

THANKSGIVING FOR TWO (PLUS LEFTOVERS): A COMPLETE MENU AND PLANNER

Thanksgiving for Two shouldn't be any less than Thanksgiving for twelve. I want everyone to enjoy an indulgent and flavor packed Thanksgiving - no matter the party size! In this post I have included a complete menu and a planner to plan grocery shopping, oven schedule and overall kitchen schedule!

This will be a long post. But it's long because it's complete, right. In order to make it easier for you to read, I've included a table of contents to make scrolling and finding the right paragraph easier.

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A lot of food = awesome leftovers

And yes, this is a lot of food. Thanksgiving is all about the food, and you are supposed to be stuffed. So that is what I do. Stuff you with recipes so you can make and eat and then love me. I make extra because I want to have leftovers. Leftovers actually gives room for a lot of creativity. And if you stay with me, next week I'll try and post my leftovers!

One turkey breast of 1.7 kg (3.7 lb) is too much for two people, especially with all these sides. But I still want you to have that festive feeling of roasting a bird for a long time. And with all the shopping you need to do on Black Friday, I am sure you will appreciate the extra meat and quick leftover dinners.

What to do before the actual Thanksgiving day?

So, you only have two hands and one brain (I think), so we need to spread it out a little. I really hope that since this is Thanksgiving for two, that two also help make it. I was alone on making this, and it went fine. But two is always better.

On Monday or Tuesday - go grocery shopping. Get it out of the way. I have made a grocery list. We are sometimes out of the kitchen and pantry staples too, so this is a complete list. So much of the list won't have to be bought that day! [Click this link to download the pdf!](#)

And there are also two posts I want to redirect you to. This is because these are make ahead dishes and you can do it. Both are small batches, but a little room for leftovers.

Dessert: The Pumpkin Crème Brûlée

It's 4 ramekins, but they can be stored in the fridge for days. So you have dessert two days! Make these either on Wednesday or Tuesday, store covered in the fridge. All you need to do on Thanksgiving is adding sugar and torching or broiling the top. This is done in a flash and you don't have to multitask with all the other dishes. Do it when you're finished eating the turkey! See page 10 for recipe.

The Orange Cranberry Sauce

Oh dear, this was delicious. And the orange cranberry sauce is usually served cold, so you don't have to do anything about this dish on Thanksgiving. Make it either Wednesday or Tuesday and store covered in the fridge. See page 10 for recipe.

There are more that could be made ahead

If you are really short on time on Thanksgiving, you could also make your stuffing beforehand. You could make it a week before, freeze it and take it out on Thanksgiving or thaw the day before. I didn't do this, but I know a lot of people do.

However, what I would do is just dry the bread cubes in the oven to golden, for 20 minutes (190C/375). That is the first step of the stuffing out of the way.

You could also make the cheddar herb sweet potato mash beforehand, but it's very little hands-on time so I think you should just make it then and there. If you re-heat it you may want to add some broth or cream, depending on the consistency you want, but I didn't find it necessary.

The Order of the Cooking

Sorry for the Harry Potter reference, I just couldn't resist. So this is my list that I continued to look at during the cooking:

Days in advance:

Orange Cranberry Sauce
Pumpkin Crème Brûlée
(Appetizer: Caramelized Onion, Mushroom and Apple Puffs filling)
You may also dry your bread crumbs for the stuffing the day before (step one of stuffing)

Preferably the day, but could also be made in advance:

Caramelized Onion, Apple and Sage Stuffing
Cheddar Herb Sweet Potato Mash

Before you start cooking:

Have I bought everything? Remember to print this free grocery checklist pdf
Make sure the kitchen is clean. You may also think of finding pots and pans beforehand. Set the table.
You may also start prepping this: bread, onion, celery, carrot, pomegranate, brussels sprouts, peel and cube the sweet potato and put in a large pot with water. If you make the puff appetizer you could also make the filling beforehand. But remember that these need oven time.

During the baking of sweet potato skins - 20 minutes

Continue prepping what's not already prepped

Prepare turkey

During baking of bread cubes - 20 minutes

Make the stuffing filling

During turkey roasting - 1 hour - 1.5 hours

Continue prepping for brussels sprouts, green beans, mashed potatoes

Bake stuffing alongside turkey the last 40 minutes

Cook bacon for brussels sprouts

Begin with the mashed potatoes (but later in the process)

Broil sweet potato skins - 4 minutes

During baking of brussels sprouts - 20 minutes

Eat sweet potato skins (if you decide to make it)

Rest turkey

Keep mashed potatoes warm (e.g. on low in slow cooker)

Green beans (12 minutes)

EAT!

Broil or torch the Pumpkin Crème Brûlée

Here is also the oven schedule ([download the pdf here](#)). Because we are only roasting a turkey breast, we could fit two pans into the oven at once. Find the smallest pan that fits the turkey.

OVEN SCHEDULE

TIME	ACCUMULATED	TEMP	WHAT	AT THE SAME TIME AS
20-25	20-25	190C 375F	Dry bread cubes until golden	
20	25-45	200C 400F	Bake sweet potato skins until soft	
60-90	45-2 15	180C 350F	Roast turkey until 73C (163F). Make room for side dishes in the oven	Stuffing
25-30	1 35-2	180C 350F	Bake stuffing covered	Turkey
15	2 - 2 15	180C 350F	Bake stuffing uncovered	Turkey
18	2 15-2 33	200C 400F	Bake brussels sprouts	

Thanksgiving for two: the recipes

I think we are more than ready for the actual recipes. Remember that orange cranberry sauce and pumpkin crème brûlée must be found in these links, and are thus not below.

Citrus Rosemary Turkey Breast

Half a turkey breast (split at the bone) 1.7 kg / 3.7 lb
2 tbsp butter
Salt and pepper
3 fresh rosemary sprigs (if they are big you may reduce to 2)
250 ml (1 cup) white wine or cooking sherry
Lemon 1/2
Orange 1/2
1/2 head of garlic, crushed with paper still on

- Preheat oven to 230C (450F). Rinse and pat dry the turkey breast. With your fingers, carefully separate the skin from the meat and spread half of the butter under the skin. Season the meat with salt and pepper. Spread the rest of the butter on the skin along with more salt and pepper. Rub it in.
- Place the turkey breast in a roasting pan (as small as can fit). Pour the white wine/sherry and juice from the lemon and orange on top. Cut the juiced lemon and orange into quarters and place in the roasting pan along with the garlic and rosemary. Top the turkey breast with rosemary sprigs.
- Reduce oven temperature to 180C (350F). Roast turkey for 60 minutes, then start checking the temp - a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the breast shall be 73C (165F). If it is getting brown, cover with aluminum foil to prevent burning. I had mine in for 1.5 hours.
- Let the turkey breast rest, covered, for 15 minutes before carving/slicing. Slice along the wing bone. A little pink at the bone is normal.

Super Easy Turkey Gravy

60 ml (1/4 cup) turkey fat - or butter to compensate
250 ml (1 cup) pan drippings - or stock to compensate
More chicken stock to thin out the gravy, as needed
60 ml (1/4 cup) flour
salt and pepper
1 tsp sugar, or more or less to taste

- When the turkey is done, there will be a lot of sauce and pan drippings in the pan. Save this in a cup. Refrigerate for 30 minutes, this way the fat and pan drippings will separate and it's easier to measure.
- Once done chilling, scoop out the fat and measure. You ideally want 1/4 cup, but I had only 2 tsp so I compensated by adding butter to reach 1/4 cup. Place in a saucepan. Once hot, add in the flour. Whisk for a few minutes, it will be bubbly.
- Add in 1 cup pan drippings (if you have less, add chicken broth to compensate). Whisk.
- Add salt and pepper and taste. Is it way too sour? Add in 1 tsp sugar. My gravy was a little sour, but that does not matter when you eat it alongside all the other dishes. So remember, a little sour is fine.
- Whisk in more chicken stock if needed, to reach desired consistency. It will thicken a little once cooled.

This recipe is adapted from The Kitchn.

Caramelized Onion, Apple and Sage Stuffing

1 tbsp canola oil
75 gr sourdough bread, cut into quarters
Medium onion 1/2 (60 g) finely chopped
1/2 tsp salt and pepper
Celery stalk 1/2 (10 g) finely chopped
Carrot 1/2 (15 g) cut into slices and then quartered
50 g mushroom, cut into slices
1 clove garlic
1/2 tsp fresh rosemary
1 1/2 tbsp fresh sage
250 ml (1 cup) chicken broth
1 egg
pomegranate, for tasty garnish

- Heat oven to 190C (375 F). Place the chopped bread on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until dry and beginning to turn a golden brown color, around 20-25 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl.
- Meanwhile, heat canola oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes.
- Add the celery and carrot, and cook, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender and the onions are beginning to brown. After 7 minutes, add in the mushrooms and cook for 3 more minutes.
- Stir in the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add in the rosemary and sage and cook for 1 minute more. Remove from heat.
- Pour the chicken broth over the golden bread and toss until it's nearly absorbed (do not pour everything at once, check and see if it's covered enough, then add more if needed). Add the cooked vegetables and the apple and mix to combine. Fold in the egg.
- Oil a deep baking dish and add the mixture to it. Cover loosely with foil and bake for 25 minutes on 190C (375F)*. Uncover and bake until golden brown, 15 more minutes.

* If you can bake it alongside the turkey, we will make do with 180C (350F). No worries.

The Caramelized Onion, Apple and Sage Stuffing is adapted from Woman's Day.

Cheddar Herb Sweet Potato Mash

500 g sweet potato (about 1 large). Peeled and cut into 2.5cm (1 inch) pieces. If you are frying the sweet potato skins, you should peel the skin in large pieces. Set aside.

1 tsp salt (divided), or more to taste

1/2 tsp pepper, or more to taste

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tsp fresh chives

4-6 sage leaves - cooked in bacon fat of brussels sprouts (optional)

20 g cheddar cheese, 3 tbsp

- Place the cubed sweet potatoes in a large pot, cover with water with about 2.5 cm (1 inch) extra. Add 1/2 tsp salt. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer over medium-high heat. Simmer uncovered until the potatoes are tender. Approx. 10 minutes.
- Drain the potatoes and return to the pot. Mash it to your desired consistency.
- The herbs: because you are going to cook bacon for the brussels sprouts, I cooked a few sage leaves a couple of seconds in the bacon fat. You can cook it in butter or oil if you want.
- Add all the other ingredients and give it a good mix. Taste and season to your liking. Garnish with more chives.
- Serve hot. Leftovers can be stored covered in the fridge for 4 days.

Optional Appetizer: Smoky Sweet Potato Skins

The skin of 1 large sweet potato

2 tbsp cheddar cheese, grated

1/2 tsp smoked paprika

1/4 tsp garlic powder

1/2 tsp sea salt

1 tsp olive oil

4-5 small sage leaves, finely chopped

- Pre-heat oven to 220C (425F). Prepare baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Remove peels from the large sweet potato into large pieces - 0.5 cm thick (1/4inch). Set the peeled potatoes aside, use in Cheddar Herb Sweet Potato Mash.
- Place the skins on the baking sheet and bake until tender, approximately 20 minutes.
- Meanwhile, mix grated cheese with smoked paprika and garlic powder.
- Remove the potato skins from the oven and get the broiler on.* Lightly brush the potato skins with olive oil and sprinkle with the cheese mixture. Broil until golden brown, 4-5 minutes.
- Once they are done, sprinkle with sea salt. Eat immediately.

* I waited with this step until the turkey was done, but I made the soft skin before I roasted the turkey, see oven schedule.

This Sweet Potatoes Skin recipe is adapted from Woman's Day.

Honey Balsamic Baked Brussels Sprouts

280 g brussels sprouts, cut in half and outer shell removed
4 strips bacon
1 tbsp olive oil
1/2 tsp salt and pepper
2 tsp honey
2 tsp balsamic vinegar
1/4-1/8 cup pomegranate arils

- Cut brussels sprouts in half and remove outer shell. Place on aluminium foil lined baking sheet.
- Cook bacon, set aside but reserve the bacon fat.
- Combine the brussels sprouts with the bacon fat, olive oil, salt and pepper. Bake in the oven at 200C (400F) for 15 minutes. Toss the brussels sprouts around halfway through.
- Add balsamic vinegar, honey and bacon to the brussels sprouts. Bake 3 more minutes.
- Serve with pomegranate arils.

Garlic Parmesan Green Beans

190 g green beans, stems removed
1 tbsp butter
1 large clove garlic, minced
2 tbsp grated parmesan cheese
1/2 tsp salt and pepper

- Steam the green beans, using a steam basket over a deep pot with a few cm/inch of boiling water. Steam for around 6 minutes. Tender, but not done.
- Heat butter in a large skillet, over medium-high heat. Add garlic and stir for one minute, until fragrant.
- Add the green beans, salt and pepper and stir to coat evenly. Sauté for about 5 minutes. Until green beans are done. Remove from heat.
- Sprinkle with the parmesan and toss to melt the cheese.

This garlic parmesan green beans recipe is adapted from A Sweet Pea Chef.

Orange Cranberry Sauce

150 g (1.5 cups) cranberries
60 ml (1/4 cup) orange juice. 1 orange
2 tbsp maple syrup
75 gr (3 oz.) sugar
pinch salt
2 tbsp orange liqueur* I used Cointreau
1/2 tbsp orange zest. 1 orange

- Rinse the cranberries. Add all ingredients into a medium saucepan, apart from the orange liqueur and orange zest. Bring this mixture to a boil and then reduce to a simmer for 10 minutes. It shall then have thickened a bit.
- Add in orange liqueur* and orange zest. Simmer for an additional 10 minutes or until you've reached the desired thickness. Remember it will thicken considerably in the fridge.
- This orange cranberry sauce can be made days in advance. Store covered in the refrigerator. Served cold.

* There may still be traces of alcohol in the cranberry sauce even though much will evaporate. It's still only 2 tbsp and one person wouldn't eat the whole thing. If you still don't want alcohol in your orange cranberry sauce, you can substitute it with either nothing or more orange juice. But bear in mind, that if alcohol in such a small quantity doesn't matter, I would definitely add it in. The flavor of it was amazing in this orange cranberry sauce!

Pumpkin Crème Brûlée

200 ml + 1 tbsp heavy cream
90 gr egg yolks (4 large egg yolks)
50 gr brown sugar + white for caramelizing
125 ml (1/2 cup) pumpkin puree
2 pinches cinnamon
pinch ground nutmeg
pinch ground ginger
pinch ground allspice optional
pinch salt

- Begin with pre-heating your oven to 150C (300F). Make sure your pumpkin puree is extra fine, blend it if not.
- In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and 50 gr brown sugar until well blended.
- Heat the heavy cream in a small saucepan, while stirring, make sure it just heats through and not boils. Remove from heat and let cool a little. Slowly add the warm cream into the sugar and eggs. This way the heavy cream won't heat up the eggs too much and make scrambled eggs. Strain this mixture.
- Whisk in the pumpkin puree, salt and spices. Divide the mixture into 4 ramekins*, and place in a large baking dish. Fill the baking dish with warm water about halfway up the sides of the ramekins. This ensures even baking.
- Bake for around 35-40 minutes. They should wobble a little in the middle once done because they firm up considerably in the fridge. Cool to room temperature. Then cover and refrigerate, at least 4 hours, preferably overnight. They can be in the fridge for days like this, so it's great for a make ahead dinner.

On Thanksgiving Day do this

- Pour 1/2-1 tsp sugar into each ramekin, jiggle and turn it until it's evenly coated.
- **IF USING A TORCH:** torch the tops using a circular motion and turn the ramekins. The tip of the flame is all that needs to touch the sugar. It will start to bubble and caramelize. A few burned pieces are fine, that's what a creme brulee should look like! Cool 1 minute before serving to let the sugar set and crisp up.
- **IF USING THE BROILER:** Place the rack in the top position in your oven, place the pumpkin creme brulee ramekins on the rack, and then turn on the oven. Broil for 5-10 minutes (watch all the time!) and turn them around a little to ensure even broiling. This way the pumpkin creme brulee will have a little lukewarm center, but that's okay too!

You did it!

I try my best not to confuse you here. If you want all my other helping tools (and photos) go back to the blog post: <http://www.gingerwithspice.com/recipe/thanksgiving-for-two/> and download them there. These are what's available:

Thanksgiving Checklist < this includes grocery list, recipes, oven schedule, time schedule
Thanksgiving Grocery List
Thanksgiving Recipes
Thanksgiving Oven Schedule
Thanksgiving Time Schedule
Blog Post without photos pdf < this is what you are reading now

I hope you will have a fantastic Thanksgiving celebration, even though you may be only one or two or a small family. It's time to be in the kitchen and just shut the outside world out.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Best wishes,
Stine Mari
Ginger with Spice

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