Christmas Dinner 2026 Planner: Timeline and Shopping List

Thaw, shop, prep and cook dates counted back from Friday, Dec. 25

Friday
December 25, 2026

Christmas Day

WHAT IS OPEN, CLOSED OR CHANGED

STATUS	PLACE OR SERVICE	DETAIL
☒ **Closed**	**Federal offices**	Christmas Day is a federal holiday

PLAN AHEAD

WHEN	TO DO	DONE
Fri., Dec. 11 14 days before	Set the guest count and menu; buy a frozen turkey	☐
Fri., Dec. 18 7 days before	Buy the rest of the groceries; find a food thermometer	☐
Sat., Dec. 19 6 days before	Fridge-thaw a 24 lb turkey (6 days)	☐
Sun., Dec. 20 5 days before	Fridge-thaw a 20 lb turkey (5 days)	☐
Mon., Dec. 21 4 days before	Fridge-thaw a 16 lb turkey (4 days)	☐
Tue., Dec. 22 3 days before	Fridge-thaw a 12 lb turkey (3 days)	☐
Wed., Dec. 23 2 days before	Fridge-thaw an 8 lb turkey (2 days)	☐
Thu., Dec. 24 1 day before	Prep sides and desserts; keep the fridge at 40°F or below	☐
Fri., Dec. 25 On the day	Roast at 325°F; turkey and stuffing reach 165°F	☐
Fri., Dec. 25 On the day	Ham: reheat packaged cooked ham to 140°F; beef, pork, lamb 145°F	☐
Fri., Dec. 25 On the day	Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours	☐

Key

☒ Closed - not open on the day

My plans

Shopping: turkey, ham or roast _____

Shopping: sides and stuffing _____

Shopping: desserts and drinks _____

Shopping: pantry and fridge _____

Guests and dietary needs _____

Dinner time _____

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Federal Holidays; University of Wyoming Extension, Let's talk turkey (MP-135); University of Illinois Extension; University of Maine Cooperative Extension. Thaw dates are computed from the Wyoming rule; shop and prep days are our suggestions.