smitten kitchen Things I Learned Hosting My First Friendsgiving • As I realized last week, what makes big meals (we had 16 people) scary isn’t the cooking as much as the sheer volume of it all and the logistics required to manage them. I mean, who here has a kitchen that was built to feed 16? Trust me, it’s not you, it’s your kitchen making things hard. • Thus the more time you spend plotting things out, the less stressful it will be. Because I’m Team Casserole, i.e. I prefer dishes that are deep and bubbly, can be made well in advance and reheat well, they’re all fairly forgiving of too long or short warming times. Too long, they get a little extra crunchy and toasted on top (yum), too little, they still pack a lot of warmth inside, even if they’re not bubbling hot. I warmed all of the dishes before the turkey went in and then slid in one or two while it roasted. When the turkey came out and we needed 30 minutes to rest and carve it, all the sides went back in to warm.  
• Everything that can be done in advance, should be, and as early as possible. You’re doing it for you. When we have a lot of people over, this often leads to me quite over-exhausting myself the night before getting everything prepped that can be, but then I wake up rested and we’re 80% there. It’s not actually a stressful day, which means we’re far more likely to enjoy the party. If I can’t finish prep the night before, I’ll do it in the morning. It’s essential to me that there’s a little window of vegging/non-cooking time between prepping stuff and cooking the stuff that must be done at the last-minute. It’s also a great time to change into something fresh.  
• All the pies were made earlier in the week and either went into the fridge (pecan) or freezer (pumpkin) until needed.  
• Finally, I think we should all buy each other trivets for Christmukkah. I have… 4? What kind of Thanksgiving has only 4 hot dishes coming out of the kitchen? None we want to be at, thank you very much.