

# Tips For A Stress-Free Thanksgiving

(NAPSA)—“Thanksgiving is the biggest food holiday of the year, but preparing the feast doesn’t have to be stressful if you follow a few simple tips,” says Sara Moulton, chef, cookbook author and TV host of “Sara’s Weeknight Meals” on PBS.

“First, decide what kind and what size of turkey you’re going to buy,” says Moulton. She recommends buying 1 pound of bird per person, to allow for leftovers. “If you’re buying a frozen bird, note when to start defrosting it in the fridge—you’ll need 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds,” she says.

“Prepare the gravy a day ahead, then ‘marry’ it to the drippings in the roasting pan while the turkey is resting. Other essential dishes to prepare ahead are stuffing, cranberry sauce and mashed potatoes. Cook and rice the potatoes, then refrigerate. On Thanksgiving, ‘nuke’ them and add softened butter and warm milk. Another trick to make preparation go more smoothly is to create a timetable listing everything you are going to prepare and when and post it on the fridge,” says Moulton.

## Sara’s Make-Ahead Gravy serves 8

Make about  $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$  cup gravy per person. You’ll need that much gravy to pour over everything and have leftovers. For each cup of gravy, use 1 cup broth, 2 tablespoons butter and 2 tablespoons flour.

- 8 Tbsp. (1 stick) unsalted butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups chicken or turkey broth, heated
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dry red or white wine reserved liquid from turkey roasting drippings
- reserved liquid from turkey resting platter

In medium saucepan over moderate low heat, melt butter.



TV chef Sara Moulton, pictured here on set, recommends making side dishes in advance to reduce stress.

**Whisk in flour and cook, whisking, for 5 minutes. Add broth in a stream, whisking to boil. Simmer for 5 minutes. Let gravy cool, transfer to a bowl and cover and chill overnight. Note: The gravy will be thick but you’ll be adding liquid and thinning it before serving.**

**On Thanksgiving Day, platter your cooked turkey and cover it loosely with foil, pour drippings into a fat separator and discard fat. Place bird roasting pan on two burners of the stovetop and use medium heat. Add wine and reserved drippings, scraping up the brown bits on bottom of pan. Whisk in premade gravy and any juices from resting turkey; salt and pepper to taste, cooking until hot. Serve with bird.**

Carving the bird: “My last tip to avoid stress: Carve the bird in the kitchen, not at the table and make sure you have a very sharp knife or knives.”

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After the turkey is cooked (meat thermometer should read 180° when inserted in the thickest part of bird), cool for 20 minutes. Cooling makes meat firmer and easier to slice. Remove and set aside the legs and last joint of each wing. Make a long, deep (to the bone), horizontal “base cut” into the breast just above wing.

Slice down vertically through breast until you meet the original base cut. This will release perfect, even slices.

Following these preparation and carving tips can help make your Thanksgiving a meal to remember.

