

10 Ways to Simplify Your Thanksgiving



Hello! I'm Jessie George, a certified Health Coach specializing in helping busy professionals balance their blood sugar levels for a healthier and happier life. Congratulations on taking the first step towards better health!

Eating well can lead to a healthier, happier lifestyle, and I'm here to make your journey to wellness simple and F-U-N! Together, we can turn healthy living into a joyful and sustainable habit.

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Introduction

Thanksgiving should feel joyful, not stressful. It's about gratitude, connection, and comfort, not excess. This guide offers simple ways to host with ease, along with healthier recipes that keep the flavor without the sugar overload.

1. Keep the Meal Simple

Stick to a small menu of fresh, classic dishes. Choose lighter proteins and simple vegetable sides.

Sample Recipes:

- Slow Cooker Turkey Breast: Rub with herbs, onions, and apples, drizzle lightly with olive oil, cook, then slice.
- Roasted Vegetables: Carrots, Brussels sprouts, and parsnips tossed with garlic and rosemary, roasted at 400°F.
- Bacon-Wrapped Turkey: A flavorful twist that keeps the meat juicy.

2. Go Non-Traditional

Thanksgiving doesn't have to mean heavy casseroles. Try lighter global dishes.

Ideas:

- Shepherd's Pie made with turkey and root vegetables
- Balsamic roasted Brussels sprouts
- Cauliflower gratin as a lighter swap for cheesy casseroles
- Salmon, roast chicken, or vegetarian lentil loaf with maple-apricot glaze

3. Host a Potluck

Sharing the menu lightens your load and makes the meal more diverse.

- Plan a balanced menu ahead of time (veggies, salads, lean proteins).

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- Let guests pick what to bring and share recipes to avoid overlap.
- Encourage seasonal produce, whole grains, and healthy fats.

4. Set Your Table in Advance

Save time on the big day by prepping the table early.

- Lay out plates, flatware, and glasses the night before.
- Add simple linens, cloth napkins, or plain neutral plates.
- Use natural centerpieces—small jars with flowers, leaves, or herbs.
- Place cards, candles, or a printed menu add a nice finishing touch.

Quick Tip: Small jars with wildflowers or autumn leaves make easy, no-cost decorations.

5. Use Natural Decorations

Bring seasonal beauty indoors with simple, nature-inspired décor.

- Use squash, gourds, and herb sprigs as table accents.
- Arrange pinecones, acorns, or colorful leaves in a basket or tray.
- Fill bowls with apples, pears, or nuts—decor that doubles as snacks.

DIY Touch: A bouquet of dried grasses or wildflowers in a mason jar adds rustic charm.

6. Plan for Other Meals

Guests often stay more than one day. Plan simple, make-ahead meals to keep everyone fed.

Breakfast Ideas:

- Overnight oats with apples, cinnamon, and nuts
- Egg and veggie casserole
- DIY yogurt bar with granola and toppings

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Lunch & Dinner Options:

- Crockpot vegetable soup
- Sandwich station with whole-grain bread, turkey, and hummus
- Big salad bowls with lots of toppings
- Chili or lentil stew with cornbread

7. Set Up Self-Serve Stations

Stations make hosting easier and let guests help themselves.

Ideas:

- **Salad station with greens, toppings, and dressings**
- Water and beverage station with fruit-infused water
- Veggie snack station with dips like hummus or guacamole

Extra touches: fruit platters, spiced nuts, or roasted chickpeas.

8. Use Sustainable Disposable Dinnerware

If you're serving a crowd, eco-friendly disposables simplify cleanup.

- Choose compostable plates, cups, and utensils made from bamboo, palm leaf, or sugarcane.
- Set up labeled bins for compost, recycling, and trash.
- Use cloth napkins or recycled-paper options.
- Offer bulk beverages in pitchers instead of single-use bottles.

9. Delegate and Involve Guests

Don't do it all yourself. Most guests are glad to help.

Ways to Share the Work:

- Ask guests to prep sides, slice bread, or plate appetizers
- Have kids fold napkins or make simple place cards
- Let music lovers handle the playlist
- Assign cleanup crews for dishes and recycling

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Making it a group effort creates a relaxed, fun atmosphere.

10. Healthy Thanksgiving Recipes

Starters & Sides:

- Cider roasted vegetables
- Lemony green beans or green beans with almonds
- Pumpkin & cauliflower gratin
- Spinach cranberry salad
- Mashed cauliflower

Main Courses:

- Roasted turkey or turkey breast
- Shepherd's Pie
- Rosted vegetables, greens beans with almonds, or bacon wrapped asparagus
- Homemade low-carb rolls

Low-Sugar Desserts:

- Apple oatmeal muffins
- Pumpkin pie pudding
- Fruit-and-nut bars
- Warm pears with vanilla sauce
- Seasonal berry crumble with oat-nut topping
- Pumpkin fudge with almond butter and coconut oil

Closing Thoughts

Thanksgiving doesn't need to be complicated. With simple recipes, shared responsibilities, and natural touches, you can enjoy a holiday that feels festive, nourishing, and full of gratitude for good food, good health, and good company.