

**From the White County Extension Office:**

2400 Old Searcy Landing Road  
Searcy, AR 72143  
501-268-5394 [kcullum@uada.edu](mailto:kcullum@uada.edu)



## Timetable to Plan Ahead for a Safe Holiday Meal

### 1 Month before meal

Make menu plan, grocery lists  
Bake cookies for snacks. Cool, wrap, freeze  
Optional: make dressing, wrap well, freeze before baking

### 2 Weeks before meal

Review the menu  
Make the shopping list or review

### 1 Week before meal

Clean, organize refrigerator  
Bake and freeze pies  
Bake and freeze cakes  
Prepare and freeze dinner rolls

### 4 Days before meal

Check food supplies  
Review menu  
Check needed items  
Check tableware  
Make cranberry sauce and refrigerate (if using fresh cranberries)  
If turkey is 12-16 pounds, take out of freezer, let thaw in refrigerator (larger birds may need longer)  
Bake, cool, crumble bread for dressing

### 2 Days before meal

Prepare congealed or marinated salads and refrigerate  
If you have a small turkey, take it out of the freezer and thaw in fridge

### 1 Day before meal

Put cranberry sauce in serving dish, cover, and refrigerate  
Prepare vegetables, cool, refrigerate  
If serving ham, bake it, cool, refrigerate  
Prepare tossed salad and refrigerate

### Day of meal

Prepare stuffing or dressing  
Remove rolls from freezer to rise  
Bake turkey and dressing (plan to remove from oven 30 minutes before serving time)  
Make gravy. Cool and refrigerate  
Set table

### 1 Hour before meal

Heat vegetables and gravy  
Prepare beverage (tea, etc.)  
Remove pies and cake from freezer

### Last minute jobs before the meal

Bake rolls  
Place food items on table  
Place pies in the oven to defrost

### Immediately following the meal

Refrigerate leftovers (smaller, shallow containers are best)  
Clean kitchen  
De-bone turkey (bones may be boiled and stock used to flavor soups, stews, and gravies)  
Refrigerate or freeze leftover turkey

### 1 Day after meal

Plan to use leftovers