

3 SIMPLE RULES FOR A JOYOUS THANKSGIVING



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We make things so hard on ourselves when we entertain. We do this even more at Thanksgiving. You would think we were catering the Thanksgiving dinner at the White House the way we fret and fume over cookbooks and magazines to choose the perfect dishes, recipes and decorations.



You are not a caterer. You are simply entertaining family and friends. Your company at the table is the best thing you can serve.

You should always put your guests first. As I always say, “It’s about the People, not the event!” When everyone is having a great time, no one focuses on the dust bunnies.

And remember, if anyone says anything rude, encourage them to host next year’s dinner!



Rule #1 Keep It Simple

When Mr. D. and I were first married, we would host his co-workers from the radio station for dinner. Most were young kids, unmarried and far from home. To enable them to go home for Christmas, they stayed behind for Thanksgiving. Many would eat frozen dinners if they had nowhere to go. So, I began making dinner for the group.

The first year, I went overboard with my menu. I made all sorts of elaborate dishes, things I had made before but still, time intensive. I had a ton of food left over since the crowd at our house on Thanksgiving was mostly of young men.

They wanted lots of turkey, lots of mashed potatoes, dressing, a basic vegetable like corn or green beans, dinner rolls and pie. So after that first year, that's what I

made. Much easier for me. It is a lot simpler to make a lot of one dish than a little bit of 2-3 dishes. I would roast 2 turkeys, one the day before. In fact, I still roast 2 turkeys. You can offer a variety of dishes to make the menu interesting but make certain you have plenty of the basics.

I also learned the value of disposable dinnerware during those early years. I worked in retail. The next day was always early, busy and tiring. I did NOT need to stay up late Thursday night cleaning up the kitchen. We didn't have a dishwasher unless you count Mr. D!

I also did not need to come home Friday to a mess leftover from the day before. Using disposable dinnerware, cutlery and glasses made clean-up much easier. All I had to wash were the serving dishes and the pots and pans. If I kept cleaning up as I went along, it really wasn't so bad. And, yes, Mr. D. did help. He

worked overnights but he would do a lot of the clean-up the next day.

Find simpler ways to do things to make your life easier. You need your energy for all those Black Friday bargains! Or to watch football if you are at our house!



Rule #2 Ask for Help

How often have you thrown a party, had guests ask if they could do anything to help, only to shake your head and tell them, “No, no! That’s all right!” ARE YOU KIDDING? You need to make a list of everything that needs to be done and made, then carry it with you everywhere. If someone asks what they can do, pull out your list and assign them a task.

What, you think there’s something wrong with that? Afraid they didn’t really mean it and they might be upset? Too bad, so sad. Next time they won’t offer so fast. For now, that’s their problem. And, one less thing for you to worry about on Thanksgiving.

What if no one offers to help? Ask them for help! Yes, I mean it. If they expect a perfect meal served in an elegant

style, they should get on Martha Stewart's Thanksgiving guest list. For now, they are on YOUR guest list. Everyone is busy & it makes less work when everyone helps do something. Plus, the event is more enjoyable when everyone participates in the preparations.



Rule #3 Take Care of Yourself

Plan your preparations so you are able to relax and get ready for your celebration. Take a short nap. Take a bubble bath. Get yourself dressed and ready, just like a guest. Remember, the party is the best when the hostess is the #1 guest. Then, when the doorbell rings, take a deep breath and smile. You are ready to entertain!

