



JONES DAIRY FARM THANKSGIVING GUIDE

Created in Collaboration with Emily Dingmann
of My Everyday Table



Everyone loves Thanksgiving! The meal, the traditions, the gathering. But if you're hosting, it can feel like an overwhelming amount of work. The best way to tackle it is with a plan! We're laying out our best tips, tricks, timeline, menu ideas, recipes and more to make this your best and most enjoyable Thanksgiving yet.



5 Biggest Tips for Hosting a Stress-Free Thanksgiving

- 1 **PLAN EARLY!** Start your menu and prep planning a few weeks before the big day so it doesn't feel rushed. Don't worry, we'll help you do all the planning.
- 2 **MANAGE EXPECTATIONS.** Mainly your own. Remember that gratitude and being together are what matter on Thanksgiving, so you don't need to have the perfect meal, perfect home, or perfect tablescape. Your guests will remember how you made them feel, not what your house looks like or if it's perfectly decorated.
- 3 **PREP AHEAD.** In the name of minimizing stress and making this an enjoyable experience, prep work starts the week of Thanksgiving! Even little pockets of time can pay off immensely so that your holiday isn't too rushed with a mile-long to-do list and you feeling stressed.
- 4 **OUTSOURCE.** Have your guests help (everyone likes to contribute something anyway!) with the meal, pick up baked goods from the bakery or bring a bottle of wine. You can also order part of the meal from your local grocery store to help spread out the work.
- 5 **LEAN ON TAKEOUT OR EASY MEALS THE DAY BEFORE.** We are not cooking the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Order pizza, cook a frozen one, but do not cook! Even if you're hosting guests. Thanksgiving morning, put out a spread of baked goods, hard-boiled eggs, fresh fruit, a skillet of Jones Golden Brown Chicken Sausage and a pot of coffee.

Thanksgiving Planning Checklist

2-3 Weeks Out:

- ☐ Plan your menu (again, we'll help with that!)
- ☐ Assign guests dishes if you can OR decide what you will outsource
- ☐ If having a dress code (which can be fun!), share it with guests
- ☐ Buy turkey
- ☐ Order meal items or baked goods from your store

1 Week Out:

- ☐ Make grocery list
- ☐ Plan out dishes, glassware and cooking dishes to ensure you have what you'll need (label cooking dishes with a post-it for easy cooking the day of)
- ☐ Make place cards if using—have kids make these for a sweet touch!
- ☐ Buy turkey if you haven't

3-4 Days Out:

- ☐ Grocery shop or order groceries
- ☐ Thaw the turkey! This is important as it can take a few days in the refrigerator, depending on the size of your bird
- ☐ Start to gather cooking dishes, glassware and serving platters and wash anything if necessary
- ☐ Clean kitchen

2 Days Out:

- ☐ Prep and wash dishes if necessary
- ☐ Prep drink station—collect wine chillers, beverage containers, glassware, mixers, wine openers, etc. so that people can help themselves
- ☐ Prep stuffing: tear bread into pieces and dry out, chop celery and onion if desired
- ☐ Bake squash or potatoes
- ☐ Make any desserts

1 Day Before:

- ☐ Prep turkey if doing a dry brine
- ☐ Prep a side dish if you can (make a salad dressing, make au gratin potatoes)
- ☐ Prep an app if it requires cooking
- ☐ Pick up any outsourced menu items, bakery items, etc. (or have a guest do this for you!)
- ☐ Map out your day-of cooking schedule, so you have a rough idea of what needs to get done first
- ☐ Set table and serving dishes
- ☐ Clean kitchen
- ☐ Rest

Thanksgiving Menu Ideas

- Main: Turkey, ham with apricot and dijon glaze (recipe included), roasted chicken
- Sides: Ham and potato au gratin (recipe included), mashed potatoes, [squash](#), sausage stuffing (recipe included), hot bacon spinach salad (recipe included), [green bean casserole](#), [kale salad](#), [French green beans](#), roasted Brussels sprouts, roasted carrots
- Extras: Cranberries, gravy, rolls
- Appetizers: Cheeseboard, sausage and gruyere pinwheels (recipe included), [smoked salmon dip](#), [baked brie with fig jam](#)
- Dessert: Pumpkin pie, pecan pie, cheesecake
- Drinks: Red wine like Pinot Noir, white wine like unoaked chardonnay, sparkling wine like prosecco or champagne, sparkling water, Shirley Temples for kids, signature drink if desired, NA drink option

Extra-Special (Optional) Touches

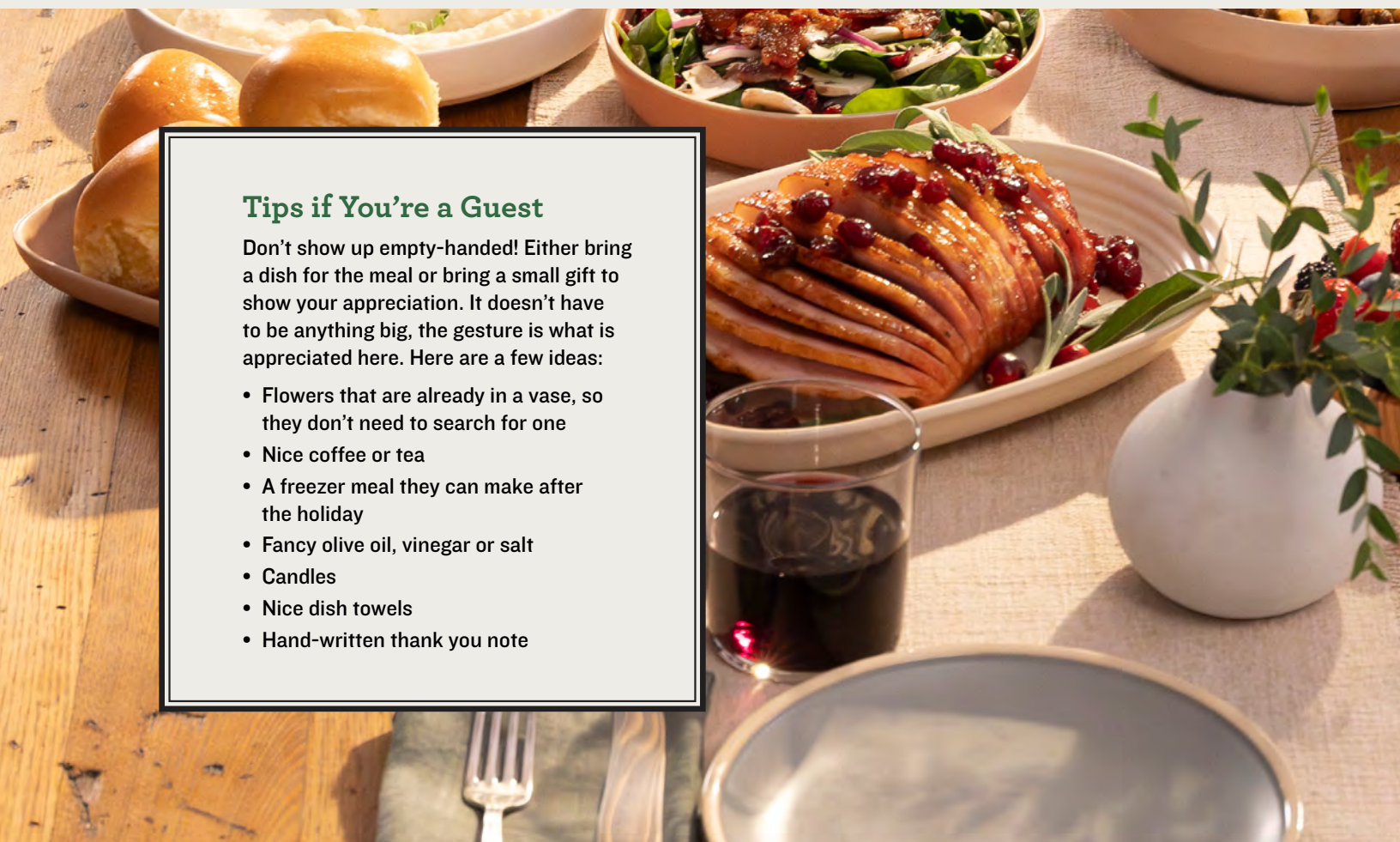
If you want to make things extra special and have the capacity to do so, here are some ways to do so:

- Put together a beautiful table with small bud vases of flowers, unscented candles and cloth napkins.
- Order flowers from your local florist.
- Make it a theme! Theme parties can be really fun, Thanksgiving doesn't need much of a theme, but you can have a dress code to make it feel special. Even something easy like "Holiday sparkle" or plaid.
- Send guests home with leftovers! Gather some deli containers or to-go containers you don't need back and have everyone pack up some leftovers to take with them.

Tips if You're a Guest

Don't show up empty-handed! Either bring a dish for the meal or bring a small gift to show your appreciation. It doesn't have to be anything big, the gesture is what is appreciated here. Here are a few ideas:

- Flowers that are already in a vase, so they don't need to search for one
- Nice coffee or tea
- A freezer meal they can make after the holiday
- Fancy olive oil, vinegar or salt
- Candles
- Nice dish towels
- Hand-written thank you note



APRICOT AND DIJON GLAZED HAM

Servings: 5-7

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Sweet apricot preserves, tangy Dijon, and a touch of brown sugar create a beautifully caramelized glaze that enhances every slice. Perfect for holidays or special occasions, this ham delivers the ideal balance of savory and sweet.



Make Ahead: Mix the glaze a day or two ahead of time and keep in the refrigerator until you are ready to use it. The ham can be scored in advance and kept covered tightly with plastic wrap until it is time to bake.

INGREDIENTS

Jones Dairy Farm Uncured Heritage Half Ham
1/4 cup apricot preserves
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1 teaspoon minced ginger (or 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger)

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat oven to 325°F.

Place the ham in a baking dish lined with foil, fat side up, and lightly score it in a crosshatch pattern. Bake for 30 minutes.

In a small bowl, stir together apricot preserves, Dijon mustard, brown sugar, and minced ginger.

Spread apricot glaze over ham and bake for another 30 minutes, or until the internal temperature reaches 125°F.

Let rest for 5 minutes, slice, and serve.

SOURDOUGH SAUSAGE STUFFING

Makes about 12 cups

Servings: 8-10

This stuffing gets rave reviews year after year. Studded with flavorful pork sausage, fresh herbs and sourdough bread, this stuffing is absolutely delicious and has a variety of soft and crunchy textures.



Make Ahead: Tear bread and let it get stale a bit, cook the onions, celery and pork sausage. Reheat sausage mixture and assemble stuffing.

INGREDIENTS

- 16 oz. loaf sourdough bread (about 9 cups cubes)
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 3 stalks celery, diced (about 1 cup)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 lb. Jones Dairy Farm All Natural Pork Sausage Roll, thawed if frozen
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, minced

INSTRUCTIONS

The day or night before cooking, tear or cut bread into small cubes (about 1-inch) and place into an extra-large mixing bowl. (We do this ahead so they can get a little stale and dried out.)

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. When it foams, add onion and celery to skillet. Cook for 4-5 minutes, until soft. (Turn down heat to low or medium-low if they are browning.) Add garlic to skillet and cook 30-60 seconds, until fragrant. Season with sea salt and black pepper.

Add pork sausage to skillet, breaking up with a spatula, and cooking for 6-8 minutes stirring occasionally, until cooked through. Add to bowl with bread cubes.

Meanwhile, in a large glass measuring cup (at least 2 cups), whisk together the chicken broth, heavy cream and egg. Set aside.

Add fresh herbs to bread cubes and sausage mixture.

Pour chicken broth mixture over the top of the bread and sausage mixture. Gently fold mixture together so all of the bread is coated in liquid and transfer to a greased 9x13-inch baking dish.

Bake for 45-55 minutes, until golden brown.

HOT BACON SALAD

Makes about 12 cups

Servings: 8

This salad is a classic for a reason and it is a beautiful addition to your Thanksgiving table. Salad is a lighter and brighter dish in a sea of rich ones, but the warm bacon dressing is satisfying and rich enough to stand up to the other dishes. We've added a few unexpected ingredients—dried cranberries and raw pumpkin seeds—for a seasonal twist.



Make Ahead: Cook bacon and make dressing up to two days in advance. Store dressing in refrigerator and take out a few hours early to come to room temperature. Reheat in microwave gently for 15-20 second increments until warmed through. Reheat bacon quickly in a hot skillet or wrapped in a paper towel in the microwave for 15-30 second increments until heated through. Let the bacon crisp up and assemble the salad.

INGREDIENTS

12 oz. Jones Dairy Farm Dry Aged Bacon
1 medium shallot, diced (about 1/2 cup)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon honey
12 oz. baby spinach
6 oz. mushrooms, thinly sliced (about 2 cups sliced)
1/4 medium red onion, thinly sliced (about 1/2 cup sliced)
3/4 cup dried cranberries
3/4 cup raw pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
Freshly cracked black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Cook bacon in a skillet over medium heat until browned and crispy, about 5-8 minutes, flipping frequently. (Be careful to not let bacon or oil burn, turn down heat if necessary.) Transfer cooked bacon onto paper towel to cool and reserve bacon grease in skillet. Lower heat to low and add minced shallot to the bacon grease in skillet and cook for about 1-2 minutes, until softened. Remove from heat, let cool slightly and transfer to blender.

While bacon is cooking, prep salad. Thinly slice mushrooms and red onion. Soak onions in cold water for 5-10 minutes to mellow them out a bit, if desired. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towel to let them dry. Roughly chop or crumble bacon.

Blend dressing. To the bacon grease and shallot mixture in a blender, add olive oil, vinegar, mustard and honey. Blend until smooth. (Makes a little over 1 cup.)

Assemble salad. Add baby spinach to a large salad bowl and toss with 1/3 of the warm dressing. (Gently warm in the microwave if necessary in 15-20 second increments, we do want it to be hot so it can wilt the spinach a bit.) Top with sliced mushrooms, red onions and another 1/3 of the dressing and toss together. Sprinkle with crumbled bacon, cranberries and pumpkin seeds. Top with freshly cracked black pepper and serve the remaining dressing on the side for additional dressing as desired.

HAM AND POTATO AU GRATIN

Makes about 10 cups

Servings: 8-10

Prep Time: 30 minutes

We're adding smoky Jones Dairy Farm Ham to these classic French potatoes. It's creamy, flavorful and cheesy, and a delicious way to switch up your potatoes. The recipe is inspired by Julia Child's Gratin Jurassien (Scalloped Potatoes with Heavy Cream and Cheese) and is also an excellent way to use up leftover ham if you find yourself with some after the holidays.



Make Ahead: Follow recipe and bake for 60-80 minutes, without the top layer of cheese on it. Cook until potatoes are fork tender. Let cool completely, top with remaining cheese and thyme, and cover in aluminum foil in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Take out of the fridge about an hour before cooking to come to room temperature. Bake at 350°F for about 40-60 minutes, until heated through and the cheese is golden brown.

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs. russet potatoes, peeled and sliced with mandoline
6 oz. cooked Jones Dairy Farm Uncured Ham or Ham Slices, diced
1 1/4 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons melted butter
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
8 oz. gruyere cheese, shredded by hand
3 sprigs of thyme, leaves removed from stem (about 1 tablespoon), plus more for garnish
Fresh cracked black pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Prep potatoes. Wash, dry, peel and thinly slice potatoes using a mandoline slicer.

Prep cream mixture. In a large glass measuring cup, melt butter. Stir in heavy cream and sea salt.

Layer au gratin. In a generously buttered (or sprayed with cooking spray) 2.4 qt. baking dish, layer about 1/3 of the sliced potatoes so they are slightly overlapping each other in an even layer. Follow with layers of 1/3 of the cream mixture, 1/3 of the diced ham, 1/3 of the thyme and 1/3 of the shredded cheese. Repeat with the remaining two layers, but don't add cheese on the top layer yet.

Cover with foil and bake for 60-80 minutes, until potatoes are fork tender. Remove foil, top with remaining shredded cheese, and bake for another 15-20 minutes, until cheese is melted and golden brown. Garnish with thyme and serve with freshly cracked pepper to taste.

SAUSAGE AND GRUYERE PINWHEELS

Makes about 36 rolls

Servings: 24-36

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Flaky, golden pastry wraps around a rich blend of savory Jones Dairy Farm sausage, cream cheese, and a hint of heat for the perfect bite-sized appetizer. Ideal for holidays, parties, or any special occasion, these pinwheels are guaranteed crowd pleasers.



Make Ahead: Follow the recipe to make and assemble the rolls a day in advance. Chill in the refrigerator until you are ready to bake, then follow the baking instructions as shown.

INGREDIENTS

1 (16 oz.) Jones All Natural Pork Sausage Roll, thawed
8 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
1/2 cup shredded gruyere cheese
1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
2 8-oz. puff pastry sheets, thawed
Minced chives, for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat a medium skillet over medium-low heat. Add sausage and cook, breaking up with a spoon, until browned, about 6-8 minutes.

Combine cream cheese, cooked pork sausage, cheese, and red pepper flakes in a medium bowl until well combined.

Spread half of the mixture onto one dough sheet. Roll the dough up like a jelly roll, starting on the short edge. Repeat with the other puff pastry sheet and the remaining sausage mixture.

Wrap rolls with plastic wrap and chill for 20 minutes, or up to a day in advance.

Heat oven to 375°F. Slice the dough into 1/2-inch thick pinwheels. Lay flat on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and bake 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Garnish with chives, if desired.

Thanksgiving FAQs Ham

What Size Ham Should I Buy?

Plan for 1/2 pound per person for boneless ham or 3/4 pound per person for bone-in. That ensures plenty for dinner and a little extra for leftovers—because who doesn't love a ham sandwich the next day?

How Do I Cook A Ham?

For a fully cooked ham, preheat the oven to 325°F. Place the ham cut side down in a baking dish with a bit of water or broth, cover with foil, and bake for about 12–15 minutes per pound, until the internal temperature reaches 125–130°F.

If you're adding a glaze (like the Apricot & Dijon Glazed Ham in this guide!), brush it on during the last 20–30 minutes of baking to avoid burning. Let the ham rest for 10 minutes before slicing.

Cooking

Can I Make The Sides Ahead Of Time?

Yes! Most sides actually taste better when made a day in advance. The Sourdough Sausage Stuffing can be prepped and assembled the day before—just bake it fresh on Thanksgiving. The Ham and Potato Au Gratin can also be baked partway, cooled, and finished the next day. Even the Hot Bacon Spinach Salad dressing can be made ahead and rewarmed before serving. See the Make Ahead tips throughout this guide for instructions on each recipe.

When Should I Start Cooking Everything?

Work backward from mealtime. Turkey first (it takes the longest), then sides you can reheat or keep warm. Desserts and salads can be made a day ahead. Your oven schedule is your best friend!

I Only Have One Oven, How Can I Cook Everything?

This is totally doable, you just need to plan your cooking schedule a bit. The turkey typically will take the longest to cook, so you'll want to start with that as it does require some rest time and time to make gravy, so there will be a free spot!

Another option is to bake the sides (stuffing, potatoes, etc.) before the turkey, cover them with foil, and reheat when you take the turkey out. You can also use insulated casserole carriers to hold heat for up to an hour.

If your oven is full, everything will take a bit longer (15% estimation, but it will vary), so that's also something to consider. And if you have a convection function, use it, as it will help the heat circulate better.



Thanksgiving FAQs Turkey

How Much Turkey Do I Need?

You'll want to plan on about 1-1 1/2 pounds of turkey per person. If you have 8 guests, this is about 12 pounds, which is typically on the smaller side of what you might find at the store. If you're worried about too many leftovers, be sure to grab or collect some extra to-go containers you don't need back so you can send your guests home with extras and still have some to enjoy as leftovers.

How Do I Defrost A Frozen Turkey?

Always defrost your turkey in the refrigerator, never at room temperature. Plan on 24 hours of thawing for every 4-5 pounds of turkey.

So, a 12-pound bird will need about 3 days to fully thaw. Keep it in its original wrapper, place it on a tray to catch drips, and store it on the bottom shelf.

If you're short on time, you can do a cold water thaw—submerge the sealed turkey in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes. Plan for 30 minutes per pound.

What Is Brining?

Brining is the process of soaking a turkey in a saltwater solution—sometimes with added herbs, spices, and citrus—to help it stay juicy and flavorful during roasting. It seasons the meat all the way through and helps it retain moisture.

Do I Need To Brine And How Do I Do It?

You don't have to, but brining can make a big difference in tenderness and taste!

To wet brine, dissolve 1 cup of kosher salt in 1 gallon of water, then add herbs, garlic, and citrus if desired. Submerge the turkey (breast side down) and refrigerate for 12-24 hours. Rinse and pat dry before roasting.

To dry brine, rub salt and seasonings directly onto the turkey, place it uncovered on a rack in the fridge, and let it rest for 24-48 hours before cooking.

How Long Do I Cook A Turkey

A good rule of thumb: about 15 minutes per pound at 325°F for an unstuffed bird. Always check for doneness with a meat thermometer—the thickest part of the breast should reach 165°F, and the thigh should reach 175°F.

Example: A 12-pound turkey will take about 3 hours. Let it rest for at least 30 minutes before carving to lock in the juices.

How Do I Carve A Turkey?

Let it rest at least 30 minutes first! Then remove the legs and thighs, cut along the breastbone to remove the breasts in whole pieces, and slice against the grain. Don't forget the wishbone if you're feeling lucky.

Leftovers

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO REHEAT LEFTOVERS?

Reheat turkey with a splash of broth and cover it to keep it moist.

Reheat ham in a covered baking dish with a splash of broth or water at 325°F for 10-15 minutes, or until warmed through. Avoid microwaving for too long—it can dry out the meat. Jones Hams are fully cooked, so you're just reheating, not recooking.

Warm sides like stuffing and potatoes in a 350°F oven until heated through, about 20-30 minutes. Microwave smaller portions in short intervals to avoid drying them out.

WHAT TO DO WITH LEFTOVERS?

Leftovers are a fun and delicious part of Thanksgiving!

- Ham sandwiches
- Ham & cheese breakfast bake
- Pasta carbonara with ham
- Ham, potato & leek soup
- Turkey sliders
- Turkey white chili
- Turkey nachos
- Turkey soup or chili
- Turkey hash
- Turkey casserole
- Turkey and stuffing quiche
- Stuffing waffles
- Stuffing stuffed mushrooms
- Mashed potato pancakes