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# Avoid these 5 Thanksgiving dinner mistakes

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Create a meal-preparation schedule that begins several days before the holiday. A common mistake is to underestimate time needed for turkey defrosting. / Getty Images/Fuse

Written by MCT

Hosting a Thanksgiving Day dinner celebration? Here are some mistakes to avoid on your way to creating a smooth, happy event:

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## 1. Leaving all meal preparation for Thanksgiving Day.

A traditional Thanksgiving Day dinner includes staple favorite dishes that require lengthy prep and cooking times. Create a meal-preparation schedule that begins several days before the holiday.

A common mistake is to underestimate time needed for frozen turkey defrosting. Depending on its size, a frozen turkey may require two days to defrost before it is ready for cooking.

Consider preparing side dishes the day before the holiday, or at minimum, preparing ingredients (i.e. chopping vegetables) in advance.

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**2. Running an oven's self-clean cycle the day before.**

Run an oven's self-clean cycle no fewer than two weeks prior to Thanksgiving Day. Due to extremely high temperatures of the self-cleaning function, there is risk of damage to an electrical component or the door latch, according to Chris Hall, president and co-founder of RepairClinic.com.

"If you're preparing a Thanksgiving meal, you should run the self-cleaning feature at least two weeks in advance to give yourself time to repair the range if necessary, he said."

Note that self-cleaning ovens should not be cleaned with a general oven-cleaning spray, as the formula may damage the self-cleaning surfaces of the oven's interior.

**3. A disorganized kitchen that complicates meal prep and leftover storage.**

Set aside one to two hours to clean out your refrigerator, freezer and cabinetry and toss out expired items. Reorganize to maximize space. Take an inventory of your pots, pans and other cookware to ensure that you have enough for everything you plan to cook on Thanksgiving.

**4. One-person cooking.**

Ask guests to bring side dishes and desserts.

Most people are happy to contribute to the feast.

**5. Chaotic clean-up.**

Don't do all of the clean-up work yourself and then act annoyed that no one helped you. Delegate point people to load the dishwasher, wrap leftovers, take out the trash, etcetera.

If everyone knows what they're supposed to do, you'll enjoy a far more efficient clean-up process.

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