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# HOLIDAY Chees!

November 2025

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE  
**PAYNESVILLE PRESS &  
EDEN VALLEY-WATKINS VOICE**

HOSTING TIPS • DECOR • HOLIDAY HISTORY • RECIPES AND MORE!

## PLANNING POINTERS FOR HOLIDAY HOSTS

**The following are some planning pointers to ensure your home is ready and guests feel welcome this holiday season.**

Hosting is a significant part of the holiday season. From late November until New Year's Day, millions of people across North America welcome friends and family into their homes. Whether you're hosting a small gathering with locally based loved ones or welcoming distant relatives into your home for several days, the following are some planning pointers to ensure your home is ready and guests feel welcome this holiday season.

**Hire a local cleaning service.** The holiday season can be hectic. Holiday functions at school, office parties, community events, and more fill up social schedules between late November and early January. Busy social schedules leave little time for house cleaning,

which is a must before welcoming guests into a home. A local cleaning service can clean the whole house for hosts welcoming overnight guests or focus on a few popular entertaining areas if party guests will be going home at the end of the night.

**Get an early head count.** Ask party invitees and prospective overnight guests to RSVP early enough to ensure you can accommodate everyone's needs. Additional seating may be required for holiday parties, while hosts may need to arrange for extra bedding for overnight guests. The earlier you know who's coming, and potentially staying, the more time you have to ensure you can accommodate everyone.

**Rent items from a local party supply store.** When hosting large gatherings, a local party supply store can be the place to go for decorations, seating, food trays and utensils, and more. Such establishments also may rent specialty supplies like outdoor heat lamps for cold weather parties or



tents and outdoor tables and chairs in areas where the weather is warm during the holiday season. Hosts can typically rent everything they need to host the party, saving them the expense of buying items that may just sit in storage the rest of the year.

**Arrange for transportation.** Whether guests are flying in from distant lands or local friends, relatives or neighbors stopping in for the night, hosts can arrange for transportation to and from their

homes to ensure everyone arrives safely and makes it home without incident. Pick overnight guests up at the airport so they see a friendly face upon arrival. When hosting gatherings with local family and friends, encourage others to share how they intend to get home and recruit designated drivers if you intend to serve alcohol.

Hosts can take heed of these planning pointers so guests feel welcome and have a good time this holiday season.

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# THESE TIPS CAN HELP MAKE TURKEY TERRIFIC

**These turkey-cooking tips can calm anyone's nerves and result in a mouth-watering main course.**

Sweet potatoes may be stars; cornbread dressing a contender. Dinner rolls are divine and green bean casserole a go-to. But Thanksgiving dinner isn't complete without turkey.

Even in households that don't eat meat, plant-based turkey alternatives find their way onto the dinner table in a nod to Thanksgiving tradition. Given the emphasis placed on the main course each Thanksgiving, cooking a turkey can be intimidating. These turkey-cooking tips can calm anyone's nerves and result in a mouth-watering main course.

- Allow ample time for thawing. Some people may not be able to buy a fresh turkey, and millions of individuals purchase frozen turkeys each year. The Food Network says it can take 24 hours per every five pounds to thaw a turkey. Therefore, if you have a 15-pounder, allow for three days for thawing. Always thaw a turkey in a refrigerator.

- Get the right size bird. The general



rule of thumb is 1 pound (uncooked) to 1 1/2 pounds of turkey per person if you're buying a whole turkey. Rather than purchasing the largest turkey you can find for a large crowd, consider two smaller turkeys or one turkey and one breast to make cooking more even. Smaller birds are more tender as well.

- Adjust the temperature. The food and cooking resource TheKitchn

advises preheating an oven to 450 F, then dropping the temperature to 350 F after putting the turkey into the oven. Cook, on average, 13 minutes per each pound of turkey. The turkey is done when it registers a minimum temperature of 165 F in the thickest part of the thigh.

- To brine or not to brine? Many food fanatics swear by brining turkey to achieve more moist and flavorful meat. However, a wet brine

may not lead to the crispiest skin possible. Good Housekeeping suggests trying a dry brine instead. This involves rubbing salt all over the raw turkey, placing the bird into a large plastic bag, and refrigerating overnight or up to two days before cooking; otherwise, purchase a kosher turkey, which already has been salted from the inside out.

- Avoid stuffing the bird. Rather than stuffing the turkey and cooking everything en masse, prepare the stuffing mixture separate from the turkey. This reduces the risk of contamination from the turkey's raw juices and helps to achieve a crispy coating on the stuffing guests will enjoy.

- Make an aromatic roasting rack. Turkeys typically are placed on a metal rack for cooking so the juices do not cause the turkey to stick to the pan. However, you also can cut onions and lay them with a bed of whole celery stalks and carrots to elevate the roast. This creates extra flavor in the bird and the vegetables also can be served or mixed into the stuffing.

Some turkey-roasting techniques can ensure a moist and flavorful main course this Thanksgiving.

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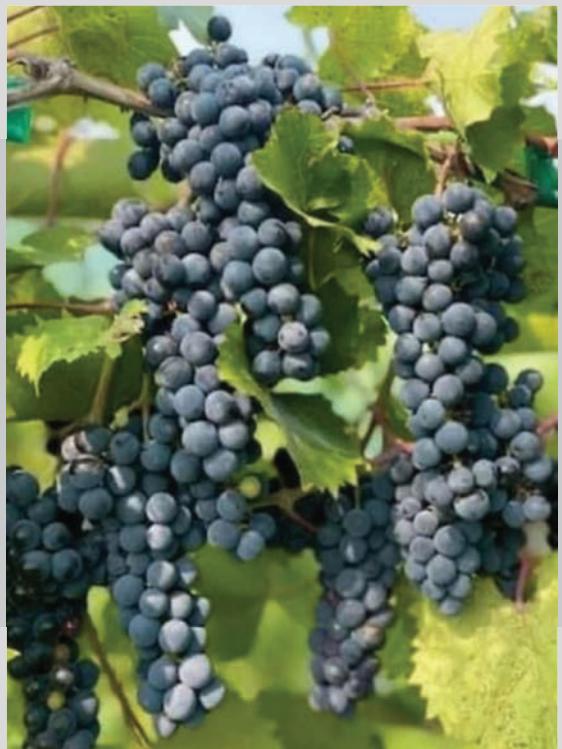
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