bell. Just one thing left to do. Take a deep breath and SMILE! After all, you are the #1 guest at This party!



A BOUNTIFUL PANTRY

Shaunna Privratsky

Pantries no longer merit a room of their own. Today, homeowners are lucky if they have a tall, thin cabinet in the kitchen labeled “the pantry.” Yet a well-stocked pantry is a necessity for families stretching their food dollars or trying to stick to a budget.

Here’s why: saving at the grocery store is all about stocking up during sales. However, if you don’t have a place to store all your great bargains, you miss out. You might stuff a

flat of canned soup under the bed, but forget all about it. Or throw the extra rolls of paper towels in the coat closet, only to endure an avalanche whenever anyone opens the door.

I solved our cabinet-inadequacy problem by making a pantry cupboard. I had an old entertainment center that was bulky and outdated. I turned it on its side, cut off the bottom, and added additional shelves. I finished it with a plywood door, attached with sturdy hinges. Later I added a bookshelf to add even more vertical space. A fresh coat of white paint is all it needed to complete my new pantry!

To capitalize on the space, I stock up on sale items that we regularly use. For instance, soups, canned veggies and fruits, pasta helpers, Mac cheese boxes, crackers, oatmeal, baking supplies, fruit snacks and cereal bars. I always follow the “first in, first used” rule, to make sure everything is eaten before it expires.

One caution when stocking up: don't buy more than you can reasonably use. A lot of sales are offered because the item is nearing the expiration date, so always check first. Canned goods, pastas and unopened condiments usually don't expire for long periods of time.

Combining sales with coupons can net you even bigger bargains. The Sunday newspaper usually carries coupon inserts, and the grocery stores often put the same items on sale that week. You could even get the item free!

Having a well-stocked pantry does you no good if you don't use the items. In today's hectic lifestyle, it may seem difficult to put together dinner from a couple of cans and some pasta. Yet making meals ahead of time and freezing them is an easy way to have quick, healthy meals faster and cheaper than ordering pizza, again.

Here are some simple meals to prepare, using ingredients from a well-stocked pantry. All have less than five major ingredients and can be made in advance.



Hamburger Hot dish

- ½ lb. hamburger
- 1 can Cream of Mushroom Soup
- Noodles, any shape
- 1 can green beans

Cook noodles according to directions. Cook hamburger. [Can substitute turkey burger or soy products] Combine with soup and green beans.

Rice and Veggie Stir Fry

- 1 Tbl. oil
- Cubed chicken, pork, or ring sausage, about a cup
- 1 package frozen vegetables
- Rice, ½ cup per serving

Sweet & Sour Sauce:

- 1 Tbl. Ketchup
- 1 Tbl. Grape jelly
- 2 Tbl. Brown sugar
- ½ cup juice, like apple
- Optional: 1 Tbl. Soy sauce

Cook meat and oil in a wok or frying pan on Medium. Add vegetables and sauce; turn to High for about seven to ten minutes. Meanwhile, cook rice according to package directions. Combine and serve.

Ham Salad

- Noodles, any shape
- Cubed, cooked Ham
- 3 Tbl. Light or Regular dressing
- Peas, carrots or other vegetables

Cook the noodles per directions, drain. Add ham and vegetables. Toss with dressing

Taco Hot dish

- ½ lb. Hamburger
- 2 small cans tomato sauce
- 1 cup instant rice
- 1 ¼ cup water
- Taco seasonings or spices

Toppings:

- ½ cup grated cheese
- ¾ cup crushed chips, like *Fritos*, *Doritos*, or tortilla style chips
- Optional: diced tomatoes, peppers, onion, black olives

Cook hamburger. Add rice, water, spices and tomato sauce. Simmer for ten – twelve minutes, stirring occasionally. When sauce has thickened, top with cheese and chips.

Crackpot Chili

- ½ lb. Hamburger, cooked
- 1 can chili or red kidney beans
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 2 cups water
- Chili seasonings or spices

Combine all ingredients in a crackpot or large pot. Simmer.

Tator tot Hotdish

- ½ lb. Hamburger
- 1 can whole corn
- 1 can Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 1 medium bag of frozen tator tots

Heat oven to 400 degrees F. Cook hamburger. Line a square, 9” baking pan with foil. [For easy clean-up] Combine hamburger, corn and soup in the pan. Top with rows of tator tots. [Don’t push in] Cook in oven for approximately 15 – 18 minutes, until tator tots are lightly browned and center is hot.

Spanish Rice

- ½ lb. Hamburger
- 2 small cans tomato sauce
- 1 ½ cups instant rice
- 1 ½ cups water

- Optional: 2 large green peppers, halved and seeded
- ½ cup grated cheese

Cook hamburger. Add rice, water and tomato sauce. Simmer until thickened, about ten minutes. Variation: Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Put rice mixture in green pepper halves in a baking pan. Top with grated cheese. Bake for 10-14 minutes, until cheese melts.

Western Burgers

- 1 lb. Hamburger
- 2 small cans tomato sauce
- ¼ cup barbecue sauce
- ½ packet Taco seasonings or spices
- Buns

Cook hamburger. Add tomato sauce, barbecue sauce and Taco seasonings. Serve on warm buns.

Pasta Helpers

- 1 box Hamburger, Chicken or Tuna Helper
- Meat of choice, cooked

Add: ½ cup corn, peas, carrots or other vegetables.

Follow directions on package, except use about half of the recommended meat portion. This saves calories, money and time. Use the other half of cooked hamburger, chicken or can of tuna in a second meal the next day. Add the veggies for taste and nutrition.

These are just a sample of the many simple recipes you can put together from a well-stocked pantry. Your family's tastes may be different, so adjust your ingredients and items accordingly.

Besides the pantry, beverages are another item that can really drain your budget.

“There's nothing to drink,” my teens complain, even though I always have lots of bottles of cold, sparkling water on hand. They prefer soft drinks, juice boxes, *Gatorade*, *Hawaiian Punch*, flavored milk like chocolate or strawberry, and sports drinks. There is certainly nothing wrong with any of them, except the price.

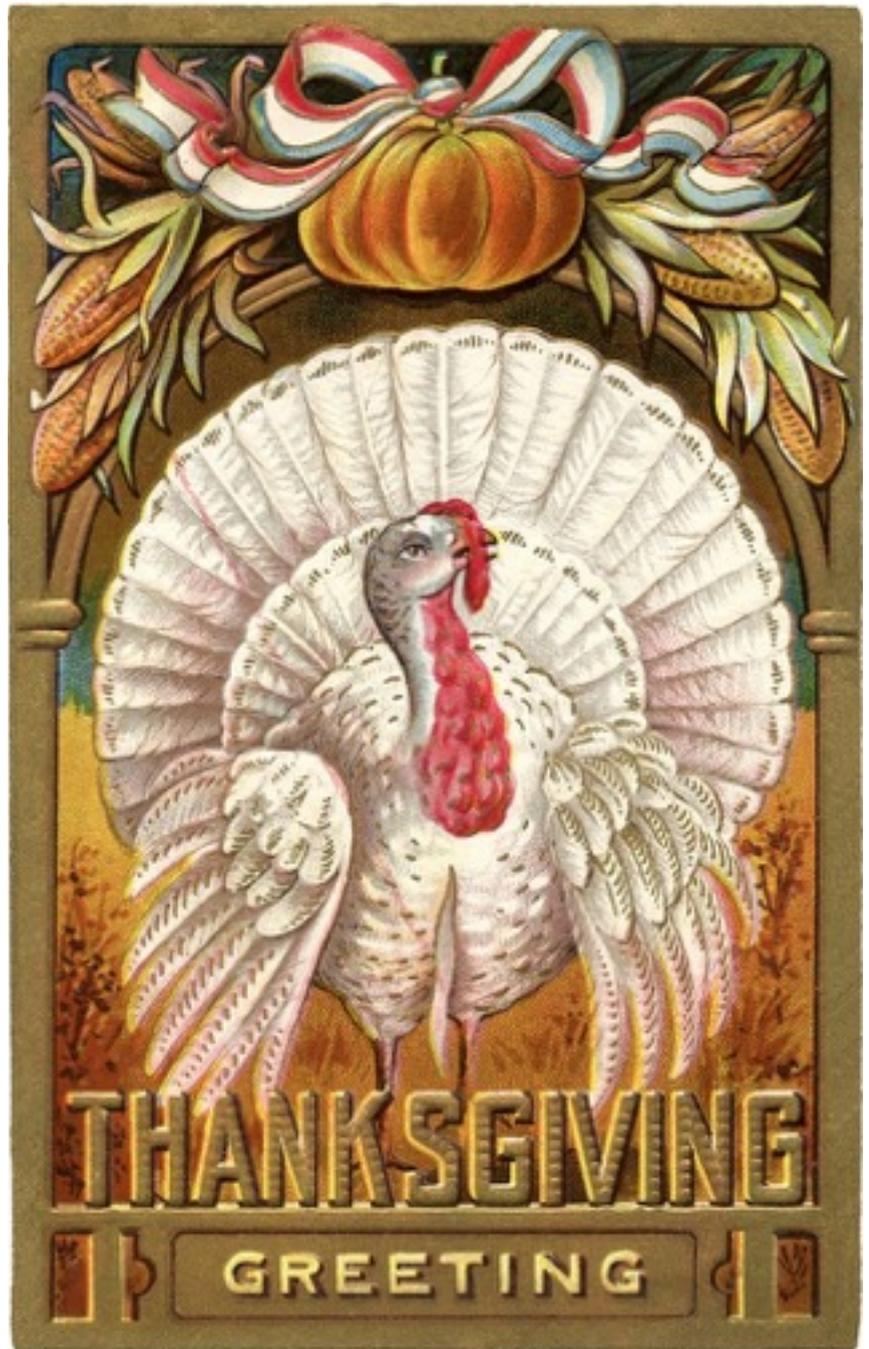
After another sky-high grocery bill, I decided to take action and lower our “drinking” costs. There are several ways that I found to reduce it, without sacrificing taste.

- Milk prices are enough to make even the cows bellow. Regular white milk runs about \$5 a gallon, while flavored milk adds at least \$2. I discovered that buying the chocolate and strawberry powders that you add to the white milk

saved us in the long run. Plus I was able to use coupons on the cans, saving even more. My fifteen-year-old says it tastes better than the pre-mixed flavored milk.

➤ Frozen concentrated juice is healthier than punch, and costs two-thirds less. All I do is get a can out the night before, put it in the fridge to thaw, and then add water the next morning. I use a fancy pitcher that the kids like to grab when they want a fruity drink.

➤ *Gatorade* is another favorite, but spendy drink. A six-pack of individual bottles cost anywhere from \$8 up to \$12.50. In a different aisle than the bottled drinks, I found *Gatorade* pouches for 69 cents each. You simply add a quart of



water to the powder and you have *Gatorade*! I put it in the old bottles that I saved and the kids can't tell the difference.

- Canned soda pop can deflate your budget. The larger cans often get wasted; since my kids only drink about half, then leave the rest laying around. I countered by buying small pop bottles for 50 cents each, then refilling them from the larger bottles. The kid-sized bottles have just the right amount, so I don't pour my money down the drain anymore.
- As the weather turns chilly, hot chocolate is a favorite. Yet the pouches disappear faster than I can buy them. I discovered a giant, family-size canister in the over-sized aisle for only \$4. I estimate that I have already saved \$7 in one month on hot cocoa. There is a convenient scoop included, so it is still easy to measure the right amount.
- Don't forget the old stand-by: *Kool-aid*. The last time I counted, there were seventeen varieties, all for about 29 cents. It is actually cheaper to buy the pre-sweetened kind, since it is all too easy to add too much sugar.
- My kids are way too young for coffee, but I thought I would include some tips for the grown-ups. I had lots of coupons for *Folgers* coffee, any size, so I bought lots of tiny cans, and then put them into a larger, airtight container. I have also bought the "bricks" that are about half the price. You simply cut them open and put them into a container. Another hint is to buy the cheapest off-brand, since all coffee is essentially the same. You can experiment with flavored coffee as well for different taste sensations.

- Last but not least, nothing beats good old H₂O. You can spend lots of money on specialty-bottled water, or you can “make” your own. If you don’t like the taste of your tap water, you can buy water filter pitchers like *Brita*. You leave it in the fridge so it is nice and cold. You can also install a filter directly on your faucet. Or a gallon of distilled water is only 50 cents at *Wal-mart*.

These are some different ways to save money on beverages. Keep an ongoing list, to replenish if there is a big sale or before your cupboard is bare. Making dinner every night will become an adventure, as you utilize these pantry pointers. Here’s a toast to you!

Shaunna Privratsky is grateful she can feed her family of four on a limited budget. Learn her money-saving secrets at The Discount Diva <http://shaunna67.tripod.com/id21.html>

A Blessed Thanksgiving.

INCLUDING CHILDREN IN THANKSGIVING PREPARATIONS

All events held in your home are family events but none as much as Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is such a family event. In addition, Thanksgiving leaves little time for preparation. There are many things you can do in advance but only so much. Since the holiday focuses almost entirely on a meal, much of the preparation must be done the week of Thanksgiving and the

majority of it the day before and the day of your gathering. I believe children should be involved in preparing for company, regardless of the event but especially for Thanksgiving. This holiday is the perfect time to teach children the satisfaction of

With thankful and
contented heart.

Ellen H. Clapsaddle

working to prepare your home and food for the guests invited to share the event with you. Even small children can be assigned tasks. There are 6 ways children can help prepare for Thanksgiving:

Cleaning

You want your home to look nice for company. I am not one to prepare my home for the inspector general when company is coming, you know, a white glove inspection of all areas of the house. However, I do believe my home should be clean and comfortable for company. Assign cleaning tasks to children based on their age. Small children can dust low sections of furniture, like the dining room table and chair rungs. Small children can empty trashcans. Older children can vacuum, dust and clean the bathroom.

Will you get groans and grumbles? Of course! This is the perfect time to explain to kids that elves don't magically do these things during the night. These tasks are regular household chores and they need to learn to do them so they are ready to have a place of their own. Create a list of cleaning chores when you begin and assign tasks to everyone in the family. Spread the work among everyone so no one person (you) ends up exhausted from doing everything by themselves.

Shopping

I often like going to the grocery store alone. I find I can get through the store faster and for less money than when I take someone along with me. However, when it comes to power grocery shopping for Thanksgiving, I like to have help along. The grocery bags get heavy, I often need to run back to another aisle to pick up an item (and need someone to watch the cart) and to unload the cart for me. I hate handling the groceries so much when I shop.

Having help along allows me the opportunity to only handle the groceries 2-3 times. Take one or two of your kids with you to help with the shopping. Younger kids, not little kids, can take items with you and load them into the cart. Let them check the list over for you to make certain you have everything. Give them responsibility of the coupons so you remember to use them. Teach them about price shopping, showing them how to compare prices among like items.

Older kids can unload the cart and put the groceries in the car. They can also carry bags into the house and put groceries away. Give kids your main grocery list that contains everything you need for company and hand them the store ads. Let them go through the ads and coupons looking for the best deals for you. You may be surprised at the incredible job they do for you.

Prep

As with cleaning, even the youngest kids can help with preparations. When I was very young, my job was ice. Before ice makers, I had to make ice and store it in the weeks before company arrived. Even with an ice maker, kids can put extra ice in a container and save it. I hate paying for ice when I can make it for free. Have little ones fill the fridge with soda and other beverages a day or two before so everything is nice and cold. Kids can prepare crudités for you as well. I became a champ when it came to radish roses. Kids can peel potatoes and prepare dishes for you as they get older. Create a tradition of having children work with you in the kitchen during the Holidays. In fact, make meal prep a family affair. The work becomes easier and memories are created.

Decorating

This includes preparing the tables for dinner. Print free coloring sheets (<http://www.free-coloring-pages.com/thanksgiving.html>) for little one and perhaps a few big ones, to color. Then let them hang them up to decorate the house. Leaves can be collected and used for decorations. Beautiful autumn leaves can be placed between sheets of waxed paper. Put a cotton towel over the paper and press with a cool iron. Trim the edges with craft scissors. These can be used as placemats. However, no hot items on the waxed paper. Older kids can set and decorate the table, creating centerpieces. Give them a budget and let them

search online for ideas. Other decorations can be placed around the house, including candles and flowers.

Entertaining

Family friends from my childhood spent Thanksgiving with family in Texas. Every year, the kids put on a play for the adults. The play always had a Thanksgiving theme and usually involved one or two of the adults. Your kids can be drafted to entertain during Holiday events, especially if it is a family event. Encourage them to include other children invited to your house. Entertainment can be as simple as choosing music to play to performing. This does not need to be a major production. In fact, for the adults, the cornier and sillier, the better. This sort of family entertaining provides families with stories to share for years to come.

Clean-up

All the food has been eaten and the guests have all gone home. Nothing left to do but relax. NOT! The table is covered with food to put away and the sink is filled with dirty dishes.

Now, if you followed the advice from my table prep video, you used disposable dinnerware. You may not have as much to clean up but there is still a lot to do. When you

create your to-do lists before the holiday, be sure to make a clean up list. Assign tasks to everyone. Make sure they all understand that it goes much faster when everyone pitches in and works together. Rising dishes, loading and unloading the dishwasher can be coordinated between 2-3 people.

You should take care of storing the leftovers so you can decide how to handle everything. Trash can be emptied and taken out. A quick clean of the bathroom and vacuum. Give the floor a quick mop when the food is put away and the dishes are done. When it is all done, sit down and enjoy another piece of pie. You did a great job and burned off enough calories. You can relax and enjoy.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!



For more Thanksgiving & Christmas tips, recipes & stress busters, please visit our Life of Simple Joy blog:

<https://mysimplejoylife.wordpress.com>

Thanksgiving Recipes

Thanksgiving is filled with tradition, including your menu. I'm sure many if not most of the dishes you plan to make this year are the same ones you have been serving your guests every Thanksgiving.

Your family enjoys the dishes you put on your Thanksgiving menu. There is comfort in tradition. Still, it's nice to introduce something new to your meal. Thanksgiving is not the time to try many new, and often complicated recipes in my humble opinion. However, one or two simple new dishes that compliment your tradition menu add a nice touch to the meal.

I suggest trying new recipes before Thanksgiving. Our traditional food intensive meal is NOT the time to stress yourself out struggling with a new recipe. Try it out first. Let your family weigh in. Then only add it to the menu if it works for you AND your family.

Here are a few ideas to get your creative cooking juices flowing. Enjoy!

Chess Pie

1 unbaked pie shell

1 cup light brown sugar

1/2 cup sugar

1 tablespoon flour

2 eggs, well beaten

2 tablespoons whole milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

1/2 cup unsalted butter

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Mix the 2 sugars and flour together thoroughly. In separate bowl, beat eggs, milk and vanilla together. Add to sugar mixture. Add cooled, melted butter. Mix thoroughly. Pour into pie shell and bake in 375 over 35-45 minutes or until set.

Pumpkin Chiffon Pie

3/4 cup brown sugar
1 envelop unflavored gelatin
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ginger
3 egg yolks
3/4 cup milk
1 1/4 cups canned pumpkin
3 egg whites
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 graham cracker crust

In saucepan, combine brown sugar, gelatin, salt and spices. Combine egg yolks and milk, stir into brown sugar mixture. Cook and stir until mixture comes to a boil, remove from heat, stir in pumpkin. Chill until mixture mounds slightly when spooned (test frequently, don't let it get too stiff.) Beat egg whites until soft peaks form, add granulated sugar, beating to still peaks. Fold pumpkin mixture thoroughly into egg whites. Turn int crust, chill until firm. Garnish with whipped cream if desired.

Southern Pecan Pie

1 unbaked pie shell
1/4 cup unsalted butter
2/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar
dash of salt
3/4 cup dark corn syrup
3 eggs, well beaten
1 cup pecan halves
1 teaspoon vanilla

Thaw crust. Preheat oven to 450. Cream together butter, brown sugar and salt; stir in remaining ingredients. Pour into pie pan. Bake in 450 oven for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 and bake 30 minutes or until firm. To determine firmness, gently shake pie pan. Pie should not have a liquid consistency.

I like to carefully move the pie shell from the aluminum pan into one of my own glass pans. My glass pans are sturdier.

Cherry-Cola Salad

1 20-ounce can black cherries

2 3-ounce packages cherry gelatin

12 ounces cola

1 cup chopped nuts

Drain cherries, reserving juice. Heat the reserved juice to the boiling point in a sauce pan. Add the gelatin; stir until dissolved.

Combine the gelatin, cherries, cola and nuts in a serving bowl. Chill until firm.

Cranberry Salad

3 3-ounce packages raspberry gelatin

2 16-ounce cans whole cranberry sauce

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped celery

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped apple

1 16-ounce can crushed pineapple

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped walnuts

3 cups sour cream

1 8-ounce carton whipped topping

1 cup miniature marshmallows

Dissolve gelatin in four cups boiling water in a large bowl. Chill until partially set.

Add the cranberry sauce, celery, apple, pineapple, and walnuts; mix well. Pour half the mixture into a greased 9 x 13" dish. Chill until firm.

Combine the sour cream, whipped topping and marshmallows in a bowl; mix well. Spread over chilled layer.

Spoon remaining gelatin mixture over the sour cream layer. Chill until firm. Cut into squares.

Homemade Cranberry Sauce

1 pound (4 cups) fresh cranberries

1 1/2 cups sugar

2 cups water

Pick over and wash cranberries in a colander; drain. Place berries, sugar and water in a deep saucepan and bring to a boil; cover and cook slowly over low heat about 10 minutes, or until the skins on the cranberries are broken. Skim the bubbles off the top and allow to cool. Makes approximately 4 cups.

Pineapple Orange Salad

- 3 8-ounce cartons whipped topping**
- 1 Large container small curd cottage cheese**
- 2 3-ounce packages orange gelatin**
- 1 3-ounce package pineapple gelatin**
- 1 large can crushed pineapple, drained**
- 2 small cans mandarin oranges, drained**

Place whipped topping in large bowl. Sprinkle gelatin over topping and mix until thoroughly combined. Add cottage cheese and fruit. Pour into bowl, smooth top and place in frig. Serve chilled.

Baked Corn

2 cans cream-style corn

1 can sweetened condensed milk

½ cup chopped green pepper

2 tablespoons chopped onion

2 teaspoons salt

4 eggs, beaten

Combine the corn, condensed milk, green pepper onion, salt and eggs in a bowl; mix well.

Pour into buttered casserole.

Bake at 350 degrees for 45-50 minutes.

Bourbon Sweet Potatoes

4 lbs sweet potatoes

1 stick (1/2 cup) butter or margarine, softened

1/2 cup bourbon

1/3 cup orange juice

1/4 cup light brown sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

1/3 cup chopped pecans

Heat oven to 350. Scrub potatoes. Cook, covered in boiling salted water in a large saucepan, about 35 minutes or just until tender. Drain, cool slightly, peel.

Mash potatoes. Add butter, bourbon, orange juice, brown sugar, salt and spices. Beat until smooth.

Spoon into buttered six-cup baking dish (1 1/2 quarts) sprinkle nuts around edge. Bake for 45 minutes or until lightly browned.

Broccoli Casserole

2 10-ounce packages frozen broccoli

1 cup minute rice

¼ cup melted butter

2 tablespoons instant minced onions

1 can cream of chicken soup

½ cup milk

1 8-ounce jar Cheez Whiz

Thaw broccoli. Combine thawed broccoli with rice, butter, onion, soup, milk and Cheez Whiz in a large bowl. Mix well.

Spoon into a greased nine by 12 inch baking dish.

Bake at 350 degrees for 30-40 minutes or until bubbly and rice is tender.

Makes 10 servings

Corn Pudding

1 small onion, chopped

1 stick margarine

1 16-ounce can whole kernel corn

1 16-ounce can cream-style corn

1 small package corn muffin mix

3 eggs, beaten

1 cup sour cream

1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

Sauté onion in the margarine in a skillet until tender. Remove from heat.

Add the whole kernel corn and cream-style corn; mix well. Add the muffin mix and the eggs; mix well.

Pour into a greased 9 x 13" baking pan. Spread sour cream on top. Sprinkle with the Cheddar cheese.

Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes.

Marmalade Beets

1/3 cup orange marmalade

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 tablespoon beet juice (from the can)

1 tablespoon butter

salt and pepper to taste

dash of nutmeg

1 can small whole beets

Melt marmalade with lemon juice, beet juice and butter over low heat, stirring constantly. Add seasonings and blend. Add beets, cover and simmer until beets are heated, shaking the pan carefully to prevent sticking. Uncover and continue simmering 3 or 4 minutes until beets are glazed, stirring carefully so all the beets are coated and glazed doesn't burn. Makes about 6 portions.

Stuffed Acorn Squash

2 small acorn squash, cut into half, seeded

1/2 pound pork sausage

1/4 cup chopped celery

2 tablespoons chopped onion

2 tablespoons chopped green pepper

3/4 cup bread crumbs

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons butter, melted

3/4 cup bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place the squash cut side down in a shallow baking dish. Bake for 45 minutes or until tender. Scoop out and mash the pulp, reserving shells.

Brown sausage with celery, onion, and green pepper in a skillet. Add the mashed squash, 3/4 cup of bread crumbs and salt; mix well.

Spoon sausage mixture into the squash shells. Mix butter and second 3/4 cup bread crumbs. Sprinkle mixture around edges of squash. Bake for 10 minutes.

DECORATING YOUR THANKSGIVING TABLE

Create a beautiful table with a little imagination and very little work. It is so simple to build a fabulous table for Thanksgiving dinner. My favorite tip for creating your table? Set it the night before and cover it with a clean sheet. One less task on Thanksgiving.

Wondering what size turkey to buy for your dinner? Confused by different cooking times? Where to go for all your answers! Why the good people at Butterball! Their site has a variety of information to help you prepare the perfect turkey. Check them out before you shop!



=Cranberry Pancakes

The perfect dish for Thanksgiving morning.

- 1 cup flour, sifted**
- 2 Tbsp. sugar**
- 1 Tbsp baking powder**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 2 eggs, well beaten**
- 1 cup milk**
- 2 Tbsp melted butter**
- 1 cup raw cranberries**

Sift dry ingredients together in a bowl. In a second bowl, combine well beaten eggs, milk and butter.

Combine flour and egg mixture and stir in the cranberries. Cook the pancakes in the usual way, making them small with 4-5 cranberries in each.

Bread Stuffing

3 cubes soft bread crumbs*

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon pepper

1/4 teaspoon thyme

1/2 medium-sized onion, minced**

1/3 cup butter, melted

Mix bread crumbs, seasonings and onion; add butter slowly, tossing lightly with a fork until blended.

Makes about 3 1/2 cups of stuffing.

*soft bread crumbs are made with fresh bread. Simple put bread slices in the food processor until the crumbs are the desire consistency.

**I use frozen onions, saving myself the tears. When I use fresh onions, I put them in the food processor & chop them until they are the size I want.

Cranberry Punch

1 1/2 cups sugar

3 cups boiling water

2 cups cranberry sauce

1/3 cu lemon juice

1 pint raspberry sorbet

1 quart club soda

1/2 cup maraschino cherries

Dissolve sugar in hot water, add sauce and stir until smooth; add lemon juice and strain through a fine sieve or cheesecloth; chill. When ready to serve, pour over block of ice in punch bowl; add raspberry sorbet, club soda and cherries, chopped fine. Makes about 20 punch-cup portions.

Cranberry Stuffing

2 cups fresh cranberries, ground

1/2 cup butter

1/2 cup sugar

8 cups soft bread crumbs*

1 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

1 tablespoon powdered sage

2 teaspoons thyme

1/2 cup chopped celery

3 tablespoons minced parsley

1 cup water

Cook cranberries in butter about 5 minutes, then stir in sugar. Mix together bread crumbs, seasonings, celery and parsley; add water and bread crumb mixture to cranberries and cook about 8 minutes or until well blended, stirring constantly. Makes about 6 cups of stuffing.

Turkey Broth

I like to use as much of the turkey as possible. Taking the time to make this broth allows me to enjoy homemade broth when I want. I am able to control the amount of salt in my broth. When broth is done, I strain & ladle the broth into freezer containers. Allow to cool. Freeze up to 6 months. I use the broth in my dressing throughout the year.

Bones of one turkey

2 cups cold water

1 carrot, sliced

1 stalk celery, chopped
1 teaspoon chopped onion
1 sprig parsley
1/4 bay leaf
salt & pepper to taste

Place all ingredients in large slow cooker. Cook on high until liquid begins to boil. Turn to low and allow to simmer 6 hours. Strain



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<http://eepurl.com/cmmmir>