

What to do with all those holiday leftovers

The food cooked during the holidays is often enough to feed an army. Too often, hosts and hostesses prepare and serve much too much food, only to find themselves left with a refrigerator full of leftovers when guests don’t eat as much as hosts had suspected.

In order to avoid wasting food, many people attempt to create new meals from their excess holiday ingredients. Putting leftovers to good use can take a little ingenuity to disguise the reality that you’re eating turkey or ham for the third consecutive night. All it may take is a little inspiration to create delicious meals with repurposed holiday foods.

The first thing to keep in mind when using leftovers is food safety. Any food remaining after the holiday meal should be packed into storage containers and refrigerated or frozen no more than 2 hours after the meal has ended. This ensures that bacteria are not able to proliferate in the food and cause food-borne illnesses. Choose shallow containers, which will enable the food to chill more uniformly and not create warmer spots that take longer to reach a safe storage temperature. Do not save any foods that have remained at room temperature for too long or seem questionable, especially dairy products. It is advisable to discard leftovers (even if refrigerated) after 4 days. Use it or lose it!

Now that leftovers are properly stored, you can think up some creative menu ideas for using them in the next few days.

- Turn stuffing into croquettes or burgers by mixing chopped turkey with stuffing or adding a new meat to the equation, like sausage.
 - Dice ham and potatoes and add to the morning helping of eggs for a country-style omelette.
 - Promptly boil the turkey carcass to make homemade stock for soups and stews.
 - Turn leftover mashed potatoes into a creamy potato soup, with the addition of cream, bacon and scallions.
 - Use cranberry sauce in place of butter on bagels or toast.
 - Mash up leftover sweet potatoes and bake into a moist and delicious sweet potato loaf bread.
 - Create open-faced sandwiches for lunch by layering ham or turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce and gravy on top of a thick slice of bread.
 - Diced meats, vegetables and onion can be added to a batter of pancake mix and turned into an easy quiche.
 - Host Mexican night and use leftover turkey meat to make spicy fajitas, complete with sour cream and salsa.
 - Use stale bread to make homemade croutons for salad or use in a bread pudding recipe.
 - Add cranberry sauce to boxed muffin mixes for a tart treat.
 - Turn leftover holiday meats into an Asian stir-fry with the addition of water chestnuts, bean sprouts, soy sauce, and mixed vegetables.
 - Grind meats to make a hearty meat loaf.
 - Make leftover potatoes into hash browns.
 - Cube leftover cake and serve on skewers and fruit for dipping into chocolate fondue.
 - Use pie crust and small ramekins to turn turkey or ham into savory pot pies.

There are so many ideas for using leftover holiday foods this season. Experiment with flavors your family will enjoy.

Tips for first-time holiday dinner hosts

Hosting a holiday meal for loved ones provides an exciting opportunity to bring family and friends together during a special time of year. First-time hosts may be a little nervous and put pressure on themselves to make the meal just right. But there are a few tricks of the trade novices can employ to calm their nerves and enjoy their first foray into holiday hosting.

• Go with what you know. Experimenting in the kitchen can be fun, but such experimentation should be avoided when hosting for the holidays. When planning the menu for your holiday dinner, choose a main course that you have prepared in the past. Familiarity can calm your nerves, and you’re less likely to forget key ingredients when preparing a meal you have made several

times in the past. If you want to experiment a little, do so with desserts that you can prepare and test for taste several days in advance. If the desserts don’t pan out, you will still have a few days to find an alternative.

• Get a head start wherever possible. The day friends and family are coming to visit figures to be hectic. In addition to preparing the

see TIPS page 16

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Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.

WORDS

ACORN
AUTUMN
BAKE
BASTE
CASSEROLE
CONVERSATION
CORNBREAD
CORNUCOPIA
DELICIOUS
DESSERT
DINING
DINNER
EAT
FEAST
FOOTBALL
GATHERING
GRAVY
LEAF
LEFTOVERS
NAPKIN
NATIVE
OVEN
PILGRIMS
POTATOES
PUMPKIN
RECIPE
SQUASH
STUFFING
TASTY
THANKFUL
THANKSGIVING
THURSDAY
TRADITIONS
VEGETABLES
WISHBONE
YAM

Catering takes the work out of holiday entertaining

As enjoyable as the holiday season may be, quite a number of people admit to feeling pressured by the demands of shopping, wrapping and hosting events. According to a poll from the American Psychological Association, up to 70 percent of people feel stressed out by a lack of time and/or money during the holidays.

Stress can take its toll during the holidays. But stress does not have to turn this festive time of year into something less enjoyable. By removing some of the work involved in holiday planning and hosting, individuals can free up time and enjoy a more relaxing holiday season. For example, holiday hosts may spend several weeks organizing their holiday meals, hours shopping for the ingredients and still more time preparing and cooking the food. By enlisting the services of a professional caterer, hosts can still throw festive parties with great food while letting someone else deal with the stress of meal planning.

When you decide to have your holiday party catered, keep a few factors in mind as you consider your options.

Recommendations
If you have never used a local caterer before, seek recommendations from neighbors and friends. There are many different types of caterers, and some restaurants even provide catering services. Recommendations can help hosts find the right caterer for the

style of gathering they’re hoping to host and help them avoid caterers who may not be the best people to work with.

Timing
The holiday season is a busy time of year for many businesses, caterers included. The sooner the contract is negotiated, the better. Lock in the date and desired foods as soon as you decide to use a caterer. The longer you wait, the more your options dwindle, as caterers’ schedules tend to book up quickly come the holiday season. Have a second-favorite caterer

see CATERING page 16

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