Technical Writing Program – Spring Semester

Document Plan for “How to Prepare a Delicious, Scratch-made Thanksgiving Dinner for 10”

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# Introduction

Hosting a large Thanksgiving dinner, especially if you are responsible for cooking the meal – and committed to preparing it from scratch, is challenging and a significant undertaking. A menu must be created, guests’ diets considered, grocery lists made, and plans and timelines developed. Additionally, the groceries need to be gathered and the food needs to be cooked. This document is intended to help those who take on this challenge and to serve as a tool used in planning and as a hands-on guide during execution.

# Audience

The document is intended for serious-minded cooks or people on the path to becoming serious cooks. The most important attributes shared across my audience are a moderate comfort level when cooking from scratch and the drive to make an excellent Thanksgiving dinner.

Knowledge of basic cooking techniques and working in a well-supplied kitchen are also necessary to my readers’ successful execution.

The motivations driving these cooks can be singular or a combination of several factors. Common reasons for cooking from scratch include lower costs, control over ingredients, better taste, and healthier preparations. Additional reasons that motivate cooks are sometimes more personal and include cooking as an activity that helps cooks relieve stress, be creative, engage their families in a joint endeavor, and to please people.

The end goal with my audience is to deliver a delicious Thanksgiving dinner that is impressive and contributes to a special holiday.

# The Essential Steps Necessary to Delivering a Delicious Dinner

Thanksgiving dinner is not a meal that can be solely executed on Thanksgiving Day, at least not at a high level. It is essential the cook is organized and has a plan that will help efficiently deliver a delicious dinner.

The key components to achieving a successful Thanksgiving dinner are planning, gathering, preparing, and executing.

## Planning

There are many dishes to prepare and tasks to be done prior to Thanksgiving Day. It is important to have the food and kitchen equipment that is needed, and to know what you are making and when you are making it.

This section will help the cook establish a schedule that begins over a week before Thanksgiving Day and may include a project schedule chart.

## Gathering

To deliver a delicious dinner, high-quality ingredients need to be gathered. Some ingredients may need to be ordered ahead of time and other ingredients may need to be gathered at different times to ensure they are prepared at their peak.

Additionally, the proper equipment, if not already a part of the cook’s kitchen, needs to be obtained.

Grocery lists and equipment lists will be included in this section.

## Preparing

Thanksgiving Day is often hectic. Preparing as much as possible prior to Thanksgiving Day will be essential to achieving an exceptional meal.

This section will detail the steps involved in preparing and brining the turkey prior to roasting on Thanksgiving Day and will include suggestions regarding what to prepare ahead of time and how store what has been prepared.

## Executing

The “Executing” section will detail all that needs to be done on Thanksgiving Day, including the details of cooking and serving.

A selection of detailed recipes will be included.

## Additional Considerations

Every family has its own way of doing things, and Thanksgiving dinner is no different. It is important to take into account the traditions of your guests. Is this largely the same group that gets together every Thanksgiving, are two families joining for their first Thanksgiving together, or is this an entirely new mix of people? The answers to those questions will help you determine if grace should be said, football planned for, or special dishes prepared.

# The Need for a Guide to Cooking Thanksgiving Dinner

Although there are numerous articles, lists of tips, and recipes related to cooking Thanksgiving dinner, there is no single resource available that helps cooks to strategically plan and execute this pressure-filled challenge at a very high level.

This will serve as a preparation guide and hands-on reference for cooks that will help them at every stage involved in the creation of a scratch-made Thanksgiving dinner.

# Outline

* Introduction: How to use this guide to help prepare a delicious Thanksgiving dinner
  + Description of what this document will help achieve
* Requirements of the cook
  + Techniques to know
  + Equipment needed
* Essential Steps: Planning, Gathering, Preparing, Executing
  + Planning:
    - Deciding on a menu
    - Developing a schedule
      * A project schedule chart
  + Gathering:
    - Listing all ingredients needed
      * Scheduling shopping
        + Salt
        + Fats
    - Detailing all equipment needed
      * Tips for overcoming common problems
  + Preparing:
    - Brining the turkey
    - Preparing dishes ahead of time – partially or fully
    - Storing the food
  + Executing:
    - Thanksgiving Day schedule and timeline
    - Recipes
      * Traditional dishes
      * Untraditional dishes
      * Making dietary adjustments
  + Additional Considerations:
    - Cocktails, beer, wine
    - Table setting
    - Football
    - Traditions
    - Clean up