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Is This The Year To Simplify Christmas Dinner?

By Joanie Williams

Are you hosting Christmas dinner this year? What do you think about making this the year you simplify it?

We know perfectly well that every year there's too much food on the table. We eat too much, we work too hard, and most years we get ourselves too tired to really enjoy everything.

What about making as much as possible ahead?

What about (gasp!) even cooking the turkey and making the gravy the day before?

There are lots of recipes on the internet for making the turkey ahead. You just have to put in "make-ahead turkey" and you can pick and choose the one that suits you.

A few years ago one of my sisters and I tried cooking our turkey the day before. It worked beautifully. The turkey tasted no different, although I admit we "cheated" a little because we also cooked another turkey on Christmas Day. So the guests could smell turkey cooking when they walked in.

Just the same, I am going to cook my turkey ahead this year, and I won't be cooking another one on Christmas Day.

I'm also going to make the mashed potatoes and gravy ahead. You can also find lots of recipes for make-ahead mashed potatoes and make-ahead gravy on the internet.

Imagine – all those roasting pans and mashed potato pots washed and put away before Christmas morning. Wouldn't that be super?

The other thing I am going to do this Christmas is limit the number of dishes. When we already have turkey and gravy and stuffing, why do we need a bunch of other side dishes?

Isn't one or two vegetables enough?

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If you really think you need two vegetables why not serve frozen mixed vegetables? That way you get two for one, and you only have to use one serving dish.

Does that salad get eaten? Be ruthless answering this question. If you have wondered in years past why you (or your host of the year) bother making it, then just don't make it this year.

Of course if people love to have salad, then by all means go ahead and make it. Just prepare it the day before, so all you have to do at the last minute is add the dressing.

If all this sounds a bit heartless, then close your eyes for a minute and visualize what Christmas Day is really like. Do you have nuts and tangerines and maybe chocolates out in little dishes around your living room? Have people been eating a hearty breakfast at your house or somewhere else? Did it maybe include eggnog, shortbreads, candy canes and other rich treats? Have your guests spoiled their

appetite a little even before they arrive?

Have you or your guests already been to a big meal on Christmas Eve? Do they have to go to other relatives tomorrow to have yet another feast?

Then ask yourself – will people suffer if Christmas Dinner is simple? Or will they be grateful that they have the turkey and trimmings, but don't have to stuff themselves with hearty starter appetizers, turnips, squash, or whatever else you normally put on the table to make it groan?

What would you prefer?

If you would prefer to simplify Christmas dinner, then why not start right now, this Christmas?

Just remember, make everything you possibly can ahead, get those pots washed and put away. Pare down the number of side dishes, and don't serve a rich appetizer.

Then enjoy your own simplified Christmas dinner!

Joanie Williams has been giving small dinner parties for years. She would love to hear your burning questions about planning a dinner party. Submit your burning question now.

<http://www.thedinnerpartyplanningsite.com/Burning-Questions.html>

What Do You Want This Year?

By Angie Dixon

Christmas is all around us, and many people are making up wish lists. Those who aren't doing that are busy setting down their New Year's Resolutions already. But this is a good time to sit down and do some serious introspection.

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What do you want from the holidays this year? Do you want to rush around, spend a lot of money you don't have, and yell at the kids for not playing with all twenty of the toys they asked for—at the same time? Is that really how you want to spend Christmas?

We talk about "Christmas spirit," and mostly we mean giving. Giving of ourselves, giving to people who need it. That's great, that's Christmas spirit.

But I think there's another aspect to "Christmas spirit." I think it's spiritual. And don't close your screen on me because I said spiritual. I didn't say religious, because it's not. I think it comes from our souls.

I think deep down, each of us has a spirit that wants to be expressed. And I think at Christmas, when we're naturally thinking of others, that spirit is more easily expressed. I think if you want to, you can have a spiritual Christmas. You can feel loving, caring, generous. You can feel like a kid at Christmas, just by opening up to your spirit.

So what do you want this year?

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

<http://www.discoveringtruenorth.com>

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What Do You Want This Year?

10 Ways to Keep Your Expectations From Making You Crazy This Christmas

How To Find Christmas Decorations For Your Home

Need To Recapture The Magic Of Christmas? Try Inspirational Christmas Stories!

Last Minute Festive Packages From Superbreak

Christmas Happy Package

Is This The Year To Simplify Christmas Dinner?

- 470 Crock Pot Recipes
- The Big Book Of Cookie Recipes
- 120 Lip–Smacking Good Jam Recipes
- Brew Your Own Beer



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