

Beginners' Christmas Dinner Checklist

How to Make the Perfect Christmas Dinner



Cooking Christmas dinner for your friends and family should be an enjoyable experience, but it can often be overwhelming if you're unprepared – especially if it's your first time! Pull your Christmas socks up and start making your way through our Christmas dinner checklist to make sure yours can compete with the best of them.

Get Ready

Before Christmas day even arrives, there's a lot of preparation to be done to make sure your kitchen's up to the job.

What Needs Doing?	The Detail	Done
<p>1 Get the right kitchenware</p> 	<p>First things first – if you're going to be cooking up a feast, it's important to make sure that you've got the right tools for the job</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roasting dish <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steamer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potato masher <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vegetable peeler <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carving knife <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gravy boat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serving spoons 	
<p>2 Clear out the fridge</p> 	<p>That turkey's going to need to be stored somewhere ahead of the big day. So clear out extra fridge space before you buy your bird.</p>	
<p>3 Check your cutlery</p> 	<p>There's nothing worse than cooking up that feast only to discover you're two plates and three forks short for serving. Make sure you've got more than enough cutlery, crockery and glassware so no one goes without.</p>	
<p>4 Plan your shopping list</p>  	<p>A checklist within a checklist, we know. Start thinking about what you want, what you need, and what you've got already. Remember if you're cooking for specific dietary requirements (or just a fussy eater) that you might need alternatives too.</p> <p>Turkey</p> <p>Crown, breast, or full bird? Knowing how many people you're cooking for, how much storage space you've got, and even what your oven can hold are good ways to determine what turkey is best for you. To work out how big a bird you need, divide the amount of people you're cooking for by two and use that number as a guide for how many kilograms it should weigh.</p> <p>Other meat choices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ham • Beef • Lamb <p>Veg</p> <p>Everybody's favourite part of Christmas dinner, right? This one comes down to preference really. A good mix of greens and roots is always a must, along with any of your favourites. As a rough guide, choose 3-4 of the following and aim to provide per person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-6 sprouts • ¼ small cabbage • 2 florets of broccoli • ½ large parsnip or 1 small-medium parsnip • 2 medium potatoes for roasting or 3 medium potatoes for mashing (or both!) • ½ carrot • ½ swede 	 

What Needs Doing?	The Detail	Done
<p data-bbox="65 129 335 224">4 Plan your shopping list Continued</p> 	<p data-bbox="475 129 550 159">Sides</p> <p data-bbox="475 163 1372 219">Not to be missed, sides can often make or break the plate when it comes to Christmas dinner. Festive favourites include:</p> <ul data-bbox="475 235 933 459" style="list-style-type: none"> • Gravy • Stuffing • Pigs in blankets • Chestnuts • Sauce: Turkey – cranberry or bread sauce Beef – horseradish or mustard Ham – mustard Lamb – mint <p data-bbox="475 488 566 517">Drinks</p> <p data-bbox="475 521 1348 577">Perfect for washing down the remnants of a successful dinner, there’s nothing like a good drink accompaniment for Christmas dinner. Top off your table with:</p> <ul data-bbox="475 593 742 672" style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecco or champagne • Wine • Beer <p data-bbox="475 712 598 741">Desserts</p> <p data-bbox="475 745 1380 824">Just when you thought you couldn’t eat anymore, in comes dessert. Having a selection of festive favourites should leave everyone taken care of. Pick at least two from these treats:</p> <ul data-bbox="475 840 710 974" style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas pudding • Yule log • Trifle • Mince pies • Cheese and crackers <p data-bbox="475 1019 1109 1048">Vegetarian, Vegan and Gluten Free Alternatives</p> <p data-bbox="475 1052 1348 1131">If you’ve got vegetarian or vegan guests, or those with specific dietary requirements including gluten and dairy free options, remember to cater for them too. Common alternatives include:</p> <ul data-bbox="475 1146 877 1281" style="list-style-type: none"> • Mushroom stuffing • Parsnip, cranberry and chestnut loaf • Nut roast • Gluten-free gravy • Cranberry, maple and pecan pudding 	   



What Needs Doing?	The Detail	Done
<p data-bbox="76 1657 191 1691">Morning</p> 	<p data-bbox="475 1657 1332 1736">If your turkey is frozen, now’s the time to take it out to defrost. Make sure that it’s covered over, place on a plate and leave out in a cool room for around 10-24 hours, depending on size.</p> <p data-bbox="475 1758 1284 1803">Defrosting it in the fridge? You’ll need to start the defrosting process at least a day earlier.</p>	
<p data-bbox="76 1937 215 1971">Afternoon</p> 	<p data-bbox="475 1937 1324 1993">Do as much pre-Christmas Day prep as you can. Things you can make and keep in the fridge:</p> <ul data-bbox="475 2004 1149 2161" style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuffing: Make the mixture ready to add to the turkey tomorrow • Peel and chop the carrots, parsnips, broccoli and cabbage • Make your cranberry and/or bread sauce • Making your own pigs in blankets? Prep them now • Make any homemade desserts, ready for baking or serving 	



Christmas Day

Get Cooking

What Needs Doing?	The Detail	Done
<p>When do I do what?</p>  	<p>So the big day has finally arrived, and if you've planned correctly, you should have everything you need to make a successful Christmas dinner. But much like doing the shopping, timing is everything here.</p> <p>Note: We've based our timings on a 5kg turkey.</p> <p>To calculate how long your turkey will take: Calculate 20 mins per kilogramme in weight, then add 90 mins = Total Cooking Time, at around 180°C (Gas Mark 5) in a fan assisted oven.</p>	
 <p>9:30AM</p>	<p>Prep the turkey – take out the giblets, add the stuffing, place in a roasting dish and sprinkle over any herbs.</p>	
 <p>9:50AM</p>	<p>Put the turkey in the oven to roast.</p>	
 <p>10:00AM</p>	<p>Take this opportunity to begin setting the table, before the real cooking begins.</p>	
 <p>11:45AM</p>	<p>Prep all the remaining vegetables for roasting or boiling.</p>	
 <p>12:30AM</p>	<p>Put the vegetables in to roast, parboil potatoes for mashing or boiling Put the pigs in blankets in the oven.</p>	
 <p>12:45AM</p>	<p>Put the potatoes in the oven for roasting; boil or steam the sprouts and broccoli .</p>	
 <p>1:00PM</p>	<p>Take the turkey out of the oven, cover with tin foil and leave to rest for half an hour.</p>	
 <p>1:05PM</p>	<p>Make the gravy.</p>	
 <p>1:30PM</p>	<p>Carve the turkey, dish up the veg, and pour out the bubbly.</p>	
<p>Serve and Enjoy!</p> 	<p>All ready? Serve up the dinner and scoff it while it's hot.</p>	

Merry Christmas from SPAR!

