

Week Two Overview

Good morning, and welcome to Week Two - Menu Week!

This week we will be preparing all of our menus for our holidays and parties, finding the recipes we're going to use, and preparing shopping lists.

This prep work will make things easier throughout the holidays to get everything you need to make your holiday food as easy as possible.

Week Two Activities:

- Make menu for thanksgiving
- Make menu for Christmas
- Make menu for New Year's
- Make menu for any parties
- Write list of all food related activities/traditions/gifts
 - Decorating cookies
 - Drinking apple cider
 - Gingerbread houses
 - Making marshmallows
- Find recipes, put in binder
- Make Thanksgiving Shopping List
- Make Parties/Traditions Shopping List
- Make Christmas Shopping List
- Make New Year's Shopping List

Week Two, Day One

Today, we're going to create menus for the holidays. Our family does Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's - you can choose which holidays you plan the menu for. If you have a large get together on Christmas Eve, create a menu for Christmas Eve. If Halloween is your jam, create a menu for Halloween.

How you choose to do this is completely up to you, but we want you to be very specific. Don't just write "pie" on your Thanksgiving menu - how many pies? What kind of pies?

If you're sharing the holiday with others, work on your menu together. Who can bring what? Who is in charge of making sure that each specific item makes it to the table in time?

When you're done, your menu should be as specific as possible so there is no confusion.

If you have limited oven space, do you need to plan what time everything needs to go in the oven to be done on time?

Would it be more helpful for you to create a menu, and then create a list of everything that can be made the day before?

What do you put on your menu? We include everything - breakfast, lunch, dinner, and dessert.

Do you need specific drinks? Include those too.

Ask yourself these questions to help you decide how in-depth you want to make your menus. No matter how you choose to do this, your goal is to make things as easy as possible for yourself later on.

Here's an example of our Thanksgiving Menu, to show you roughly what we do. Feel free to do something completely different, though.

Breakfast - roughly 9 am

- Bacon (1 pkg per 2 people)
- Pancakes (chocolate chip, blueberry, and plain)
- Orange Juice
- Fresh fruit (whatever is on sale)

Thanksgiving Dinner - roughly 2 pm

- Turkey - Mason
- Cranberry jelly - canned, kids open them

- Crescent rolls - store bought, kids make them
- Mashed potatoes - Emery
- Gravy - PJ
- Sweet potatoes - Brett
- Stuffing - Colter
- Broccoli - Hewitt

Dessert

- 2 Apple pies
- 2 Strawberry Rhubarb Pies
- 2 Cherry Pies
- 1 Blueberry Pie
- 1 Pecan Pie
- 10 Pumpkin Pies
- Whipped Cream (18)

Drinks

- Sparkling Grape Juice
- Water

That's not a complete list, but it gives you an idea of how we build our menus. If another way will work better for you, then definitely customize it for yourself! If you're having trouble with this, let me know in the Facebook group, and we'll see if we can help.

See you tomorrow!

Week Two, Day Two

Today, we're going to focus on all of the other things we do with food during the holidays.

First, we're going to make a menu for any parties that you will be hosting over the holiday season. For us, that's just one big Christmas party that we generally invite 200 to 300 people to, and have close to 200 show up over the course of the day.

We choose to provide all of the food for our Christmas Party. You, however, can coordinate a potluck, or ask everyone to bring their favorite Christmas dessert to share - you don't have to supply all of the food if you don't want to! Share the burden of hosting by asking everyone to bring a dish and suddenly hosting a Christmas party becomes much easier. Don't miss out on the joy of hosting family and friends for a celebration because it's too much work or money!

So, like we did yesterday, make a menu for any parties you'll be hosting with everything you'll have to provide. Whether you're making a full meal, providing finger food, or just setting out a few bags of chips and pretzels, write down what you're planning on doing. Don't forget any special drinks, even if that's just a big serving container of ice water.

Our second (and last) thing we're going to do today is create a list of all food related activities, gifts, and traditions you will be doing this holiday season. Here are a few examples:

- Drinking apple cider while singing Christmas carols (tradition)
- Making homemade marshmallows as a family to enjoy with hot chocolate (activity)
- Baking cookies from scratch or pre-made dough to decorate (activity)
- Homemade baking mixes in Mason jars for all the Aunts (gift)
- Decorating gingerbread houses (tradition/activity)

You don't have to specify whether each item is a tradition, activity, or gift, though you might find it helpful to write down roughly when you will be doing all of these items.

Once you have all of these written down, you're done for the day!

Week Two, Day Three

Today's activity shouldn't take too long, now that you have your menus ready!

We're going to find every single recipe that you'll need and put it in your binder so it's easy to access when you need them for the holidays.

So, grab your menus and food list that you made yesterday, and either find a computer with a printer, or go through your recipe books.

If you'll need a recipe for anything, find it now. You may not need a recipe for hot chocolate, but if you're making homemade marshmallows, you'll need a recipe for that. You may not need a recipe for cookies if you buy ready made cookie dough, but if you use Great Grandma Jean's recipe, you'll need to find that.

Start with each menu and work your way through the list, gathering all the recipes you already have, and researching to find the ones that you'll need for the first time.

Put them all into your binder, so that you are prepared when it's time to start cooking. And that's it for today!

Week Two, Day Four

Now that you have all of your menus and your recipes, we're going to create our shopping lists.

We won't need these for quite a few weeks, but having these ready to go will make such a difference in releasing that holiday stress.

I would suggest splitting your shopping lists by holiday or week, especially if you have a limited budget or pantry space, so you can purchase things as you need them.

Gather your menus for the holidays and recipes (they should all be in your binder by now!) and start breaking down each recipe into a shopping list. Don't forget to add more to the shopping list if you'll be duplicating or tripling a recipe.

Once you've done your holiday menus, take a look at your list of food related activities and gifts, and create the shopping lists for those as well. Don't forget to include any drinks, hot chocolate and cider and such.

That's all we're doing today, so while it might take a little while, it's not very complicated. Once you have your shopping lists ready, put them back in your binder so they're ready when you need them.

That's it for Week Two! We'll see you next week for Week Three, Shopping Week.