Holiday Planning & Portioning Guide

"The opportunity to waste food and money is lessened when your holiday meal begins at your desk, weeks before the actual holiday". -Chef Todd Mohr

7 Steps to Holiday Planning

1) Know your portions before shopping—Using the attached worksheet, plan with a calculator the total amount of ingredients you'll need to feed the number of guests you'll be entertaining. Even if you decide to add 10% more in your planning, don't "eye-ball" it at the grocery store, you'll always over-purchase, over-cook, and over-waste. Stick to your plan.
2) Purchase (or reserve) your turkey NOW—Everyone is shopping for a holiday bird. Don't wait until the busiest grocery shopping days to secure the best ingredient for your meal. If you prefer a frozen product, buy it now and keep frozen until 3 days before cooking. If you prefer a fresh, never frozen product, contact your local farmer to reserve a turkey as far in advance as possible.
3) A week in advance—purchase those items that will not perish in a week. You can purchase carrots, onions, potatoes, etc, before the grocery store rush and potential scarcity of the best ingredients.
4) Make a written cooking plan—Many items can be prepared days, or a full week in advance. Begin your holiday planning with a time schedule. Soups, stuffing, even mashed potatoes can be prepared and either frozen or vacuum packed days in advance for reheating on meal day.
5) Plan your oven and refrigerator space—There is probably more food than you cook or store the rest of the year, so plan the logistics of what items will fit in the oven, how long they'll cook, and what items need to be cooked next. For cold storage, have a few coolers iced-down to accommodate the space no longer available in the refrigerator.
6) Have your serving vessels planned in advance. Where's that gravy boat? What will I put the potatoes in? How will I keep the rolls warm? Answer all these questions, written on your plan, to avoid last minute confusion.
7) Prepare only the amount on your original plan. Resist the urge to over-produce because "it doesn't LOOK like enough". Take note of the amount of leftovers and make this knowledge part of next year's plan.

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Standard Portion Sizes for Average Adults:

Protein (Turkey, Ham, Poultry) - 5 oz / 140g
Starch (potatoes, pasta, grains) - 4oz / 115g
Vegetable (green beans, squash) - 2 oz / 55g
Salad Mix (greens, tomatoes) - 2 oz / 55g
Stuffing (bread, vegetables) - 3oz / 85g
Fruit Chutney (Cranberry/Apple Sauce) - 1 oz / 28g
Gravy (pan gravy, mix gravy) - 4 fl oz / 118 ml

Buying Turkey -

Purchase 1—1 1/2 pounds (450-680g) RAW turkey per person. You can expect 20% cooking loss and 40% carving loss in weight of the bird, yielding 10-12 ounces of edible meat per person.

Safely thaw a frozen turkey 2-3 days in the refrigerator.

Meal Planning Work-Sheet

Turkey— ____ people x 16oz/450g = _____Uncooked weight

Potatoes—_____people x 4oz/115g = _____ cooked weight*

Potatoes2 _____people x 4oz/115g = _____cooked weight*

(If serving two starch dishes, figure 2oz/55g each per person)

Vegetable _____people x 2oz/55g = _____cooked weight*

Vegetable _____people x 2oz/55g = _____cooked weight*

(If serving two vegetables, figure 1oz/25g each per person)

Salad Mix _____people x 2oz/55g = _____ total salad weight

Stuffing _____people x 3oz/85g = _____total stuffing weight

Fruit Chutney _____people x 1oz/28g = _____cooked weight*

Gravy _____people x 4fl oz/118ml = _____total volume

Take Note of Leftover Amounts for Next Year

The above portions are averages, you may choose to increase or decrease as past practices teach you. Consider also, the difference between final cooked weight and purchased weight. Potatoes may need to be peeled, losing weight from purchase to preparation. Adding heavy sauces to vegetable casseroles increases the FINAL weight and should be considered. Purchase only what you need, prepare only what you've purchased.