



Home On The Range



Christmas Dinner Ideas

The holiday meal is probably the most festive one you'll prepare all year — a real show stopper!

Can it be spectacular and special yet simple, too?

Yes, if you select foods that are easy to prepare and add your own special touches.

Do as much of the preparation ahead of time as possible.

It is possible to entertain elegantly and easily if you know a few tricks.

A boneless ham or a boneless beef roast are some of the easiest entrees to cook and serve. Once in the oven, the roast cooks virtually unattended. Because it's boneless, carving is easy even for the novice. It needs no preparation except for perhaps a seasoning rub prior to roasting.

ZESTY PEPPER RUB FOR BEEF ROAST

2 teaspoons each cracked black pepper and dry mustard
 ½ teaspoon ground allspice
 ½ teaspoon red pepper
 1 large garlic clove, crushed
 1 teaspoon vegetable oil

Combine pepper, dry mustard, allspice, red pepper, and garlic; stir in oil to form paste. Rub mixture evenly over surface of beef roast. Place roast, fat side up, on rack in open roasting pan. Insert meat thermometer so bulb is centered in the thickest part but not resting on bone or fat. Roast at 325 degrees for about three hours for a 6-pound roast.

EASY POTATO SALAD

10 cooked potatoes, diced or shredded

6 hard-boiled eggs
 ¼ cup celery, chopped
 1 small onion
 1½ cups salad dressing
 2 tablespoons mustard
 2½ tablespoons vinegar
 1½ teaspoon salt
 1 cup sugar

Put potatoes, eggs, celery, and onions in bowl. In separate bowl, mix remaining ingredients. Sprinkle in celery seed to season. Stir the ingredients until sugar is dissolved. Pour over potato mixture and mix thoroughly with a spoon. Chill.

Ringgold Pike Cook

EGGNOG BERRY TRIFLE

1 small package vanilla pudding and pie filling

2 cups dairy eggnog
 6 ounces ladyfingers, split
 ¼ cup Amaretto liqueur
 1½ cups sliced fresh strawberries

1½ cups whole fresh or frozen unsweetened raspberries

1 cup whipping cream
 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar

½ teaspoon almond extract
 Whole fresh strawberries and raspberries, if desired

Fresh mint, if desired

Prepare pudding according to package directions using eggnog in place of milk. Cool. Sprinkle ladyfingers with Amaretto. Arrange about half of ladyfingers on sides and bottom of 8-inch springform pan. Spread strawberries over ladyfingers on bottom of pan. Spoon on half of the pudding. Arrange remaining ladyfingers over pudding. Spread raspberries over ladyfingers. Layer with remaining pudding. Refrigerate at least 4 hours. About 1 hour before serving, combine whipping cream, sugar, and almond extract in small mixer bowl. Whip until stiff peaks form. Pipe whipped cream through pastry tube fitted with star tip to cover top of trifle. Refrigerate. Just before serving, place trifle on serving plate. Carefully remove sides of pan. Garnish with fresh strawberries, raspberries and mint. Cut into wedges and serve. Yield: one 8-inch round dessert.

HAMBALLS

1 pound ground ham
 1½ cups soft bread crumbs
 ½ teaspoon dry mustard
 1 teaspoon prepared mustard
 ½ pound ground pork
 1 egg
 ¼ cup brown sugar

Combine meats and crumbs, egg, and dry mustard. Mix well. Shape into balls and place in baking dish. Combine sugar and prepared mustard. Spread over top of balls. Dribble with a small amount of water to keep balls moist while baking. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 to 55 minutes.

Ringgold Cook



Whipped cream rosettes garnish this delicious Eggnog Berry Trifle, easily assembled from purchased ladyfingers, pudding mix and fresh strawberries and raspberries. A perfect end to a holiday meal.

RAISIN CREAM PIE

1 cup raisins
 1½ cups milk
 ½ cup flour
 ¾ cup sugar
 2 egg yolks
 1 tablespoon butter
 1 teaspoon vanilla

¼ teaspoon salt

Stew raisins in a little water. Mix flour, sugar, and salt. Add milk and egg yolks. Cook until thickened. Add stewed raisins, butter, and vanilla. Pour into baked pie shell and top with meringue.

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FRENCH HOLIDAY TRUFFLES

½ cup whipping cream
 8 ounces semi-sweet baking chocolate, chopped
 ½ cup butter, softened
 Unsweetened cocoa or confectioners' sugar

Chocolate and vanilla candy coating, melted

In a 2-quart saucepan, combine whipping cream and chocolate. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until chocolate melts, 7 to 9 minutes. Remove from heat.

Stir in butter until melted and creamy. Cover, refrigerate until firm, at least 2 hours.

Dust hands with cocoa or confectioners' sugar. Working quickly, shape 2 teaspoonsful of mixture into balls; roll in cocoa or confectioners' sugar. (Truffle mixture will be soft. Repeat dusting hands to make shaping easier to use small ice cream scoop to form balls). Refrigerate truffles until firm, at least 45 minutes.

To coat truffles, use a spoon or wooden pick to dip truffles into melted candy coating; let excess coating drip off. Place dipped truffles on waxed paper until coating is hard. If desired, to decorate, drizzle dipped truffles with melted colored candy coating. Store truffles in tightly covered container in refrigerator. Makes about 2 dozen.

Naomi Becker
 Shamokin

CRAN-RASPBERRY MOLD

2 cups boiling water
 6-ounce box raspberry Jell-O
 16 ounces whole cranberry sauce
 1 cup sour cream

Pour boiling water on Jell-O, stir until dissolved. Stir in cranberry sauce. Refrigerate until partly jelled. Beat in sour cream. Refrigerate until firm. Serves 8.

Wanda Yoder
 Belleville

Featured Recipe



First, remove the leg and last two wing joints and make a deep horizontal "base cut" into the breast, over the wing.



Second, slice in a vertical direction, down through the breast, to the horizontal "base cut."

Courtesy Edgecraft Corp.

HOW TO STUFF, ROAST, AND CARVE A TURKEY

Stuffing: Rinse the turkey inside and out with cold water and pat dry with paper towels. Lightly spoon some of the stuffing into the neck cavity. Spoon the stuffing in loosely, do not pack. This leaves room for the stuffing to expand during roasting. Pull the neck skin over the stuffing to the back of the bird.

Lightly spoon some stuffing into the body cavity; do not pack. Tuck the drumsticks under the band of skin across the tail. If the skin is not present, tie the legs securely to the tail with string. This helps the bird hold its shape. Twist the wing tips under the back to hold the neck skin in place.

Roasting: Place the turkey, breast side up in roasting pan. Brush with oil. Insert meat thermometer in center of the inside thigh muscle, making sure bulb does not touch bone. Cover.

Roast in 325 degree oven until thermometer registers 185 degrees, basting occasionally with juices. Uncover and cut band of skin between legs for last 45 minutes of roasting. Remove turkey from oven; cover loosely with foil. Let stand 15 minutes before carving.

Carving: Cutting beautiful slices depends on using a good, sharp, non-serrated carving knife. Serrated knives tend to tear tender meat, producing shreds instead of slices.

Make sure you let the turkey set for at least 12 minutes after removing from oven. This makes the meat easier to carve.

Start carving by removing the drumsticks and thighs. Next remove the wings; but only the tip and center sections. Leave the last section of the wing attached to the breast. This provides a good broad base to help prevent the bird from tilting when you slice the "breast."

When carving the turkey breast, start by making a deep horizontal base cut into the breast, just above the wing bone. Then you can release nice even slices by cutting in a vertical direction down through the breast to the base cut.

Recipe Topics

If you have recipes for the topics listed below, please share them with us. We welcome your recipes, but ask that you include accurate measurements, a complete list of ingredients and clear instructions with each recipe you submit. Send your recipes to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522. Recipes should reach our office one week before publishing date.

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