

# Holiday Meal Planning & Recipes

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This time of year, the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays frighten many people who eat a healthy diet. They wonder how to socialize with friends and how to prepare a meal in their home. These two days are supposed to be the largest feasts of the year. Yet in fact, both dinners are the healthiest, most vegetarian-like, most McDougall-like meals people eat all year long.

Traditionally, these holiday dinners consist of mashed white potatoes, roasted sweet potatoes, a bread stuffing, butternut and acorn squash, cranberries, and a variety of green vegetables, including Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, and green beans. For dessert, pumpkin pie ends the feast. That's a cornucopia of starches and vegetables. The turkey served is the leanest of all common meats. The truth is that every other dinner consumed by Westerners all year long is far richer in fat, cholesterol, salt and sugar than is eaten at these two traditional festivals.

Therefore, if you are a healthy eater you will find Thanksgiving and Christmas the two most comfortable times of the year to socialize with all of your family and friends. I have laid out the menu, shopping list, and time schedule so that you will be able to more easily prepare a successful meal.

The starred (★) items are ones I suggest for a basic meal plan, and then add as many more dishes as you feel your Thanksgiving dinner needs to fit your celebration.

## **MENU:**

- **Creamy Pumpkin Soup**

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Servings: 6

1/4 cup water

1 small onion, chopped

4 cups vegetable broth

16 ounce can solid pack pumpkin  
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce  
2 teaspoons curry powder  
Several dashes Tabasco sauce  
1/2 cup non-dairy milk

Place water and onion in a medium saucepan. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes until onion is soft. Add broth, pumpkin and applesauce. Stir to combine. Add seasonings. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Stir in milk just before serving.

Hint:

This would be very attractive served in a small baked pumpkin. Cut top off of a pumpkin. Clean out seeds and strings (just like Halloween). Replace top. Place pumpkin in a pan with 1/2 inch of water. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Serve the cooked soup in the baked pumpkin.

Success Tip:

Prepare this up to two days ahead without the non-dairy milk and refrigerate. Reheat in microwave or on stovetop. Add the non-dairy milk after the soup is heated through.

- **Tossed Green Salad with assorted dressing**

Success Tip: Prepare dressings three to four days in advance and refrigerate. Or buy your favorite non-fat salad dressings. Buy organic baby greens in bags and toss in a bowl just before serving.

- **Holiday Stuffed Pumpkin ★**

This is the recipe I have used for my Thanksgiving centerpiece for over 25 years. It has always been a favorite with everyone who has celebrated the holidays with us over the years.

Preparation Time: 1 hour  
Cooking Time: 1 1/2 hours  
Servings: 6-8

1 large loaf whole wheat bread, cut into cubes  
4 1/2-5 cups vegetable broth  
1-2 onions, chopped  
2-4 stalks celery, chopped  
3 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce  
1 1/2 tablespoons parsley flakes  
2 1/2 teaspoons thyme  
2 1/2 teaspoons sage  
1 1/4 teaspoons marjoram  
2-3 teaspoons poultry seasoning  
1/2 teaspoon rosemary  
several twists of fresh ground pepper to taste  
1 medium pumpkin or large winter squash

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Place the bread on a baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes. Place the broth, onions, celery and seasonings in a medium saucepan and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, cut the top off the pumpkin or winter squash and save for a cover (as if you were going to make a jack-o-lantern). Clean out the seeds and stringy portion, leaving plenty of the squash flesh along the sides. Rinse well and set aside. Place the bread cubes in a large bowl, pour the cooked broth over the bread and toss well until bread is saturated with the liquid. Cover the bowl and allow liquid to be absorbed for about 10-15 minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings (adding more poultry seasoning and ground pepper, if needed).

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place the stuffing into the cleaned pumpkin and cover with the pumpkin top. Place in a large baking dish. Add 1 inch of water to the bottom of the baking dish. Bake for 1 1/2 hours, or until fork pierces the side of the pumpkin easily.

**Hint:**

To save some time, cube the bread the night before and allow it to sit uncovered in a single layer overnight. This will eliminate the need to bake the bread cubes in the oven for 15 minutes.

**Success Tip:**

Buy pumpkin in October or early November for the best selection. Keep in a cool place. Buy extra pumpkins for use at other times during the winter months.

Choose one of the many varieties available at this time of the year. One of my favorites is the “ghost” pumpkin with its white skin and orange flesh. The traditional pumpkin for carving a jack-o-lantern is not the tastiest choice for use as a stuffed pumpkin, although I have used them when nothing else was available. Clean the pumpkin the day before use and refrigerate, but do not stuff until just before baking. If you do not have enough room to refrigerate the cleaned pumpkin then clean it just before stuffing. Cube the bread the night before and allow it to sit out overnight so the bread dries out slightly. This step helps to make the stuffing mixture nicely moist, but not mushy.

- **Mashed Potatoes ★**

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Servings: 6-8

10 medium potatoes, peeled, in water to cover

Cut potatoes in half and place in a large pot with the water. Cover and cook over low heat until potatoes are very tender, about 45 minutes. Remove from heat. Drain potatoes, reserving the cooking liquid. Beat the potatoes with an electric mixer, adding small amounts of the cooking liquid to the potatoes while mashing. Beat until smooth and creamy. Season with a small amount of salt and pepper to taste, if desired.

Hint:

To make the potatoes more creamy, replace the reserved cooking liquid with non-dairy milk. Add the milk to the potatoes while mashing as above.

Success Tip:

Peel potatoes in the morning and store in water to cover until cooking time. Drain off all cooking water. Use a handheld electric mixer and add warmed non-dairy milk while beating. Place mashed potatoes into a warmed bowl before serving. For garlic mashed potatoes, add some of the Elephant Garlic Spread to the potatoes while mashing.

- **Maple Mashed Sweet Potatoes**

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Servings: 6

3 pounds sweet potatoes

1/2 cup non-dairy milk

1 tablespoon pure maple syrup

dash salt

freshly ground pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Scrub potatoes and prick all over with a fork. Place on a baking sheet and bake for about 45 minutes, or until potatoes are tender. Remove from oven and allow to cool slightly.

Cut potatoes in half lengthwise and scoop out the flesh into a large bowl. Mash with a hand masher or electric beater (do not use a food processor). Add non-dairy milk, maple syrup and seasonings. Mix well.

Hint:

These may be prepared a day or two ahead of time and refrigerated. Reheat in a microwave before serving. These may also be peeled and cooked in water on the stovetop. Drain off cooking water and mash as directed above.

Success Tip:

These may be made two days ahead of time and refrigerated in a covered casserole dish. Reheat in microwave just before serving.

## • **Creamy Golden Gravy ★**

This gravy is made with brown rice flour instead of wheat flour. The great thing about using rice flour instead of wheat flour for thickening is that it doesn't form lumps like wheat flour often does. You can just sprinkle it over the top of a hot liquid, stir it in and it thickens nicely without any lumps, or mix it in before cooking and stir occasionally until thickened.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Servings: makes 2 cups

2 cups vegetable broth  
3 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce  
2 tablespoons tahini  
¼ cup brown rice flour  
freshly ground black pepper  
dash or two of Sriracha, if desired

Place the broth into a saucepan. Add the soy sauce and tahini to the saucepan. Stir in the brown rice flour and whisk until liquid is smooth. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally until sauce becomes thickened and smooth. Season with freshly ground black pepper to taste. Add a dash or two of any hot sauce for more flavor, if desired. Serve at once.

**Hints:**

This may be made ahead and refrigerated. It will thicken slightly more when refrigerated. To reheat, place in a saucepan, add a small amount of water, whisk to combine and then heat slowly, stirring occasionally, until hot.

- **Rich Brown Gravy**

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Servings: makes 6 cups

1/4 cup water  
1 onion, chopped  
1 cup whole wheat flour  
5 1/2 cups water  
1/2 cup soy sauce  
fresh ground pepper to taste

Place the 1/4 cup water and the onion in a medium saucepan. Cook, stirring occasionally until onion softens, about 5 minutes. Add the flour and mix in well. Continue to cook for another 3 minutes, stirring constantly. (This will toast the flour and give it a rich flavor.) The flour and onions will clump together. Add the remaining water and soy sauce. Cook for another 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from heat. Blend in batches in a blender jar until smooth. Place in a clean pan. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until gravy thickens, about 10-15 minutes. Season with fresh ground pepper to taste.

Hint:

If the gravy fails to thicken to your satisfaction, you may want to add an extra thickener to the gravy. Use a mixture of 2 tablespoons cornstarch mixed in 1/4 cup cold water. Add a small amount to the gravy while stirring until it is thick enough for serving.

Success Tip:

Brown the onions and flour a day or two ahead of time, then cover and refrigerate. Finish the recipe as directed, realizing that it will take a bit more time for the liquid to heat through.

- **Whole Wheat & Sourdough Rolls with Elephant Garlic Spread**

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour

Servings: makes about 1 ½ cups

2 large heads Elephant garlic

2 tablespoons vegetable broth

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Separate the garlic heads into individual cloves. Discard the center stalk section. Cut a small piece off each of the root ends and off the tops. Peel each clove. Place the peeled cloves in a baking dish, spoon the vegetable broth over the garlic, cover and bake for 30 minutes. Remove cover and bake for an additional 30 minutes. (Test to make sure all the cloves are soft by piercing with a fork. If they are not soft enough, bake for a bit longer until soft.) Remove from oven and mash with a fork directly in the baking dish, using the broth in the bottom of the dish to mix with the garlic.

Season with salt, if desired.

Serve warm or cold as a spread for bread or rolls.

Success Tip: Order your rolls from Whole Foods or a bakery about one week early, then pick them up the day before the holiday. Make the garlic spread one or two days ahead of time and refrigerate until serving.

- **Cranberry Sauce ★**

This is a simple cranberry sauce, easy to make and delicious. I have been serving this sauce with our Thanksgiving feast for years.

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Servings: makes about 2 ½ cups

1 cup orange juice or water

1 cup organic cane sugar

3 cups fresh cranberries (12 ounce bag)

Place the orange juice or water in a medium saucepan. Add the sugar and heat until sugar is dissolved. Add the cranberries and cook, stirring occasionally, until they start to pop, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Transfer to a covered container and refrigerate until just before use.

Hint:

Traditional cranberry sauce is made with water. Try this with orange juice for something a bit different.

Success Tip:

Make two to three days ahead of time and refrigerate until just before serving.

- **Green Beans ★**

Success Tip: Trim beans the day before and store in the refrigerator. Wash just before steaming. I usually serve these plain with a bit of salt and pepper.

- **Brussels Sprouts with Creamy Caesar Salad Dressing**

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Servings: makes 2 cups

12.5 ounces silken tofu  
2 teaspoons minced fresh garlic  
3 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
3 tablespoons parmesan cheese substitute  
3 tablespoons lemon juice  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
¼ cup water (approximately)  
1 tablespoon drained capers (optional)  
2-4 cups of Brussels sprouts, cooked

Place all ingredients, except the capers, in a food processor. Process until very smooth. Add additional water if you want a thinner salad dressing. Add the capers and pulse briefly, until they are chopped but not pureed.

Hint:

This will keep in the refrigerator for about a week. If you don't have any capers, or don't like them, they may easily be omitted. It is easy to make your own Parmesan Cheese Substitute. Just mix equal amounts of almond meal or walnut meal and nutritional yeast together in a jar. Shake well, add a small amount of onion powder and salt, if desired, shake again, and it's ready. Store in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Success Tip:

Trim the Brussels Sprouts a day or two before cooking and store in the refrigerator. Wash before cooking. Most people like these best with some type of a sauce, although Heather and I like them plain with only a bit of salt. Make the dressing one to two days ahead and store in the refrigerator. Pour a small amount of the dressing over the cooked Brussels sprouts and toss just before serving.

## • **Pumpkin Pie with Vanilla Cream Sauce ★**

### **Pumpkin Pie**

Thanksgiving wouldn't be complete without pumpkin pie. I have been making various versions of pumpkin pie for many years, but have never been really pleased with the results. This one is the best! You can proudly serve this to everyone!

Preparation Time: 45 minutes  
Cooking Time: 1 ¼ hours  
Servings: makes one 9 ½ inch pie

**Crust:**

1/3 cup unsalted, roasted cashews  
3 tablespoons Sucanat  
2 tablespoons prune puree  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup unbleached white flour  
1/8 teaspoon salt

**Filling:**

12.3 ounces silken tofu (firm)  
16 ounce can pumpkin  
¾ cup Sucanat  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ginger  
¼ teaspoon ground cloves  
¼ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
½ cup non-dairy milk

**Prune Puree:**

2 cups dried, pitted prunes  
warm water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a glass 4 cup measuring container, add 2 cups of dried prunes, up to the 2 cup line. Do not remove them. Add warm water up to the 4 cup line. Let rest for 3-5 minutes. Place the water containing the prunes into a high speed blender or a food processor. (If you do not have a large food processor, this will have to be done in batches.) Process until the mixture is the consistency of applesauce.

Hints: This will keep in the refrigerator for about 2 weeks, but I like to freeze it in smaller amounts that I know I am going to use in future recipes, maybe 1/2 cup amounts. It will keep for at least a year in the freezer, just remember to thaw in plenty of time to use in your recipe. Use wherever you need a good substitute for fat in baked goods.

Place the cashews in a food processor and grind until they resemble fine meal. Add Sucanat, prune puree and vanilla. Process until well combined. Mix the flour and salt in a medium bowl. Add the cashew mixture and mix well, beginning with a spoon and ending with your hands. Press this mixture into the bottom of a non-stick or silicone 9 ½ inch pie pan with a high fluted edge. Press the mixture evenly over the bottom and up the sides. Bake for 15 minutes. Remove and set aside.

Meanwhile, place the tofu in a food processor and process until very smooth, scraping the sides often. Remove and place in a large mixing bowl. Add the pumpkin and mix well. Add the Sucanat and the spices and mix until very smooth. Add the non-dairy milk and mix again until well combined. Pour this mixture into the prebaked pie shell. Place in the oven and bake at 350 degrees for 60 minutes. Remove and cool.

For best flavor, chill for at least 2 hours before serving. This may be made a day ahead of time and refrigerated until serving. Serve with vanilla non-dairy ice cream or Vanilla Cream Sauce.

### **Vanilla Cream Sauce**

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Chilling Time: 1 hour

Servings: makes 1 ½ cups

12.3 ounces silken tofu (firm)

½ cup non-dairy milk

1/3 cup Natural Golden Cane Sugar

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Place the tofu in a food processor and process until very smooth. Add remaining ingredients and blend until smooth and creamy. Chill before serving.

This may be prepared ahead and will keep in the refrigerator for at least 5 days.

Success Tip:

Make the pie and the sauce one day ahead and refrigerate until just before serving. We like this pie best chilled. If you like warm pumpkin pie, you will need to make this just before serving. The crust can be prepared one day early and refrigerated. Mix the filling ingredients together, cover and refrigerate

overnight, then pour into the crust and bake. The vanilla sauce should be served chilled over the pie.

## • **Wicked Chocolate Pie**

This is a VERY RICH dessert to be savored on those most special occasions. Serve in small wedges and enjoy this delicious treat with friends! I probably make this only twice a year, once for Thanksgiving dinner with friends and once for John's birthday.

Preparation Time: 60 minutes

Cooking Time: 60 minutes

Chilling Time: 2 hours

Servings: makes 1 9-inch pie

Crust:

1/3 cup unsalted, roasted cashews

3 tablespoons Sucanat or brown sugar

3 tablespoons prune puree

½ teaspoon vanilla

1 cup unbleached white flour

dash salt

Chocolate Filling:

2 cups vegan (non-dairy) chocolate chips

24.6 ounces firm, silken tofu

¾ cup Sucanat or brown sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

dash salt

Almond Topping:

1 cup thinly sliced almonds

¼ cup maple syrup

Raspberry Sauce:

10-ounce bag frozen, unsweetened, raspberries, thawed

¼ cup sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Use a 9-inch silicone springform pan. (Side may be loosened and removed after baking.)

Place the cashews in a food processor and grind until they resemble fine meal. Add Sucanat or sugar, prune puree and vanilla. Process until well combined. Mix the flour and salt in a medium bowl. Add the cashew mixture and mix well, beginning with a spoon and ending with your hands. Press this mixture into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake for 15 minutes, until light brown. Remove from oven and set aside.

Place the chocolate chips in a double boiler and melt over barely simmering water. Place the tofu in a food processor and process until smooth. Add Sucanat or sugar, vanilla, and salt. Process again, then add the melted chocolate. Blend until smooth and creamy.

Scoop the chocolate mixture into the pan. Smooth out the top and bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool for 10-15 minutes. Run a knife around the inside of the pan to loosen the sides. Let the pie cool to touch, then refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving. Remove side before serving.

Place the maple syrup in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Cook, stirring constantly for about 1 minute (this is very important), then add the almonds and continue to cook and stir over fairly low heat until the syrup has crystallized onto the almonds and the almonds appear dry. (This will take at least 5 minutes. If the heat is too high, the sugar will burn and you will have a sticky, smelly mess.) Place on a baking sheet and allow to cool. Store at room temperature in a covered container.

Place the raspberries and sugar in a blender jar. Process until blended. Strain the sauce through a fine strainer, stirring often, to remove most of the seeds. Let the mixture sit in the strainer for at least 1 hour to allow most of the seeds to be removed. Discard the remaining sauce with the seeds. Pour the seedless sauce into a covered container and refrigerate until ready to use.

To Serve:

Cut a small wedge of the chocolate pie and place on a dessert plate. Sprinkle a few of the almonds over the pie, then drizzle with a small amount of the raspberry sauce.

Hints:

Vegan chocolate chips are made by many different manufacturers. Look for ones that have no added milk or other dairy products. The chocolate chips may

also be melted in the microwave. Follow the instructions for melting chocolate in your user's manual. Be careful not to burn it. Chocolate chips are high in fat and make this a VERY RICH dessert. We only make this on special holidays (and everyone loves it!). Heather and Mary adapted this recipe from one in The Millennium Cookbook by Eric Tucker and John Westerdahl. Our friends, Ann and Larry Wheat, own the Millennium Restaurant in San Francisco and we have enjoyed this dessert there several times. There are many delicious, gourmet, vegan recipes in The Millenium Cookbook suitable for serving on a special occasion. To find out more about the restaurant or to order the cookbook go to <http://www.millenniumrestaurant.com>.

**Success Tip:**

Make this one day early and refrigerate. The toppings may be made two days ahead, if desired. This needs to be served chilled.

**SHOPPING TIPS:**

Shop for the non-perishable items about a week ahead of time. These are the canned and packaged products, such as vegetable broth, canned pumpkin, flour, silken tofu and any dried herbs and spices that you may need. Potatoes, sweet potatoes and garlic can be purchased ahead of time as long as you have a cool place to store them. Choose the menu items that you want to include for your Thanksgiving feast, then look through the recipes. Check over this shopping list as you go through the recipes, and make sure you also have the pantry items available. Shop for your perishable items no more than 2 days before the holiday, if possible.

**SHOPPING LIST**

The following shopping lists are for the complete menu above. You will have to adjust the items needed depending on what you plan to prepare.

**CANNED AND PACKAGED PRODUCTS**

These may be purchased ahead of time and stored in your pantry or refrigerator.

- 6-7 boxes (32 ounces) vegetable broth
- 2 cans (15-16 ounces) pumpkin
- 1 jar (12 ounces) applesauce
- 3 containers (32 ounces) non-dairy milk
- 1 jar (8 ounces) pure maple syrup
- 5 packages (12.3 ounces) Firm Silken Tofu
- 2 cups non-dairy chocolate chips

1 bag (16 ounces) Sukanat  
16 ounces dried, pitted prunes  
1 bag (16 ounces) frozen raspberries  
1 cup unsalted roasted cashews  
1 cup sliced almonds  
1 container (32 ounces) orange juice  
1 jar (4 ounces) capers

### **FRESH INGREDIENTS**

The first nine ingredients may be purchased ahead of time. Buy the fresh vegetables and bread products the day before, if possible.

4 onions  
1 bunch celery  
1 head garlic  
2 heads elephant garlic  
5 pounds potatoes  
3 pounds yams or sweet potatoes  
1 bag fresh cranberries  
1 small pumpkin (to serve the soup in-optional)  
1 medium-large pumpkin  
Bagged organic baby greens  
2 pounds green beans  
2 pounds Brussels sprouts  
1 large loaf whole wheat bread  
6-8 whole wheat or sourdough rolls

### **PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED**

These are used in several of the recipes and are things that you probably already have in your pantry. Check over this list and purchase anything that you don't have.

Tabasco sauce  
Curry powder  
Soy sauce (at least 1 cup)  
Tahini  
Vanilla  
Whole wheat flour  
Unbleached white flour  
Brown rice flour  
Cornstarch

Salt  
Black pepper  
Golden brown sugar  
Sugar  
Dijon mustard  
Pumpkin pie spice  
Cinnamon  
Ground ginger  
Ground cloves  
Parsley flakes  
Sage  
Marjoram  
Thyme  
Bay leaves  
Poultry seasoning  
Rosemary  
Parmesan cheese substitute  
Lemon juice

## **TIME SCHEDULE**

### **1 week ahead:**

Shop for non-perishable items and some of the perishable foods listed above.  
Order rolls from bakery.

### **3 days ahead:**

Make salad dressings.  
Make cranberry sauce.

### **2 days ahead:**

Shop for vegetables and whole wheat bread.  
Make Creamy Pumpkin Soup.  
Bake sweet potatoes or yams and prepare Maple Mashed Sweet Potatoes.  
Make Elephant Garlic Spread.  
Make Creamy Caesar Salad Dressing.  
Make the raspberry sauce and the almond topping for the chocolate pie.

### **1 day ahead:**

Pick up the pre-ordered rolls.  
Make the pumpkin pie and vanilla sauce.  
Make the chocolate pie.  
Trim the green beans and Brussels sprouts.  
Make the Golden Gravy.  
Partially make the brown gravy.  
Cube the bread and allow to sit out overnight

**Thanksgiving** (Morning):

Peel potatoes and place in cold water to cover.  
Clean out pumpkins.  
Make stuffing mixture and stuff pumpkin.

**Thanksgiving** (Afternoon):

Take sweet potatoes and soup out of refrigerator.  
Place pumpkin in oven and bake as directed.  
Cook potatoes and mash.  
Wash vegetables and cook.  
Finish brown gravy and slowly reheat Golden Gravy.  
Reheat mashed sweet potatoes.  
Finish soup and heat.  
Place baby greens in bowl. Serve with dressings.  
Heat rolls and garlic spread.  
Don't forget the cranberry sauce.