



10 Tips to Host a Stress-Free Holiday Dinner

1. **Serve HAM instead of turkey** Ham doesn't need to be brined, basted, tied, twisted, rubbed, organs removed, massaged, etc. You get the picture! Other meats are high maintenance and hams are NOT. Ham doesn't have a droopy neck skin flopping around to remind you to find a way to get rid of your double chin. Ham is easier to prep. Period.

Buy a boneless, whole or half ham and slice it to the **thickness you prefer**. Some people like ham in **thin slices**, some in **thick slices**.

2. **Serve easy-to-make side dishes.** Choose two **starches** and two **non-starch vegetables**

- Skip the green bean casserole and make Green Beans Almondine. Buy it in the frozen vegetable section or add slivered almonds to green beans.
- Make **baked or roasted potatoes** instead of mashed potatoes. Serve baked potatoes with sour cream and chives or bacon and cheese.
- Make **baked sweet potatoes** instead of sweet potato casserole. Serve them with cinnamon sugar and a dollop of butter.
- Make **Glazed Carrots**-use baby carrots instead of regular carrots to eliminate peeling and cutting them.

3. **Prep produce the day before.**

- Wash and cut celery and onions the day before for stuffing/dressing.
- Wash and cut vegetables and fruit for veggie and fruit trays the day before.
- Prep your green beans, collard greens, corn on the cob, etc. the day before or even two days before.
- Peel and cube potatoes and store them in water up to 24 hours before you cook them.

4. **Make two easy pie desserts** two weeks ahead and freeze them. [Pecan pie](#), pumpkin pie, fruit pies and [cheesecakes](#) freeze well. Or, ask Aunt Debbie to bring her delectable Cherry Pie that everyone drools over.

5. How to Make a Super Easy Pineapple Ham Glaze

The full printable recipe is in the recipe card below. It's super easy to make and without refined sugar. In a small sauce pan on med/high heat, add 6 oz of pineapple juice, 1 tsp each- ground cinnamon, ginger and corn starch and 3/4 tsp ground cloves. Cook for about 5 minutes or until it thickens. Pour it on top of the ham before you cook it. Put pineapple juice in the bottom of the pan instead of water for extra pineapple flavor.



6. What to Clean the Day You're Hosting

It's best to do as much cleaning ahead of time as possible but, there are a few places you should concentrate on to be clean before your guests arrive. Remove the dust from the ceiling fan before it glides like a feather onto someone's white mashed potatoes.

Clean where most people congregate- the kitchen, dining area, living room and bathroom....not because people congregate in bathrooms but, because people use them and you don't want it to be dirty! Take out the trash, vacuum, dust, but don't get caught up in things people won't notice like the brick-a-brack on the shelf near the ceiling.

7. Use slow cookers- "Everybody's got em!" Borrow one if you need to.

- Slow cookers **save oven space** and **counter space**, if you put them in an adjacent room.
- Make a ham, dressing/stuffing, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, veggies, etc. in a slow cooker.
- Use slow cooker liners... Geeze I need to remember to do this myself.

8. Use a **checklist** and **delegate tasks** the day of the party.

- Write a to do list
- Write a grocery list sectioned by department
- Delegate tasks to family members (ask someone to bring ice, a dessert, wine, etc.) It'll **save you time** and **money**.

9. How to store leftover ham and make ham bone soup.

Ham bones render an absolutely delicious broth! **DON'T TOSS THE HAM BONE!** I have an amazing [One Pot Ham Potato and Bean Soup recipe!](#) It's our most popular recipe!

After you've removed the ham from the ham bone, store it in the refrigerator for up to five days. You can freeze it too. Simply put the ham bone in a zipper freezer bag or plastic container, label, date and freeze it for up to 6 months.

Make a good ham bone soup with the ham bone. Boil it in a large stock pot for one hour with two quarts or so of chicken or turkey stock. You'll need enough stock to cover most of the ham bone.

10. How to clean up your kitchen easily with little effort:

- Ask for help! Don't wait until they walk away from the kitchen and start up a long conversation with talkative Uncle Larry.



- Use disposable plastic cups, utensils, plates and serving platters as much as possible. You don't have to serve dinner on paper plates but, you can serve water, coffee, desserts and appetizers in/on them especially if you have a large crowd to feed. Minimize dishes to begin with!
- Use disposable foil baking pans and slow cooker liners when cooking and toss them.
- First, toss leftover food on plates and put away leftover food in containers- someone else can do this. Just point them to the cupboard that has the containers. If you want to freeze leftovers, do it the next day.
- Then, begin loading dishwasher or washing by hand. Ask someone to wash and someone else to dry. You can put everything away because you know where it goes.

What you can **buy prepped to save time:**

- Hatfield 1/4 pre-sliced (with natural juices or water added) or a Hatfield 1/2 pre-sliced Pit Ham and you'll save cutting time which will get everyone eating faster while it's still hot!
- Pre-cut vegetables in containers if your budget allows but, check the dates first.
- Vegetable and fruit trays.
- Bagged, pre-washed, cut broccoli.
- Bagged lettuce and salad kits. They're easy to assemble and add dressing.
- Pies at the grocery store or a good bakery.

Happy Holidays!