

The Less Stress Easter Dinner Planner

3-4 weeks before

- If your carpets need cleaning, now is the time to make the appointment.
- Think about how many people you'll be hosting, if you will have a sit down dinner or buffet, what food your guests will like to eat and make a budget.

- Invite guests, keep track of RSVPs and what guests are bringing with E-vite, Facebook Event, or Sign Up Genius which, is especially helpful if you are hosting a large crowd.
- Find out how many kids are coming so you can be prepared with juice, toys, activities, and a kids' table, and possibly a kids' menu if applicable.
- Plan your menu around what your guests have offered to bring, if you know yet. Keep in mind how much oven space you have and that it may be helpful if someone brings a side dish made in their own oven.
- Think about a delicious menu that is all encompassing- one or two meats, three or four sides (two starches and two non-starch vegetables) brown gravy, appetizers, dinner rolls, dessert variety, beverages, condiments, etc.
- Decide what beverages you'll serve-both alcoholic , non-alcoholic (include coffee, tea, creamer) and kids' drinks.
- If you will be hosting out-of-town guests, make a list of what you'll be serving them for breakfast and lunch on Easter Day and add it to your grocery list.
- Write out a first draft menu including beverages.
- Order your lamb or ham if you wish to have a specific fresh Honey Baked Ham or similar.
- Decide what tableware you'll use-table cloths, napkins, centerpieces, candles.
- Make a grocery list categorized by grocery section i.e. dairy, produce, meat, bakery, etc.
- Make a list of supplies for other retail stores i.e. Party City, Target, Costco Inc.

2-3 weeks before

- Confirm RSVPs and contact people from which you have not received an RSVP.
- Peruse the recipes you will be making, check your pantry and add the ingredients you need to your grocery list.
- Wash table cloths, your good dishes, serving platters, wine glasses, coolers, if needed.
- Think about table set up and your tablescape. If you need to rent/borrow tables and chairs, do it now.
- If you are having a buffet-style dinner, think about where and how you'll set up the food. If you are also hosting an Easter Egg Hunt, find out how many kids are participating for each age group. Add candy, plastic eggs, plastic bags for collecting eggs to store lists or delegate this task.
- Finalize menu and store lists.

1 week before

- Any planning items that have not been done prior to now, do it!
- Peruse your recipes and make sure you have all of the ingredients you need.
- Buy non-perishable groceries, candy and plastic eggs for Easter Egg Hunt, and beverages.
- Fill plastic eggs with candy and hide them from your kids and yourself!

Thursday before Easter

- Ensure you have all ingredients for your menu, including all beverages.
- Clean your house and set up bedrooms (clean sheets, make room in closets and/or dresser drawers, activities for kids) for out of town guests if applicable.
- Clean any coolers, tables, chairs that you'll be using.

Friday before Easter

- Think about any ingredients you forgot and buy what you still need.
- Make the desserts.
- Clean your powder room, vacuum and dust any rooms where most of your guests will be congregating.
- If there is anything else you can do on Friday that will alleviate the work for you on Saturday or Sunday, do it. Don't procrastinate.

Saturday before Easter

- If you are brining meat or need to prepare/marinate the main course meat, now is the time.
- Make or prepare appetizers, cover, and store them in a second refrigerator, if you have one.
- Wash and cut up vegetables you'll be using for side dishes.
- Prepare and cook side dishes if they can be made ahead.
- Move furniture out of high traffic areas
- Set up tables and chairs
- Remove extraneous small appliances and kitchen items from your counter tops to make extra space.

Easter Sunday

- Ask a family member to decorate and help set the tables.
- If you are holding an Easter Egg Hunt, ask someone to hide the eggs and give bags to kids.
- Have someone buy or bring ice if you need it.
- Chill white wine and/or beer and set up your bar.
- Set the table(s) with table cloths, silverware, napkins, centerpieces, and light candles.
- Bake or cook the main dish and side dishes .
- Make the gravy from the meat pan drippings, if you are making your own gravy.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help setting up, cooking, cleaning up afterward. Your closest family members will not mind helping a gracious host. Smile, take breaks and have a wonderful Easter!



Sample Easter Dinner Menu

Veggie tray, chips and dips, cheese and crackers, [Bacon & Blue Cheese Stuffed Mushrooms](#)

Leg of Lamb, Baked Ham, [Slow Cooker Italian Pork](#) , or Brisket

Herb Stuffing, Italian Easter Pie

Mashed Potatoes w/gravy, Scalloped Potatoes or Baked Sweet Potatoes

Green Bean Casserole, Sweet corn, Glazed Carrots, or Broccoli

[homemade Artisan bread](#), Easter Bread, Dinner rolls & butter

Wine, cocktails, and/or beer

Sweet Tea, Lemonade, Soft Drinks, Water

Coffee, Tea

[Creamy Lemon Cheesecake](#), [White Chocolate Cranberry Cannolis](#), or [Light Tiramisu](#)

Fresh fruit, fruit salad, or fruit mold