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Frugal Thanksgiving Dinner

By Adriana Copaceanu

Quite often, people overdo it for Thanksgiving, both in preparing and enjoying the meal. But, it's possible to have a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends without having to break the budget and spend two days in the kitchen. The easiest way to do this is to organize a shared meal with your family and friends, and it actually brings the original tradition of sharing what we have with those we love to the forefront of the meal.

Once you've created a guest list, call and explain to them your idea. Ask each family to bring their favorite side dish and dessert. If you want to be really organized, you could plan the menu in advance and ask each family what they would like to bring from the menu, so you don't have duplicates. However, most families have their traditional favorite items, so you might be surprised by the variety you have just by letting them decide what to bring.

Then, as the host family, you provide the main dish. Plan ahead for the thawing and cooking time for the turkey, so it will be finished shortly before your guests arrive. With the pop-up timers in turkeys, there is little guesswork involved in cooking the bird. There are many websites on the internet to help you cook the perfect holiday turkey. There are also 1-800 hotline numbers to help you prepare the meal.

If you decide to have a smaller meal, with just your immediate family, there is no need to fix a huge meal. You may want to fix a few extra items, but just having time to sit and relax and eat a meal together as a family is quite often enough. With so many families running in all different directions, it's nice just to eat together and focus on the blessings of your life.

For a quick and easy recipe of <http://www.busy-moms-online.com/513/delicious-cornbread-stuffing/>, and <http://www.busy-moms-online.com/542/frugal-thanksgiving-decorating/>, visit <http://www.busy-moms-online.com>

Thanksgiving Traditions of Gratitude

By Teresa Hansen

Thanksgiving Traditions of Gratitude by Teresa Hansen

Several years ago, I was on a talk show, sharing some of these ideas to show our thankfulness.

During the break, one of the hosts shared with me their family Thanksgiving tradition.

With tears in her eyes she said, "My mother taught us that many of the early settlers of our country starved to death because there was not enough food. Sometimes all they got to eat each day was five kernels of corn. When we start our Thanksgiving dinner, each person is served five kernels of corn on their plate. Then we each share five blessings we are grateful for as we move those five kernels of corn across our plate."

This story touched me. It is such an effective and dramatic way to actually visualize how much we have as we first witness the scarceness of food so many people have to endure before we eat our feast and enjoy our bounty.

Ways to Count Your Blessings & Show Your Gratitude

- After prayer on the food, hold hands and take turns telling what you're thankful for.
- Make a Thanksgiving Box--Have your family write notes about what they are thankful for and stick them in a box beginning a week before Thanksgiving. At Thanksgiving dinner open the box and read the notes.
- On small cards or paper, write down the following categories on each paper:
person, day, place, experience, food, item
Go around the table and have each person draw out a card. Then that person tells of something they are grateful for from that category and why they are grateful for it.
- On Thanksgiving Day hang a piece of posterboard where it will be accessible to everyone. Have everyone in your family write things on it that they are thankful for. See how many you can come up with by the end of the day. (Or write these on a roll of cash register receipt paper and tape it up around the room.)
- Have thank-you notes and stationary readily available to everyone in your home on Thanksgiving day. Encourage your family to write a letter or thank-you note to someone they are thankful for: a teacher, a grandparent, a friend.
- Invite a new family in your neighborhood or a lonely person to dinner
- Go to a homeless shelter to help cook and serve Thanksgiving dinner
- Gather food to take to a local food bank

About the Author Teresa Hansen is the creator of www.momsmakingit.com sharing creative ideas to save time, save money, and enrich your life! Visit <http://savemoney.momsmakingit.com> for your free e-guide "Moms Making It! 111 Great Money Saving Ideas!" She is a wife and mother of five children.

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