

# TRADITIONAL THANKSGIVING

Stress Free Plans and Easy Recipes for Busy Moms

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## Introduction:

Welcome to **Traditional Thanksgiving** Stress Free Plans and Easy Recipes for Busy Moms. As a very busy mom I have perfected our Thanksgiving Menu and Recipes so that we look forward to the same menu each year. Busy moms need strategies, plans and recipes for a stress free Thanksgiving. We at the Urban Homemaker believe in promoting the old fashioned skills of cooking and baking with basic, whole ingredients using streamlined methods to save time and money. Please share this ebook with your friends and relatives as our way of saying Happy Thanksgiving. If you would like to know more about the products and information that we offer, please go to our website [www.urbanhomemaker.com](http://www.urbanhomemaker.com). For a free bi-monthly newsletter with more recipes, tips, articles information, and product specials, please go to <http://tinyurl.com/u4pj> to sign up.

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## **TRADITIONAL THANKSGIVING**

By Marilyn Moll

Over the years, my children and I have focused on various historical aspects of Thanksgiving traditions and used a variety of ways to focus on and enrich our celebrations. We have read lavishly illustrated living history stories about the Pilgrims' celebrating their first Thanksgiving, made colorful Pilgrim and Indian costumes and headcoverings, roasted our turkey outside on a spit over coals, and other hands-on activities to create memories. We have prepared traditional foods such as spicy pumpkin and apple pies, Indian pudding and arisen early to gather together and watch parades and football games. Children of all ages, however, can learn that Thanksgiving has a richer and deeper meaning when they are involved in all aspects of the preparations and are taught how to focus on the spiritual blessings God has bestowed on them and their family as modeled by their parents.

### **Pausing to Give Thanks**

In our family, we don't have extended family members that live close by to celebrate with, therefore, we have had to dig deeper to create a fruitful and meaningful celebration that we eagerly anticipate each year. Although we use Thanksgiving as a time to reflect on material and financial blessings, we endeavor to take time to talk about and reflect on the spiritual blessings experienced both personally and as a family. In fact, we have found that amidst family afflictions and conflicts a quintessential opportunity presented to focus on and recognize God's abundant blessings amidst the challenges and trials incumbent in daily living. Reflection time enables us to experience deeper appreciation of God's love, His sufficiency, His great and precious promises of faithfulness, provision, mercy, goodness and the completed work of the cross. Difficulties and disappointments of life are tools that God uses to prune us so that we may bring forth more fruit in our lives. Difficulties help us to learn to count it all joy and give thanks in all circumstances.

**Planning the Meal**

In our family, preparations of our traditional family recipes sets the stage for a unforgettable and worthwhile Thanksgiving celebration. When we have eaten and are satisfied, our immediate family gathers together, not necessarily on Thanksgiving Day, to praise the Lord for all his benefits, to give thanks to him and praise his name and especially to focus on what He has been doing in the life of each of us.

Your Thanksgiving meal will be more enjoyable and noteworthy when you take time to plan the menu, assemble recipes, contact guests, make shopping lists, and prepare decorations several weeks ahead of time. When the menu is planned and the grocery list is complete, make lists and create a time line for completing food preparations, decorations, cleaning tasks and other preparations ahead of the big day. Be sure to involve all the children. Set aside the academics for a few days and focus on the life skills and memories that they can be develop.

**Involve Your Children**

Children of all ages enjoy simple to complex kitchen tasks including milling wheat into flour, measuring dry ingredients, stirring and kneading dough, rolling pie crusts, cutting fruits and vegetable, arranging trays of pickles, olives, and vegetables, mixing up dips, cutting fruits and vegetables, opening cans, shaping rolls, washing dishes, dusting furniture, vacuuming, cleaning bathrooms, putting away clutter, setting the table, preparing decorations and more.

**Making Centerpieces**

You might be surprised at what gorgeous centerpieces children can create from simple items such as gourds, pine cones of various shapes and sizes, nuts, acorns, mini pumpkins, oak leaves, Indian corn, ribbons, turkeys, pilgrim statues, candles, napkins, doilies, dried grasses, and whatever else you may have in hand that fits into the theme of harvest and Thanksgiving. Many of these items may be found while walking around in your neighborhood or a park. Older

children can teach and supervise the younger children. Teaching practical life skills to children is the foundation of priceless traditions and memories. Try to make it a point to take lots of pictures. They will make timeless additions to student notebooks or family photo albums.

### **Practical Tips**

Here are a few more practical tips for planning all the cooking and baking, followed by our family's traditional Thanksgiving menu as well as some of our family favorite recipes.

1. Purchase as many non-perishable items ahead when they go on sale.
2. Turkeys are usually on sale ahead of time. Buy the biggest bird that will fit in your freezer and oven. Leftover turkey can be frozen in meal sized portions to make some of the tastiest and most economical main dishes imaginable.
3. Pies, rolls and breads can be baked several weeks ahead and frozen.
4. Allow sufficient time for the turkey to thaw in your refrigerator. It may take several days for big turkeys.
5. Clean out your refrigerator and use all the leftovers several days ahead of the big day to make room for the turkey and trimmings.
6. Clear your counters of any unneeded clutter to make room for the preparations.
7. Stuffed turkeys cook slower but makes yummiier stuffing and helps to save precious oven space during that last hectic hour prior to serving.
8. Allow at east one hour prior to serving time for the turkey roasting to be complete so you have plenty of time to carve, make gravy, mash the potatoes, heat vegetable dishes, and attend to other last minute preparations.

**Here is the Urban Homemaker Family's Traditional Thanksgiving Menu** and recipes that we have been using for nearly twenty years. Recipes follow for the \* Items.

Turkey, Homemade Gravy\*, Herbed Stuffing\*  
Mashed Potatoes, Aunt Helen's Sweet Potatoes\*,  
Green Beans Amandine, Cranberry Relish Jello Salad\*  
Pumpkin Bread\*,Fantastic Whole Wheat Rolls\*,  
Apple Pie\*, Pecan Pie\*, coffee and tea.

**AUNT HELEN'S SWEET POTATOES**

*The crispy, nutty topping will appeal to children of all ages.*

**1/4 Cup butter**

**2 eggs**

**1/2 C. sugar or honey**

**2/3 C. evaporated milk**

**1 tsp vanilla**

**4 lbs. fresh sweet potatoes cooked OR 4 lbs canned, drained sweet potatoes**

(Note: Sweet potatoes are distinctly and vividly orange colored, extremely high in vitamin A and often mislabeled as Yams.)

To prepare sweet potatoes in their jackets, drop them into boiling water to cover and cook until tender, about 25 minutes. (I usually pressure cook the sweet potatoes in 10 minutes to save time and money.) Peel and mash the cooked sweet potatoes and mix with the other ingredients. Place in a shallow 11 X 7 baking dish, bake at 350° for 30-45 minutes. Then sprinkle the topping mixture over the sweet potatoes and bake another 15-20 minutes

**Topping Mixture**

**2 Cups Crisp Rice cereal**

**1/2 C. chopped pecans or walnuts**

**1/4 C. butter**

**1/2 C. brown sugar or Sucanat**

**CRANBERRY RELISH JELLO MOLD**

*I have served this jello mold at Thanksgiving and Christmas for nearly 30 years! This recipe can be prepared several days ahead.*

Yields 8-10 servings

1. Assemble and prepare the following ingredients:

**20 oz. can crushed pineapple unsweetened (drain, reserving the juice)**

**2 pkg (3 oz each) cherry, raspberry, or strawberry gelatin**

**1 Cup boiling water**

**1 Cup fresh, whole cranberries**

**1 - 11 oz can mandarin oranges**

**1 cup chopped celery**

**1/2 cup chopped pecans**

**1 TB lemon juice**

2. Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Add lemon juice and reserved pineapple juice.

3. Chill until gelatin begins to set-up about one hour. Meanwhile, coarsely chop cranberries in blender or food processor.

4. Stir in cranberries, oranges, pineapple, celery, and pecans to the thickened gelatin. Place this mixture in holiday jello mold or attractive glass serving bowl. Chill until firm.



## HERBED STUFFING

*Stuffing recipes are easy to make.*

1. Cut bread into crouton-size cubes, about 20 slices of toasted white or whole wheat bread OR use one large bag of Pepperidge Farm Herb Stuffing Mix (For homebaked whole wheat bread use 15 thin slices.) Place in a large bowl.

2 If you are using the Pepperidge Farm Stuffing Mix, omit this step.

IF you are using your own croutons, Combine in a separate small bowl and sprinkle over the bread:

**2 tsp. salt**

**1/2 tsp. pepper**

**1 TB sage or poultry seasoning.**

3. Crumble, brown, and drain the sausage. Add the sausage to the stuffing mix or bread cubes:

**1/4 pound bulk turkey breakfast sausage,**

**1/4 pound bulk turkey Italian sausage**

**(Leftover sausage can be frozen for scrambled eggs, pizzas, etc.)**

4. Saute the celery and onion in 1 TB of butter:

**1 cup chopped celery**

**1 chopped onion**

5. Next, add to the bread cubes/stuffing mixture:

**4 TB fresh chopped parsley**

**1 peeled, cored, chopped Granny Smith or Jonathan apple**

**3/4 cup cranberries (for color/ optional)**

6. Combine together:

**1 stick melted butter**

**2 Cups canned chicken broth or reconstituted chicken broth powder**

7. Drizzle all the liquid over the other ingredients and lightly toss until well mixed.

8. Stuff the bird loosely because stuffing expands during roasting, or place the mixture in a glass casserole dish and bake the stuffing separately until hot. It is very hard to ruin stuffing; use the ingredients you have and like, but don't forget the onion and celery. I can't wait to make this right now!

## PERFECT HOMEMADE GRAVY

*Ladies, don't spoil your feast by using store bought turkey gravy mix.* Your guests will notice the difference and remember this delicious homemade gravy. My daughter was horrified when she was helping another family clean up the meal and all the turkey drippings had been discarded! Make lots of gravy, it is perfect for leftovers, and many turkey casserole variations.

The secret to homemade gravy is to make a delicious stock/base by simmering the giblets and neck in 2-3 cups of water while the turkey roasts, and saving ALL the drippings and browned crusty bits on the bottom of the roasting pan. Canned chicken broth or commercial gravy mix is a poor substitute, so resolve not to be tempted to compromise these steps.

Pour all the turkey drippings from the roasting pan into a large measuring cup (at least 2 Cup measure) and allow the grease to separate. While the drippings are separating, pour 2-3 cups of water into the roasting pan and bring it to a boil by placing the pan on two burners on your stove top. Using a wooden spoon, stir up these browned bits so they "dissolve" into the water. This step is essential to wonderful tasting, beautifully browned gravy and makes cleaning up a roasting pan a much easier task. Reserve 4-8TB (1/4- 1/2 Cup) of the turkey grease once it separates from the drippings.

After the roasting pan has simmered with water and turned a deep brown color, combine this liquid with turkey drippings (not the fat) and the broth from simmering turkey giblets so that you have 5-6 Cups of liquid. I use my 6-Cup blender as a measuring cup.

Then combine 1/4-1/2 Cup turkey fat (or butter) with 8-10 TB flour (whole wheat pastry preferred) until it gelatinizes, or thickens in a large sauce pan. Keep stirring over medium low heat for about one minute.

Now, VERY GRADUALLY, pour the liquid from the turkey giblets and the roasting pan into the fat/flour mixture while you stir it continuously so as to not have any lumps. Stir continuously until the entire mixture thickens. Adjust the liquid if needed so you have a nice pourable gravy. Add 2-3 tsp salt or to taste, OR use 1-2 TB of Sue's Kitchen Magic for a richer/deeper flavor and for a lower sodium gravy. Save leftover gravy leftovers for future meals, open face sandwiches, etc!

### FANTASTIC WHOLE WHEAT ROLLS

These wonderful rolls will be a hit for everyday or special occasions. Halve the recipe for a smaller batch.

2 1/2 Cups warm water  
1/2 Cup honey  
1/2 Cup dry powdered milk (optional)  
2 TB yeast  
2 eggs  
6-8 cups whole wheat flour\*  
2 1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 Cup oil  
1/2 Cup vital gluten  
2 TB dough enhancer (optional)  
melted butter

Combine warm water, honey, powdered milk, and yeast in mixing bowl. Allow yeast to activate. Add the eggs and 3 Cups flour. Stir until thoroughly mixed; dough will resemble cake batter. Cover, let rest until bubbly, about 30 minutes. Add salt, oil, and enough of the remaining flour until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl. Be careful to not add too much flour. Knead the dough for 6-8 minutes or until the gluten is developed or the dough is soft and pliable, not dry. Place the dough on a lightly greased surface. Grease the baking sheets. Pinch off small round portions of dough, and roll into an 8-inch rope. Tie the "rope" in a single knot. Place the knots in rows on baking sheets, cover, and let rise until double. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Brush with melted butter if desired, and remove to a cooling rack. Makes 2-3 dozen.

Multi-grain variation: Substitute 1 cup of 7-Grain Mix, cracked OR 1 Cup cracked wheat for one cup of the whole wheat flour.

\* IF you do not have high quality fresh home milled whole wheat flour I would recommend that you use half bread flour or all-purpose flour in place of some of the whole wheat flour in order to avoid heavy, dense rolls.

**AMERICAN APPLE PIE**

This is the best Apple Pie Recipe I have ever found. Use tart apples such as Jonathan, Granny Smith, Gala, Macintosh or a combination of apples for fabulous flavor. The spices used in this apple pie version are the best. Serve with real whipped cream or French Vanilla ice cream.

**1 Double Crust Pie Recipe** (use your favorite pie crust recipe or check <http://tinyurl.com/2uwal> for for Never Fail Pie Crust)

**8-9 Large tart cooking apples, pared, cored and sliced thin. (An Apple Peeler saves LOTS of time)**

**1/4 Cup fresh lemon juice**

**6 TB flour, whole wheat pastry flour is good**

**3/4 Cup sugar or Sucanat, more if desired**

**1 tsp. cinnamon**

**1 tsp. nutmeg (key ingredient)**

**2 TB butter (not margarine)**

Place prepared bottom crust in a 9-inch pie pan. Put sliced, cored, peeled apples into a large mixing bowl and toss with lemon juice. Preheat the oven to 400° F. In a small bowl, combine the flour, sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Sprinkle 1/4 Cup of the sugar mixture on the bottom pie crust and add the rest of the sugar mixture to the apples and stir to coat the apples. Fill the pie crust heaping full with the apple mixture. Dot with the butter.

Place the top crust over the filling. Press edges together and flute. Bake about 50 minutes, until the crust is golden browned. Serve with favorite topping. Makes one pie.

## **PECAN PIE**

*A simple, easy and delicious classic!*

**PREHEAT OVEN TO 450°**

Line a 9" pie pan with single crust of pie dough (Never Fail Pie Crust Recipe can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/2uwal>), fork it all over very thoroughly to allow steam to escape and bake it only partially, from 5 to 7 minutes. Allow it to cool. Reduce oven heat to 375°.

Combine and beat thoroughly:

**3 eggs**

**1 cup sugar**

**1/2 tsp. salt**

**1/3 cup melted butter**

**1 cup light corn syrup**

Stir In:

**1 cup pecan halves**

**1 tsp. vanilla**

Fill the shell. Bake the pie 40 to 50 minutes at 375° or until a knife inserted in the filling comes out clean. I have found that when the pie looks browned it is done. Serve warm or cold.

### **PUMPKIN BREAD**

*This classic pumpkin bread recipe will make 3 to 4 medium sized loaves, or lots of muffins, plenty for family and gifts.*

**4 1/2 C. sugar, white, brown, Sucanat, or combination**

**1 1/2 C. vegetable oil**

**6 eggs**

**2 tsp. nutmeg**

**2 tsp. cinnamon**

**1 TB salt**

**3 C. canned pumpkin**

**1 c. water**

**1 1/2 tsp. baking soda**

**3/4 tsp. baking powder**

**4 1/2 C flour**

Combine first eight ingredients and beat one minute. Stir together the flour, soda and baking powder, then add to wet mixture. Stir all ingredients until well-combined without overmixing. Pour batter into greased loaf pans or muffin tins. Bake in 325° F oven for 50-60 minutes (regular sized loaf pans). Decrease baking time for muffins and mini-loaves. Test for doneness, cool five minutes in pan and finish cooling on a wire rack. Wrap completely cooled product in plastic wrap or bread bags for storage. **Variation:** Add 1-2 C. chopped nuts and/or raisins to batter before baking.

## **TURKEY LEFTOVER RECIPES**

With all those delicious turkey leftovers, here are a few recipes we look forward to each year after Thanksgiving!!! This is absolutely the best part of Thanksgiving.

### **TURKEY CHOWDER**

My friend, Debi Nancarrow, shared this recipe with me in 1985 that had become not only a family favorite of theirs but also part of their "Twelfth Night Party" Celebration tradition. The recipe has been published in a coffee table book celebrating Colorado Christmas traditions and it is probably in other books as well. I guarantee this recipe is a winner for those leftover bits of turkey.

If you make homemade turkey stock from the leftover bones the flavor skyrockets to a perfect "10"! Even if you can't try this recipe out this year, be sure to save the recipe for future use. I usually double the amounts to have some soup for the freezer. If you let the soup sit a day, the flavor improves with age. We've eaten this in bread bowls that I've made. Fabulous!

**2 C. sliced carrots**

**3 C. water, turkey broth or canned chicken broth**

**1 large floret of broccoli OR 1-10 oz box of broccoli**

**1 C. onion, chopped finely**

**1/2 C. celery, sliced**

**1 tsp. salt**

**1/2 C. ground oat flour (blend rolled oats in the blender to make flour)**

**2 C. milk or allergy alternative soy product**

**6 oz. Swiss cheese, grated**

**1-1/2 C. diced turkey**

Combine carrots, broth, onions, celery, broccoli, and salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Simmer 10 minutes. Bring to rolling boil again, and gradually stir in the oat flour, stirring constantly. Let simmer another 10 minutes until lumps disappear. Reduce heat. Add milk, turkey. Remove from heat. Stir in cheese. Serves 4-6.

## **TURKEY TETRAZZINI**

Serves: 6-8 servings (2-1/2 qt casserole)

**3 cups diced turkey pieces**

**10 oz whole grain pasta of choice or use spaghetti**

**1/2 cup melted butter**

**1/2 cup whole wheat pastry flour or 6 TB unbleached white flour**

**1-3/4 cups hot milk, low fat if desired**

**1 cup Turkey or Chicken broth (homemade is tastiest)**

**1/4 cup cooking sherry or white grape juice**

**1/2 tsp. salt**

**1/4 tsp. pepper**

**1/8 tsp nutmeg**

**1 Cup fresh mushroom slices, sauteed in oil or butter OR 4 oz can mushroom stems and pieces, drained**

**1/3 Cup Parmesan Cheese**

1. Cook pasta according to package directions until just barely tender or use leftover spaghetti or other pasta. Rinse, and drain.
2. Make the sauce by blending flour into melted butter and cook and stir over medium heat about 1 minute; remove from heat. Blend in milk and chicken broth. Return to heat; cook and stir until thickened.
3. Blend in sherry, salt, pepper, nutmeg, and mushrooms. Combine pasta, turkey, and sauce and place in casserole dish. Top with Parmesan Cheese. Bake in 350 degree oven for 20-30 minutes or until bubbly. Make two casseroles, one for the freezer and one to serve.



## **GOURMET TURKEY SANDWICH**

**Sourdough bread, French bread or whole grain equivalent**

**Jellied cranberry sauce**

**Cream cheese**

**Leftover turkey meat (white meat, preferably)**

Spread cranberry sauce and cream cheese on opposite sides of bread, and then simply layer on some cold leftover turkey meat.