

Holiday Kitchen Essentials

When did the holiday season turn into a marathon of physical and emotional endurance? From decorating the perfect house, to beautifully wrapped, Instagram®-ready gifts for everyone, to massive amounts of cooking in less time—so much anxiety builds up in a few exhausting months.

First of all, it's okay to lower expectations and stop pinning impossible holiday craft projects online. Focus on the things that really matter to you during this special time of year. Time with loved ones around a meal is at the heart of these celebrations. The meal itself doesn't really matter. It doesn't have to be fancy, but it's the catalyst for bringing your family and friends together.

So put your energy where it matters most. Spend a little extra time before the holidays to assess your kitchen. A well-stocked kitchen and quality tools will make holiday meal prep much easier. Here's a checklist of essential items you'll need to get holiday meals on the table without the fuss.

Roasting Pan & Meat Lifters



Got a large family planning to descend on your home? You'll want a turkey that will feed a crowd. It's a common rule to plan for 1 lb. of turkey per person. This roasting pan with rack will hold a whole 20-lb. bird. You'll also want to have a pair of hefty meat lifters to quickly and safely get your turkey table-ready.

Deep Dish Pie Plate



Any pie (even one with a store-bought crust) will look extra beautiful in this scalloped-edged pie plate.

Quick Tip: To keep your pumpkin pie filling from shrinking away from the crust after it's baked, let it cool to room temperature in a warmish spot before you put it in the fridge. P.S. whipped cream covers all pie imperfections.

All-Purpose Pot



Every kitchen needs one solid, deep pot that'll accommodate big portions for large crowds or batch-cook meals to get you through the busy weeks leading up to the holidays. This non-stick workhorse holds 7½ qts. of any one-pot meal you can dream up, from chilis to stews to pastas.

Baster & Cleaning Brush



Basting with rendered fat adds a lot of flavor to your holiday bird and builds up a rich golden color. Basting isn't a cooking technique you can use only for turkey. It also works wonders on pork dishes and pot roast.

Wine Tools



Have the bar fully stocked and ready when company drops by. An easy-to-use wine bottle opener is essential to getting everyone in the spirit quickly without risking pieces of cork floating in your zin.

It doesn't hurt to have an aerator to bring out flavors in your red wines. It makes your wine taste better, and guests can start enjoying their wine immediately. Have wine tags or glass markers available so glasses don't get mixed up.

Quick Tips: For a four-hour dinner with 8 adults, plan for 8 bottles of wine. You can find really excellent wine these days for under \$15.

Layer Cake Pan Set and Decorating Bag Set



Dust off your baking pans and inspect them. Are they warped, rusted, or chipped? It might be time to invest in something new. Tall layered cakes are super trendy. The Layered Cake Pan Set and this Decorating Bag Set from Pampered Chef will let you create bakery-worthy looking cakes for a fraction of the price.

Kids' Cookie Baking Set



The holiday season is a great time to let family get more involved with preparing the big meal. Who says you have to do it all by yourself?

You can turn a tedious day in the kitchen into a family afternoon activity with the kids. Yes, you have to let go of a little control, and maybe spend a little more time on clean-up, but you'll see so much confidence and pride in your children when they can tell all the relatives what they helped to make in the holiday feast.

Serving Platters



Update the look of your holiday table with trendy neutrals using the Stoneware Entertaining Set. These will complement any dishware you already have. You can bake and warm up appetizers, sides, or main dishes right on these platters. Bring them right from the oven to the table and serve!