

Newsletter

Family & Consumer Sciences

November/December 2025



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Fall has arrived with a gentle sigh, painting the world in warm hues of amber, crimson and gold. Fall of the year is nature's grand finale --a season of transformation and quiet beauty. It's a season of cozy sweaters, pumpkin patches, and nature's quiet reminder that change can be beautiful. Whether you're watching leaves drift lazily to the ground or enjoying the harvest's bounty, fall wraps the year in a golden glow.

It's a time when everything slows down just enough to notice the beauty in small things.

TURKEY

Turkey Basics

Shop and Save

- Turkey is available all year: whole, cut into pieces, ground or deli meat.
- Watch for sale prices on turkey, especially in November. Stock up if you can cook or freeze within a few days.
- Ground turkey with a lower percentage of fat costs more per pound but once cooked creates more meat to eat.
- Look for a “Use or Freeze by” date on packages of fresh turkey as a guide to using while best quality. Frozen turkey may also have a “USE by” date.

Turkey provides lean protein and less saturated fat than most other meats.



3 Ways to Thaw Turkey Safely

1 Refrigerator: Safest method. Allow 24 hours per pound for ground turkey or individual pieces OR 24 hours for every 5 pounds of whole turkey. Once thawed, cook within 2 to 3 days. Meat thawed in the refrigerator can be re-frozen without cooking although there may be some loss of quality.

2 Cold water: Safe when water stays cold and covers the package completely. Allow 1 hour for the first pound plus 30 minutes for each additional pound. Once thawed, cook right away.

- Use a waterproof bag to keep water from touching the meat.
- Submerge it in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes to speed thawing. Never use hot water.

3 Microwave: Safe if the meat is cooked immediately after thawing. Use the defrost setting. Be sure the meat can rotate freely within the microwave.

Store Well Waste Less

- Keep fresh turkey cold in the refrigerator. Check for a date on the package or use within 3 days after purchase. Freeze for longer storage.
- Keep frozen turkey in the freezer until ready to thaw.
- Refrigerate turkey deli meat and use within 5 days of purchase or

opening. Freeze for longer storage and use within 2 to 3 months.

- Refrigerate cooked turkey within 2 hours of cooking. Divide into shallow covered dishes so it cools quickly. Use within 4 days or freeze and use within 2 to 3 months.



*Cook all poultry
to 165 degrees F.*

Enjoy Turkey!

Asian Turkey Lettuce Wraps

Ingredients:

- 3 Tablespoons reduced-sodium **soy sauce**
- 3 teaspoons **sugar**, granulated or brown
- 2 teaspoons **sesame oil**
- 1 teaspoon **hot sauce**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ pound lean **ground turkey** (15% fat or less)
- 2 stalks **celery**, sliced
- 2 medium **carrots**, shredded
- 1 Tablespoon minced **ginger root** or $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon **ground ginger**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon **garlic powder** or 1 clove **garlic**, minced
- 1 can (8 ounces) **water chestnuts**, drained and chopped
- 2 cups cooked **brown rice**
- 8 large **lettuce** leaves

Directions:

1. In a small bowl, blend the soy sauce, sugar, sesame oil and hot sauce.
2. In a large skillet, sauté turkey, celery and carrot until the turkey begins to brown, 10 minutes. Break turkey into crumbles as it cooks.
3. Add ginger and garlic. Cook 2 minutes.
4. Stir in soy sauce mixture and water chestnuts. Cook 2 minutes longer.
5. Stir in cooked rice. Heat through.
6. Serve in lettuce leaves.
7. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Makes 8 lettuce wraps (6 cups filling)

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 15 to 20 minutes

Turkey Cranberry Quesadilla

Ingredients for 1 quesadilla:

- 2 Tablespoons shredded **mozzarella cheese**
- 1 (8 inch) **tortilla**
- 2 Tablespoons **dried cranberries** or **cranberry sauce**
- 2 Tablespoons **cooked turkey**, chopped or shredded
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup fresh **spinach**

Directions:

1. Sprinkle shredded cheese evenly over half of the tortilla. Add dried cranberries or sauce, turkey and spinach. Fold the tortilla in half over the filling.
2. Heat a skillet over medium heat. Lightly spray with cooking spray. Place tortilla in skillet. Cover and cook for 2 to 3 minutes on each side or until the outside is golden brown and the contents are heated through.
3. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Makes 1 quesadilla

Prep time: 5 to 7 minutes

Cook time: 4 to 6 minutes



When kids help make healthy food, they are more likely to try it. Show kids how to:

- wash vegetables under cool running water.
- sprinkle ingredients on a tortilla for a quesadilla.
- measure spices and other ingredients.

KALE AND CRANBERRY STIR-FRY

1 teaspoon **vegetable oil**
¼ cup chopped **onion** (¼ medium onion)
¼ cup dried **cranberries**
1 clove **garlic**, minced or ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
6 cups chopped **kale** (leaf portion, no stems)
Juice from ½ **orange** (about ¼ cup)

1. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water before preparing.
2. Add oil and onion to large skillet. Stir and sauté over medium-high heat (350 degrees F in an electric skillet) until onion is clear.
3. Add cranberries and garlic. Continue to sauté for 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Add kale. Pour or squeeze orange juice over top of kale. Continue to stir fry for about 5 minutes until kale is wilting and hot.
5. Serve immediately.
6. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.
7. 1 bunch fresh **kale** (about 8 cups, chopped)

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 5 minutes

Makes: 5 cups



Source: Foodhero.org/Oregon State University

FRUIT KABOBS WITH YOGURT DIP

- 1 cup watermelon (chunks)
- 1 cup pineapple (chunks)
- 1 cup grapes, red seedless
- 1 cup strawberries (stemmed)
- 2 kiwi (peeled and cut in quarters)
- 8 bamboo skewers (6 inches long)
- 1 cup yogurt, light strawberry

Place fruit chunks on bamboo skewers. Place fruit kabobs on platter. Place light strawberry yogurt in bowl. Serve kabobs with yogurt on the side.

Yield: 8 servings

Nutrition Facts: 60 calories; 0 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 20 mg sodium; 14 g total carbohydrate; 1 g dietary fiber; 11 g sugars; 2 g protein



Source: Healthy Choices for Healthy Families

August/September 2014



When the leaves continue to fall and the nightly temps dip lower, we know that the holiday season will soon be upon us. It seems the holiday season starts earlier every year. Although you may not be ready for dancing elves to be on display at local stores, now is the time to start preparing for upcoming holiday expenses. Getting an early start will help reduce holiday stress and your after-holiday bills, often known as the holiday financial hangover.

Before the holiday season moves into high gear, it takes time to get prepared. Review your current financial situation and determine a holiday spending limit that works with your family budget. To make certain you are not tempted to increase that limit as the season progresses, develop a budget for gift giving, food, travel and entertainment expenses. Additional expenses which are often left out of a holiday budget include gasoline, babysitter fees, and eating out more often.

As you work on the budget, start by making a list of everyone you plan to give a gift to, including children, loved ones, teachers, babysitters, hair stylists, etc. Identify a realistic spending limit and a possible gift for each person on your list. It is important that you do not feel pressured to give anyone a gift. If your finances are tight this year, consider a hand-written note expressing

thanks or appreciation. Continue to work your way through your holiday budget by estimating other anticipated expenses. If you have receipts or credit card statements from last year, you may be able to use them as a guide in developing a realistic estimate for travel, entertainment, and food expenses.

As you are preparing your budget for the upcoming holidays, think about how you will pay for holiday shopping and expenses. You are less likely to overspend if you pay with cash, as opposed to using a credit card. If you use cash, once your cash is gone, you are finished with your holiday shopping. Another option to consider: many stores now offer layaway plans. If you decide to use store layaway options, be certain to check their return policy and keep track of all payments. Plan holiday shopping trips ahead of time, review store ads, and know exactly who and what you are shopping for prior to entering the store. Impromptu shopping trips and wandering around a store looking for gift ideas can lead to impulsive purchases which were not part of your original budget. Do you window shopping at home using catalogs or online, so that you know exactly what you want when you are at the store. Finally, remember that holiday sales can be tempting, so once you are in the store, stick with your original budget.



Preparing for the Holidays

It's estimated that between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, Americans produce an extra one million tons of waste per week. Wrapping paper, bows, ribbon, greeting cards, shopping bags,

packaging, and even the leftover turkey all adds up to more waste. As you prepare to celebrate the holidays, keep the following tips in mind to minimize waste.



When Wrapping Gifts:

- Wrap or place gifts in items that can be reused, such as dish towels, beach towels, backpacks, or reusable bags.
- Reuse cards you

receive by making them into gift tags.

- Use a small toy or ornament to adorn packages in lieu of a bow or ribbon.



When decorating:

- Purchase balled or potted trees which can be planted in your yard.
- If you use a real cut tree, contact your local solid waste coordinator and ask about local

collection and chipping programs.

- Use natural items, such as holly sprigs, pinecones, popcorn, and cranberries to decorate. These items can be composted once the season is over.

When entertaining:

- Avoid the use of disposable tableware as much as possible.
- Decorate coffee tins, butter bowls and other items for storing, serving or giving homemade food items.
- Recycle paper, plastic, and glass items, and compost leftover food scraps.

Source: *Family Financial Management*, newsletter, November 2012

Meal Prepping Saves Time, Frustration and Calories



Deciding what to have for dinner each night can be a daily conundrum for many of us. As a result, we may find ourselves in line at a fast-food restaurant more than we care to admit. But it does not have to be this way. By preparing at least portions of our meals in advance, we can have home-cooked, healthy meals on a regular basis.

Research shows people who regularly do advanced meal preparation tend to consume more fruits and vegetables and eat a more balanced diet overall. Meal prepping is extremely popular, as it allows us to live our hectic lives while still providing our families with nutritious food. It saves time because steps in the cooking process are already completed to varying degrees. The process may include simply preparing ingredients or complete dishes that are stored and reheated for a quick meal. Meal prepping also takes some of the stress and frustration out of deciding what to eat each night.

If you have never tried meal prepping before, start small and don't invest a lot of money. At first, aim to prepare two to three meals per week in advance. Find nutritious recipes that your family would enjoy and make a grocery list of the needed ingredients. Allow your family to chime in on the meals or ask them if there is a new food or recipe they would like to try.

It is easier to set aside one day for grocery shopping and meal prepping, as it cuts down on the number of times you need to handle the food and

gives you a set time to work meal prepping into your busy schedule. Include your family in the food preparation. Not only will it help spread out the cooking responsibilities, but it will also teach your family basic cooking skills and healthy eating habits.

Remember food safety when preparing food. When using a cutting board, slice vegetables before cutting meat. Store produce and meat separately to avoid contamination. While most people associate meal prepping with dinnertime, you can also prepare quick breakfasts or use leftovers for lunches. While dinner is cooking, make the most of your time in the kitchen. Chop veggies for a salad the next day or slice some fruit for a quick grab-and-go snack.

After the food is prepared, store it in an airtight container and place it in either the refrigerator or freezer, depending on how soon you plan to eat it. Consume refrigerated meals within five days. Freezing will allow you to store meals for a longer time. As you become a meal-prepping pro, you can watch for sales to stock up on food staples and increase the number of meals you prepare at home. *Source: UK Exclusive September 12, 2025, Healthier Norman-Burgdolf, Assistant Extension Professor*

Smart Tip - Getting Enough Sleep

Going out more and staying out later often means losing out on sleep. Sleep loss can make it harder to manage your blood sugar. When you don't get enough sleep, you tend to eat more and want high-fat, high-sugar food. Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night to guard against mindless eating. Most of all, think about what the season is about — celebrating and connecting with the people you care about. When you focus more on the fun, you focus less on the food. *Source: Healthy Choices for Healthy Families Newsletter November/December 2023*

Food Facts – Carotenoids

Carotenoids are a substance found in food that helps protect cells against damage. There are more than 600 types of carotenoids. Foods high in carotenoids may be effective in helping prevent

certain cancers and may help decrease your risk of macular degeneration.

Foods high in carotenoids include red, orange, deep-yellow, and some dark-green leafy vegetables. Examples include sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, tomatoes, Brussel sprouts, Winter squash, and broccoli.

Maximize Those Leftovers

If you end up making a big meal for your loved ones, chances are that you'll have leftover food. Don't forget the power of leftovers to help save you stress and money this holiday season! Most people agree that turkey dinner leftovers are just as good the second or third day. Most guests will be glad that you are feeding them. They will not blame you for serving them leftovers — even if they were there for the first meal. To use your leftovers "as is," follow these tips: • Remove any meat from the carcass or bone. Cut it into small pieces. Store it in shallow containers in the refrigerator or freezer. • Use all leftovers within four days or freeze for later use. • Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees F, or until hot and steaming. *Source: Healthy Choices for Healthy Families Newsletter November/December 2023*

The Joy of Cooking with Kids During the Holidays

With special treats and family gatherings, this is the perfect time to teach your child about cooking! Kids not only will get to try the new foods they make, but they also get a big boost when they see family and friends eating their creations. Cooking with your children now helps them learn how to make healthy meals. To be safe, cover a few ground rules before getting started in the kitchen. Teach kids to wash their hands with warm, soapy water while singing "Happy Birthday" two times to wash away germs. To start cooking, teach your child basics. This could be as easy as cracking an egg or setting out each item needed for a favorite holiday recipe. *Source: Healthy Choices Newsletter November/December 2023*

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RECIPE



Apple Cranberry Waldorf Salad

1 cup chopped Granny
Smith apple

1 cup chopped Red
Delicious apple

1 cup diced celery

1 cup halved seedless
green grapes

1 cup halved seedless
red grapes

1½ cups dried
cranberries

½ cup chopped
walnuts

8 ounces non-fat
vanilla yogurt

2 tablespoons honey

¼ teaspoon cinnamon

1. Combine chopped apples and diced celery and put in a medium sized bowl. Add grapes, cranberries, and walnuts to the mixture. Stir ingredients together.

2. In a separate bowl, add the yogurt, honey, and cinnamon. Stir together and pour over the fruit mixture. Cover and chill before serving.

Yield: 8, 1 cup servings.

Nutrition Analysis: 210 calories, 5 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 35 mg sodium, 41 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 34 g sugar, 3 g protein.

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.

www.fruitandveggiesmatter.gov

