

Thanksgiving: A Practitioner's Guide

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July 24, 2024

Abstract

When I was in charge of the cooking for Friendsgiving back in 2023, I had compiled a bunch of notes and recipes through my planning, but they weren't very organized. In an effort to make things easier for myself and others in the future, I took some time on lazy afternoons the following summer to consolidate and clean up those notes here. Although the presentation is quite formal, my hope is that this guide isn't taken *too* seriously. Readers should feel free to swap recipes or dishes or schedules as they see fit; most of those presented here are just taken from other people anyways and could probably be improved upon (though I am quite proud of my own cranberry sauce recipe, see Sec. 3.5). I'd say the most useful part of this whole guide is the oven/cooktop schedule in Sec. 2.2. It provides a pretty neat arrangement of items grouped by temperature and time so that you can make a full feast with only a single standard, two-rack oven. But again, even this can be totally changed depending on your menu. The other main takeaway is just how many things can be made ahead of time (see Sec. 2.1). So even if you are just one person, you can make most things over the couple evenings leading up to the big day, though obviously it's even faster with help. Overall, while it definitely requires a fair amount of planning and preparation, don't stress out over a Thanksgiving feast. Ultimately, it's just an excuse to get people together, and the food is just gravy, so to speak.

Version History

Version	Date	Updater	Description
1.0	20Jul24	Evan Meade	Initial commit
2.0	24Jul24	Evan Meade	Copy over from notes

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1 Introduction

Thanksgiving can be a lovely day with a lovely meal, but it can just as easily be a stressful mess. This year, almost a dozen of my friends will be descending on Dallas with a taste for turkey (or tofurkey). Yet all we have in the way of a kitchen is our Airbnb's amenities and my small apartment. As the proverbial "Chef," I am duty bound to engineer a solution to this constrictive plight. I knew if I was going to have any chance of satiating these starving souls I'd need to plan Turkey day like a heist: craft a master plan and recruit a crack team to execute it without a trace. I'll try to avoid the mandatory mid-heist betrayal because, c'mon, it's Thanksgiving gosh darn it.

I first did some [research](#) on what can be made ahead of time and what can't. Make aheads include:

- Desserts
- Stuffing
- Gravy (you'll see)
- Casseroles
- Prep work (cutting vegetables, brining turkey, etc.)

Things to make a la minute include:

- Cook the turkey
- Roast/saute vegetables
- Salad
- Starches (potatoes, breads, etc.)

This was a good sign, since I had already boldly claimed to my friends that a lot of things could be prepped ahead of time without having really thought about it at all. Probably the hardest thing about preparing a Thanksgiving meal—besides the turkey, which we will return to—is coordinating the sheer number of dishes in a typical feast without a professional kitchen. I have one oven and four burners. At most, I can have 5-6 things cooking at once, which is only about half the menu. Luckily, a lot of those dishes are relatively small

sides which can be made ahead of time, and they will often taste even better than if you made them on the day of the feast.

Time to define the menu, keeping in mind what is easiest to make ahead of time. This is designed for serving 10-12 people at Thanksgiving, which means it serves about 20 people any other day of the year. The nice thing about this menu is that it is basically scale invariant; because half the fun of Thanksgiving is leaving with a big box of leftovers, as long as you're cooking a shit ton, you're doing it right. Force people to take their goodie bag on the way out if you have to. Remember, Thanksgiving is excessive, but that doesn't have to mean it's wasteful.

Okay, enough dilly dallying, let's talk turkey.

2 The Menu

Here's what the final setting will look like:

- Turkey[XXX]
- Gravy[XXX]
- Mashed potatoes (ve)¹
- Stuffing[XXX]
- (Optional) Stuffing (ve)[XXX]
- Green bean casserole (ve)
- Roasted sweet potatoes (v)²
- Roasted brussels sprouts (v)
- Salad (v)[XXX]
- Cranberry sauce (v)
- Cornbread (ve)
- Yeast rolls (ve)
- Pumpkin pie (ve)
- Pecan pie (ve)
- Apple pie (ve) (yes, there will be three pies, this is the American way)
- (Optional) Pretzel salad (ve)³

While there is not one big vegetarian/vegan equivalent to the turkey, note that most of the sides are actually vegetarian or vegan. And everyone knows that Thanksgiving is 90% about the sides anyways, so all your guests should have more than enough to eat regardless of their dietary restrictions.

¹(ve) vegetarian

²(v) vegan

³This one's a McKenna family recipe. It sounds like a very odd combination, but it actually goes together pretty well. I think. Maybe I just have Stockholm syndrome.

2.1 Preparation Schedule

Now for the schedule. We'll be defining T as the time everyone sits down to start eating your Thanksgiving feast. So T-1m is one month before feast day, T+30min is thirty minutes after you sit down, etc.

2.1.1 T-1m to T-1w: Pies

- Pumpkin pie
- Pecan pie
- Apple pie

Pies can be made far ahead of time and actually freeze quite well, if done right. Bon Appetit gives the following [guidance](#) for pumpkin pie and pecan pie:

1. Bake it in a disposable aluminum pan (can be set in a regular pie pan)⁴
2. Let it cool completely on the counter on a wire rack (up to three hours)
3. Wrap the entire pie, including the tin, with three layers of plastic wrap minimizing any trapped air
4. Wrap that tightly with aluminum foil or a resealable freezer bag
5. Freeze completely and use within three months
6. Thaw in fridge unwrapped and uncovered for 24 hours
7. Let sit at room temperature for 1-2 hours
8. Warm in 225F oven for 30 minutes
9. Serve with whipped cream

Taste of Home recommends [different steps](#) for fruit pies, but for simplicity's sake I think we can do them the same as pumpkin and pecan.

Alternatively, the pies can be made on T-3d or T-2d and just never be frozen.⁵

⁴I actually ended up just cooking it in a non-disposable pie pan, but it was fairly thin metal so same idea. Basically just want it to freeze quickly and evenly from all sides, so I guess just don't use a thick glass/ceramic pie pan? Or do. Who knows how much this actually matters.

⁵This is what I ended up doing, and it worked out just fine.

Keep them wrapped loosely with aluminum foil in the refrigerator. Warm in 225F oven for 30 mins.

2.1.2 T-2d: Prep Work

- Start brining turkey
- Prep vegetables
- Gravy

At this point, folks are probably coming into town soon if they haven't already. "Oh no," you think to yourself. "Thanksgiving is only two days away and all I've done is make pie." But do not fret, my child. They say our memories have a recency bias where we recall the end of something with the greatest level of detail, so those desserts will already be the saving grace of your feast.

But you are right that it's time to get serious about all the other foods. This day will be all about prepping the turkey/gravy along with basic cleaning and chopping for all your other dishes. You can easily knock this out in an evening after work.

While it is fairly essential that you start the turkey and gravy today, the vegetable prep could honestly be done the next day instead. It's something that *can* be done two days before the feast if you want to spread out the prep work a bit more evenly across the schedule, but it's not essential. Just stick the chopped veggies in airtight containers in the fridge. I probably wouldn't prep vegetables much earlier than this, or they may start to dry out a bit.

Note that some vegetables—namely the potatoes and the sweet potatoes—should not be peeled or chopped ahead of time. If they are, then they have a tendency to oxidize, which makes them taste—and more importantly, look—weird. Same goes for avocados. So just chop onions, halve your brussels sprouts, slice your tomatoes, that kind of thing. Or save it for feast day if you want to have some tasks available for others to help with.

2.1.3 T-1d: Sides and Sauces

- Start thawing pies
- Whipped cream

- Salad dressing
- Green bean casserole
- Cranberry sauce
- Stuffing
- (Optional) Pretzel salad

People are here. There are airports to pick up from, hotels to check into, friends to catch up with. But you're cooking, so you can make someone else do the first two while you and a sous chef chat and cook in the kitchen. You'll probably want to take this day off if you can. It's not a ton of work to do, but with people coming into town you'll probably end up getting more distracted than you were yesterday, even if you have helping hands.

2.1.4 T-0d: Turkey and Carbs

- Cook turkey
- Mashed potatoes
- Cornbread
- Yeast rolls
- Roast vegetables
- Dress salad
- Warm sides
- Warm gravy
- Warm pies

Reckoning is upon us. The final stragglers have shown up, sweaters on and belt buckles loosened in anticipation of your feast. Everyone is offering to help (hopefully), but you know it would be a disaster if everyone actually tried to help.

Here's the magic tip: never assign just one person to do something (unless they are a moderately skilled chef). Instead, assign *pairs* of people to tasks. Not because anything you're asking is incredibly hard, but because it's more

fun to work with a friend and you're less likely to make a silly mistake if you have two pairs of eyes on it. Both of these factors mean they are less likely to be talking to *you* while you are stressing out about the turkey.

Here are your teams:

- You - turkey, gravy, and mashed potatoes (these are the most difficult, yet essential tasks for the day)
- Cornbread and yeast rolls
- Roasting vegetables and warming side dishes
- Salad, serving dishes for cold sides, and table setting
- (Later) warming pies

2.2 Oven Schedule

Now we need to consider the highly limiting resource of stove/oven space. I am going to assume that like most kitchens, you have four burners and one oven with at least two racks. On Thanksgiving day, here's your burner schedule:

- T-1h - T (1 large front burner): mashed potatoes
- T-30min - T (1 front burner): gravy

And here's your oven schedule, in Tab. 1. Note that each cell means that item is in there from the time at the start of its row to the time at the start of the next row. So the sweet potatoes go in 90 minutes before dinner starts and come out 30 minutes before dinner starts, for instance. Similarly, the oven should be set to a new temperature the first time it appears, as highlighted in yellow. So, for example, two hours before dinner, it should be turned up to 450F.

While these times are fairly accurate, they should be paired with good judgment and observation. If the brussels sprouts are looking toasty after 40 minutes, pull them out early. If the turkey is a bit thicker than expected, leave it in for 2 hours. Thanksgiving dinner is rarely right on time, and your guests would much rather have a properly cooked meal a bit later than a rushed meal right on time.

Time	Upper Rack		Temp	Lower Rack	
T-3h			350F		
T-2.5h	Yeast Rolls		350F	Cornbread	
T-2h	Turkey		450F		
T-1.5h	Turkey		450F	Sweet Potatoes	Brussels Sprouts
T-1h	Turkey		450F	Sweet Potatoes	Brussels Sprouts
T-30m	Stuffing	Green Bean Casserole	350F		
T-10m	Stuffing	Green Bean Casserole	350F	Cornbread	Yeast Rolls
T			225F		
T+30m	Apple Pie		225F	Pumpkin Pie	Pecan Pie
T+1h			Off		

Table 1: Oven schedule for Thanksgiving Day

The main idea behind the oven schedule is simply to group items by approximately equal temperatures and put them in an order that leads to as many things being warm and ready at the same time as possible. It also assumes that the upper rack is exposed to a bit more directional heat from above, while the lower rack is for more ambient cooking as it is protected from the top heating element by the food in the upper rack.

Finally, temperature changes are not immediate, and can pose special risk when you are trying to drop the temperature. Both the stuffing and the green bean casserole are fairly wet and therefore unlikely to burn from a residual 450F oven. But this burning risk *is* a part of why there is a 30 minute wait between turning the oven down to 225F and putting the pies in. We don't want to rebake them, just warm them up. Also, they don't need more than 30 minutes anyways and dinner will be at least an hour, so the break lets them be warm the soonest someone could conceivably taste them.

But that all about does it as far as game day strategy goes. Now time to meet our recipes.

3 Recipes

I collected these recipes from a variety of sources: most online, some from family, a few from books, and a couple all my own. While those from other sources are mostly represented here as-is, I have added some modifications to most of them based on my own cooking experiences and some consideration of not making things more complicated than they need to be.

In particular, I try to omit any trace ingredients which are not used anywhere else. I also try and adjust cooking temperatures and times to match the oven schedule (see Tab. 1), though I never dramatically alter them solely for that purpose.

[XXX]list of best and worst recipes

3.1 Mashed Potatoes

Based on Andrew Rea's (a.k.a. *Binging with Babish*) [YouTube video](#)

Yields approximately 1 quart

Ingredients

- 3 lbs Yukon Gold potatoes
- 3/4 c milk
- 3/4 c heavy cream
- 12 tbsp unsalted butter
- Salt and white pepper to taste
- (Optional) 1 bunch chives

Directions

1. Add potatoes to cold water in pot. Salt generously. Bring to boil, then cover and reduce to simmer. Cook until chunks can be pierced with paring knife with no resistance, about 10-20 minutes.
2. Drain potatoes, put through ricer back into pot.
3. Add milk, heavy cream, and butter. Fold in gently, trying not to overwork it.
4. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
5. Serve immediately.

Notes

This should be made a la minute, not prepped ahead. Since Yukon Golds are lower in starch content than Russets, it is harder to end up overworking them and making them gummy.

3.2 Green Bean Casserole

Yields approximately 8 servings

Ingredients

- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 2 cans whole green beans, drained
- 1/2 c milk
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 1/3 c fried onions (e.g. French's French Fried Onions)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. Stir together soup, green beans, milk, Worcestershire, and 2/3 c fried onions. Pour into casserole dish.
3. Bake for 25 minutes.
4. Top with remaining 2/3 c fried onions. Bake for 3 minutes more.
5. Let cool slightly, and serve warm.

Notes

There are fancier ways to make this, but somehow this lazier version feels closer to the heart. I think this is pretty similar to how most people make it.

3.3 Roasted Sweet Potatoes

From Rick Martinez at [Bon Appetit](#)

Yields approximately 10 servings

Ingredients

- 3 lbs sweet potatoes
- 1/4 c olive oil
- 2 tsp kosher salt (or 1 tsp table salt)
- 8 cranks freshly ground black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450F.
2. Peel potatoes, and cut into 1 1/2" pieces. Toss everything together on rimmed baking sheet.
3. Roast, tossing occassionally, until tender and browned, approximately 35-45 minutes.
4. Serve warm.

Notes

This is a simple one.

3.4 Roasted Brussels Sprouts

Adapted from Ina Garten (a.k.a. Barefoot Contessa) on [Food Network](#)

Yields approximately 8 servings

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lbs brussels sprouts
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 3/4 tsp kosher salt (3/8 tsp table salt)
- 8 cracks freshly ground black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450F.
2. Halve the brussels sprouts, discarding any loose leaves. Toss everything together and spread out on a rimmed baking sheet.
3. Roast, tossing occasionally, until tender and browned, approximately 35-45 minutes.
4. Serve warm.

Notes

This is a simple one. Raised the recommended temperature from 400F to 450F, partly based on personal experience, and partly to match the temperature of the roasted sweet potatoes. Also, bumped up the oil from 3 tbsp to 4 tbsp because fat is flavor.

3.5 Cranberry Sauce

Yields approximately 2 cups

Ingredients

- 1 bag fresh cranberries (12 oz)
- 3/4 c white sugar
- 1 c water
- 1 orange (zest of)
- 1/4 c lime juice

Directions

1. Add cranberries, sugar, and water to a saucepan.
2. Simmer over medium heat stirring occasionally and lightly mashing until cranberries begin to pop, about 10-15 minutes.
3. Zest orange into saucepan and add the lime juice. Stir to incorporate.
4. Reduce heat to low and continue simmering for 10-15 minutes until it begins to gel on a chilled plate.
5. Remove from heat, let cool completely, preferably overnight in fridge.
6. Serve slightly cool.

Notes

I prefer a more sour, punchy cranberry sauce than most recipes aim for. So if you don't like that, you can leave out the lime juice and/or increase the sugar to 1 cup.

3.6 Cornbread

From bluegirl on [Allrecipes](#)

Yields one 9" round

Ingredients

- 1 c all-purpose flour
- 1 c yellow cornmeal
- 2/3 c granulated white sugar
- 3 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1 c milk
- 1/3 c vegetable oil
- 1 large egg

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400F.
2. Lightly grease 9" round cake pan or cast iron skillet.
3. Whisk together flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Add milk, oil, and egg. Whisk until well combined. Pour into prepared pan.
4. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of the pan comes out clean, about 20-25 minutes.
5. Let cool slightly. Serve warm.

Notes

If you have a cast iron pan, this is a great use for it. The browning will be nice, and the presentation is way better.

3.7 Yeast Rolls

Adapted from DCASH30526 on [Allrecipes](#)

Yields 8 rolls

Ingredients

- 1 c hot water
- 3 tbsp granulated white sugar
- 2 tbsp shortening
- 1 (1/4 oz) package active dry yeast
- 2 1/4 c all-purpose flour
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tsp salt

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425F.
2. Mix hot water, sugar, and shortening in a large bowl. Let cool until lukewarm.
3. Stir in yeast until dissolved, then mix in flour, egg, and salt. Cover and let dough rise until doubled in size, about 30 minutes.
4. Grease a 9" round pan.
5. Divide dough into 8 equal parts. Nestle in pan. Let rise again until doubled in size, about 30 minutes.
6. Bake until golden brown on top and a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, about 10-15 minutes.

Notes

I bumped down the temperature to 400F so I could do it at the same time as the cornbread.

3.8 All-Purpose Pie Crust

From Claire Saffitz' *Dessert Person*

Yields crust for one 9" pie

Ingredients

- 200 g all-purpose flour
- 13 g white granulated sugar
- 3/4 tsp kosher salt
- 10 tbsp unsalted butter

Directions

Preparation

1. Add some ice to a cup of water, place in fridge.
2. Cut 5 tbsp of butter into 1/8" squares, place in fridge.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, and salt.
4. With remaining 5 tbsp of butter, cut into 1/2" cubes. Add to bowl, tossing to coat, then pressing between your fingers until there are no chunks of butter larger than a pea.
5. Add in the 5 tbsp of butter from the fridge, pressing between your fingers again until there are no chunks of butter larger than a pea and the mixture resembles a lightly damp sand.
6. Slowly stream in 5 tbsp of the chilled water while whisking with a fork, avoiding pouring in any ice.
7. Knead dough in bowl with your hands a few times until it comes together in a dough.
8. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap, forcing out any air and pressing down into a 3/4" thick rectangle. Chill in fridge at least 2 hours.
9. Take dough out of fridge and let rest on counter for 5 mins. Unwrap, and thwack it repeatedly with a rolling pin to make it more pliable.

Thwack and roll it out until it is a rectangle approximately three times as long as it is wide. Fold like a trifold.

10. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap again, and return to fridge. Let rest at least 30 mins, or up to 3 days before use.

Forming

11. Take the dough out of the fridge and let rest on counter for 5 mins.
12. Unwrap dough and thwack repeatedly with a rolling pin to make it more pliable. Roll it out into a circle about 13" in diameter.
13. Drape dough over pie pan. Lift and place dough into the bottom corners; do not press it down into there, or you will risk breaking the dough.
14. Trim any excess dough which is hanging far off the edge of the pan. Tuck the edge of the dough under itself so that it is between the lip of the pan and the crust. Form this circular wall all the way around the rim.
15. Pinch one finger between two others to make a wavy edge of the rim. Follow back pressing your thumb into each part of the wavy rim which sticks out, making sure that the dough is adhering to that rim.

Notes

You can scale this recipe up to double or triple, just divide the dough by mass. This is a nice, all-purpose, simple pie crust which you can use whether you are par-baking or not.

3.9 All-Purpose Crumble Topping

From Claire Saffitz' *Dessert Person*, and her [YouTube video](#)

Yields approximately 2 cups, enough for one 9" pie

[XXX]

3.10 Pumpkin Pie

From Claire Saffitz' *Dessert Person*, and her [YouTube video](#)

Yields one 9" pie

Ingredients

Crust

- 1 All-Purpose Pie Crust (see Sec. 3.8)

Filling

- 5 tbsp unsalted butter (2.5 oz / 71g)
- 1/3 c honey (4 oz / 113g)
- 3/4 c heavy cream (6 oz / 170g), at room temperature
- 4 large eggs (7 oz / 200g), at room temperature
- 1/4 c packed dark brown sugar (1.8 oz / 50g)
- 1 (15oz / 425g) can unsweetened pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling), preferably Libby's
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp Diamond Crystal kosher salt (0.11 oz / 3g)
- 1/2 tsp ground allspice
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg (preferably freshly grated), plus more for serving
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- (Optional) whipped cream or vanilla ice cream (to garnish)

Directions**Crust**

1. Preheat oven to 425F.
2. Form the crust, as described in the crust recipe. Let chill in fridge uncovered for 30 minutes.
3. Line dough with aluminum foil, such that it hangs over the rim. Fill with uncooked rice, or other pie weights. Place on rimmed baking sheet.
4. Put in oven and bake until crust is dry around the edges and just beginning to brown, about 20-30 minutes.
5. Remove foil and weights. Poke a few small holes in bottom of crust with a knife or fork to allow any trapped steam to escape.
6. Reduce oven to 325F.
7. Return crust to oven and bake until crust is set and beginning to brown in the center, about 20-25 minutes.
8. Remove to wire rack and let cool.

Filling

9. Preheat oven to 325F.
10. Put butter in small saucepan over medium low heat. Brown it, stirring constantly until sputtering subsides and butter is foaming, about 5-7 minutes. Remove from heat.
11. Add honey to the saucepan with the butter immediately to avoid burning. Stir to combine.
12. Return saucepan to medium heat for about 2 minutes, until honey is fragrant and nutty. Remove from heat and slowly stir in the heavy cream.
13. In a large bowl, whisk eggs. Add brown sugar and whisk vigorously for about 1 minute. Whisk in pumpkin, cinnamon, ginger, vanilla, salt, allspice, nutmeg, and cloves until smooth.

14. Slowly stream in the warm honey mixture, whisking constantly, until filling is homogenous.

Assembly

15. Preheat oven to 325F.
16. Pour filling into cooled crust.
17. Bake until edges are set and slightly puffed, but center is recessed and wobbles like Jell-O, about 45-60 minutes.
18. Turn off oven and prop door open, cracked. Let pie cool completely in oven. (If you are under time constraint, you can just remove the pie and cool on a wire rack for at least 3 hours, but the surface may crack)
19. Serve warm or at room temperature. Optionally, garnish with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Notes

This filling attempts to add a bit more depth to the pumpkin flavor by layering it with browned butter and honey. Use a local honey if possible for bolder flavor and regional botanicals.

3.11 Pecan Pie

Filling from Rick Martinez at [Bon Appetit](#)

Yields one 9" pie

Ingredients

Crust

- 1 All-Purpose Pie Crust (see Sec. [3.8](#))

Filling

- 2 c pecan halves
- 4 large eggs, room temperature, beaten to blend
- 1 c light corn syrup
- 2/3 c (packed; 134 g) light brown sugar
- 1 tbsp robust-flavored (dark) molasses (not blackstrap)
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted, slightly cooled
- (Optional) whipped cream or vanilla ice cream (to garnish)

Directions

Crust

1. Preheat oven to 425F.
2. Form the crust, as described in the crust recipe. Let chill in fridge uncovered for 30 minutes.
3. Line dough with aluminum foil, such that it hangs over the rim. Fill with uncooked rice, or other pie weights. Place on rimmed baking sheet.

4. Put in oven and bake until crust is dry around the edges and just beginning to brown, about 20-30 minutes.
5. Remove foil and weights. Poke a few small holes in bottom of crust with a knife or fork to allow any trapped steam to escape.
6. Reduce oven to 325F.
7. Return crust to oven and bake until crust is set and beginning to brown in the center, about 20-25 minutes.
8. Remove to wire rack and let cool.

Filling

9. Preheat oven to 350F.
10. Toast pecans on rimmed baking sheet until browned and fragrant, about 8-10 minutes. Let cool.
11. Whisk together eggs, corn syrup, light brown sugar, molasses, vanilla, and salt in a large bowl until smooth. Slowly mix in the melted butter until combined. Fold in the Pecans.

Assembly

12. Preheat oven to 325F.
13. Pour filling into cooled crust.
14. Bake until edges are set and slightly puffed, but center is recessed and wobbles like Jell-O, about 45-60 minutes.
15. Transfer to wire rack and let cool at least 3 hours before serving.
16. Serve warm or at room temperature. Optionally, garnish with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Notes

This filling opts for simplicity, really trying to highlight that toasty Pea-Can flavor (yes, I am obligated to say it that way).

3.12 Apple Pie

From Claire Saffitz' *Dessert Person*, and her [YouTube video](#)

Yields one 9" pie

[XXX]

3.13 Pretzel Salad

Yields approximately 10 servings

Ingredients

- 3 c crushed pretzel sticks
- 1 + 1/4 c white granulated sugar
- 2 sticks melted margarine
- 1 (8 oz) package softened cream cheese
- 1 1/2 c Cool Whip
- 2 (3 oz) packages strawberry Jell-O
- 2 c hot pineapple juice
- 2 (10 oz) packages frozen sliced strawberries

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. Mix pretzels, 1/4 c sugar, and margarine together. Put in a flat layer in 9x13 pan. Bake 10 minutes. Let cool.
3. Mix together cream cheese and sugar. Fold in Cool Whip. Spread onto a layer on top of pretzel layer.
4. Dissolve Jell-O into hot juice, add frozen strawberries. Let partially jell. Spread over top of cream cheese mixture.
5. Chill overnight. Serve cold.

Notes

This isn't the most traditional Thanksgiving dish, but it's a staple for my family. It's the epitome of a seventies recipe: an unconventional use of Jell-O, puzzling layers, and a shockingly liberal usage of the term "salad." But it hits. It hits.