



# *Christmas Cooking Feast*



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# Introduction

Cooking at Christmas time either brings joyful thoughts or thoughts of dread.

Maybe it's a combination. We all love the food at Christmas and the smells wafting through the house.

But, it also puts a lot of pressure on whoever is the main cook of the house.

Most of the issues with cooking at Christmas can be solved by making things simple.

The truth is, we tend to complicate food production for the holidays, making too much food, too many different types of food, and not involving the family to help cut down on the host having to do all the cooking.

# Chapter – 1 Intermixing the Old and the New Ones

Every family has its traditions, and it's always good to keep and pass these on. But, it's also fun to add in something new. If you find out that no one in the family likes something, just stop doing it. Even if it was tradition, there is no point in continuing.

There are many traditional foods that you can serve at Christmas, but there are also some foods that you can add to make the celebration newer.

Let's look at some traditional foods and how to incorporate something new.

- **Potato Salad** – This is a common dish served at Christmas celebrations all over the world.

There are many ways to make it.

If you've always made it one way, why not try a new way. For example, if you make mayonnaise-rich potato salad, you might want to try one that doesn't have mayonnaise just to shake it up a little.

- **Turkey** – It might seem odd to you but not everyone eats turkey at Christmas. Many people today are now enjoying plant-based diets so they want something else.

Others are just tired of the same old thing each year. Why not have a pizza party, or try some traditional dishes from around the world - like Chiles en Nogada, which is enjoyed during the holidays in Mexico, as your main dish.

- **Feast of the Seven Fishes** – This is an Italian tradition.

You can change the theme of your holiday depending on what you normally do and still be fully traditional, while also trying something new.

- **Doro Wat on Injera** – This is the traditional Ethiopian Christmas dinner.

It's a spicy chicken stew. You could sub turkey for chicken and use this recipe as a way to use leftovers from your traditional turkey dinner, shaking up the old and new in a very tasty and original way.

- **Go German** – There are many rich traditions for food in Germany.

Instead of your normal turkey, why not roast a duck instead? This can be a good way to shake up your Christmas dinner, keeping it traditional while adding something new:

You get the idea regarding food. Look to your heritage. A fun idea is to get everyone to do a DNA test to check your genealogy before the holidays, then ask each person to bring a dish from a country that they discovered was part of their genetic makeup.

You can set up a Facebook group around Halloween with your entire family to discuss cooking for the holidays, as well as DNA test results if you do that.

However you choose to proceed, remember that you don't have to do it all. You can ask for help, you can skip some things, and you can add new things as you desire.

# Chapter – 2 Breakfast & Brunch Ideas for Christmas

If you're feeding a crowd, then you might want some Christmas breakfast or brunch ideas to help you make everyone happy. But remember - you don't have to fix Christmas breakfast on Christmas Day. You can do it anytime during the holidays. If you have a large crowd in your house for Christmas morning, you can offer easy-to-grab food like muffins, donuts, and even cereal if you prefer.

- **Overnight Casseroles** – These are perfect for making everyone satisfied with breakfast, while not putting too much work on your schedule.

These ten recipes are simple to follow and delicious to eat, and you can choose from sweet or savory casseroles. Don't be afraid to sub ingredients in these ideas if you don't eat or like something in the recipe.

- **Easy-to-Grab Food** – Often the morning is full of opening presents and thinking about what you must do to get dinner ready. So, if you want to, you can make a variety of finger foods so that everyone can wake up and grab food as they will.

Muffins, individual quiches, oatmeal, cereals, and even pop tarts are fine for Christmas brunch.

If you want to be creative, make cinnamon rolls in a Christmas tree-shaped pan and add red, green, gold and silver sprinklers.

- **Christmas Ham** – A great way to use that Christmas ham is for breakfast. You can provide rolls, the spiralized ham, chutney, and other toppings to enjoy with the ham.

Everyone can make their own. All you do is put out the ham and rolls and maybe some fruit, and let people grab and go at will.

- **Breakfast Quiche** – This is a great way to prepare breakfast fast and to fill people up.



You can make a quiche with all sorts of ingredients. You can also make mini-quiches if you have a lot of people with different dietary needs at breakfast - even vegans. Note: You can also buy prepared mini-quiche at Costco.

- **Bread Pudding** – You can make a breakfast bread pudding. Most of the time, you can start this overnight and then finish in the morning. Try this [blueberry-pecan pancake bread pudding](#) to brighten up your Christmas brunch breakfast.
- **Go Out for Breakfast** – That might seem strange, but you can make it super-easy by going out for breakfast. Yes, many places are open on Christmas for brunch.

You'll have to call around for your area, but it can be fun to turn tradition on its ears and go out for breakfast and then even maybe go to a movie.

- **Don't Forget the Punch** – A great thing to make for your Christmas brunch is a fun special punch just for grown-ups.

Martha Stewart has a great [Bloody Mary punch recipe](#), but you can make any type of punch you want to that means Christmas to you.

Whatever you want to make for your Christmas brunch, and whether you make it on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day or even the day after, doesn't matter. Enjoying yummy food with people you love is what it's all about.

# Chapter – 3 Ideal Christmas Dinner - Sources of Inspiration

Everyone loves to get inspiration. Today it's easier than ever to get inspired due to the internet. You can find everything on the net today, but you can still call mom or grandma to get ideas as well.

Don't overlook any source of inspiration from magazines to books, to your friends and extended family. Ideas and inspiration are literally everywhere if you are looking for them.

- **YouTube** – Do a quick search for Christmas Dinner Ideas and you'll get a plethora of videos to watch. You can refine your search and ask for quick ideas, or vegan ideas, or different ways to cook a Christmas turkey. The sky is the limit with YouTube.
- **Facebook** – This might seem a strange choice, but everyone asks all sorts of questions on their wall and in groups, and they get great answers.  
Just ask what other people do during the holidays, and you're sure to find out a lot of great ideas that you can incorporate into your holiday celebration.
- **Pinterest** – Everyone who loves Pinterest will make special Christmas dinner pin boards which you can browse at your leisure. You can search using the right keywords for your desires. You can search menu ideas, for example, instead of just turkey ideas.
- **Grandma** – Don't discount what Grandma knows. She likely has recipes that she'll be more than happy to send you that she'll make if you ask.

Grandmas like sharing what they know and yours is probably not much different. In some cases, though, she may not have a recipe and you'll need to learn in person.

- **Mom** – Your mom still has some good ideas about the holidays and can easily share her recipes with you. Even someone else's mom will have good ideas if you ask them.

If you have a guest who is coming to visit for the holidays and can't be with their own family, you can always call their mom to find out what makes Christmas for your guest.



- **Friends** – Ask your friends about what they like to cook on the holidays. They will probably post a lot of variations of the traditional things you make, but they may also have ideas that you never thought of - especially if you have a group of friends who come from all walks of life.
- **Cookbooks** – Don't forget cookbooks. They're still good ways to get ideas. You can go to a book store and make an afternoon of looking through various cookbooks to get inspiration. Then you can find out if your local library has that cookbook before you purchase it.
- **Magazines** – At some point, the magazine section will be overrun by holiday ideas, but you might want to look at last year's magazines at the library to get your ideas sooner. Libraries often have older magazines that you can look at. They also usually allow you to copy pages from the magazine so you can take recipes home.

You can find inspiration in a lot of places. But the main thing not to do is overload yourself with ideas so that you get overwhelmed. It's better to consider what your goal is for the dinner, choose a theme of some kind, and then limit the amount that you cook to that so that you don't overcook or undercook for this important holiday dinner.

# Chapter – 4 Eight Fantastic Twists to the Traditional Christmas Dinner

Tradition is all well and good. It's fun. It feels like home. We humans like rituals; it makes us feel grounded.

But, when it comes to food, there is no reason you can't still be traditional but add a little twist to it by changing up the traditional recipes to make them a little different - and possibly even better than the original. Here are a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing.

- **Turkey** – Many people enjoy turkey at their Christmas dinner. Typically, it is just a regular roasted turkey with stuffing or dressing.

But in previous years, Rachel Ray Every Day posted six flavor twists for the traditional turkey. [These recipes](#) are awesome to keep it traditional but with a little extra flavor that your family will love.

- **Stuffing / Dressing** – There is always a lot of discussion about whether you should fix stuffing or dressing.

Either is fine, but you can really switch up the ingredients and make it extra special if you want to. There are so many amazing flavor combinations. You might want to try this [Holiday Turkey with Rice Stuffing](#) recipe.

- **Go Vegan** – It might seem impossible, but you can add a huge twist to your holiday meal simply by going vegan.

Look no further than your [Whole Foods Market website](#) for great recipe ideas. If you don't have a Whole Foods, you can still find ingredients at your local supermarket for the most part.

- **Holiday Ham** – Many people enjoy spiralized glazed ham on Christmas. It's wonderful for that day but also for leftovers.

There are many different recipes that are almost the same for this traditional dish. Why not shake it up with this [Holiday Ham with a Texas Twist](#). You don't even have to live in Texas to enjoy it.

- **Pumpkin Pie** – You may think you've seen all the variations of your beloved pumpkin pie, but there are so many that they can't be listed here.

However, you can go to the Community Table website to view these wonderful [12 twists on traditional pumpkin pie](#). Be ready to get super-hungry.

- **Green Bean Casserole** – Many people hate it, but many obviously love it because it seems like it's part of every Christmas holiday meal.

There are many ways to make it that you may not know about. Here you can find a list of [seven different ways](#) to make this traditional holiday side dish extra special.

- **Giblet Gravy** – The [traditional recipe](#) is delicious but you can spice it up.

You could stir in some sour cream to make it super-rich and creamy with a tangy kick. Another option is to spice it up by adding some hot sauce, or smoked paprika.

- **Christmas Pudding** – Many people enjoy [classic Christmas pudding](#) at some point during the holidays. If you come from England then you know all about it.

But it's also in America and other countries due to immigration.

If you've never tried it, making the traditional recipe will be a great twist in itself. If you like dried fruit, eggs, and bread, you'll love it.

Don't be afraid to try new things. You can even throw out tradition altogether and have a Christmas pizza if you so desire. Don't feel constrained to do the same thing every single year if you don't want to.

# Chapter – 5 Nine Mouth-Watering and Simple Dessert Recipes

Simple dessert ideas for Christmas cooking are all around you. You can find them on Pinterest in droves. But, how do you know which ones are good?

Well, if you can find a bunch of variations on one type of dessert, then you probably found the one you want to make. Just look up the recipes and decide on the one that's easiest for you to make. There are from-scratch recipes as well as partially homemade recipes to choose from.

- **Chocolate Fondue** – Having a fondue party is a fun idea for any time of the year, but it's so festive that it fits in perfectly with Christmas. Some families love doing this on Christmas Eve with a good movie.

You can also dip whatever you want into the chocolate, so make lots of dippers for people to try.

Hint: buy pre-made dippers and cut them up to make it easier.

- **Cake Mix Cookies** - [These cake mix cookies](#) are easy to make, festive in appearance, and delicious. That's all you need in a holiday cookie.

Since it uses cake mix, it's a soft cookie that almost melts in your mouth. When you put these on the table for dessert, your family will squeal and ooh and aah in delight. Your entire family will love them.

- **Yule Log** – This wonderful and traditional dessert can be made in a variety of ways. [The traditional recipe](#) will blow the entire family away. It's chocolatey and delicious and beautiful too. You can also [make one from a box mix](#) if you prefer.

- **Almond Roca** – This also makes a great addition to any food-related gifts that you create. A lot of people like to have little bags or tins (you can get them for a buck at the dollar store) of gifts ready for those who drop by for the holidays.

The recipe for [Easy Homemade Almond Roca](#) is even easier than you may think.

- **Trifle** – Everyone loves a good trifle. They look so festive and taste so creamy and delicious. There are many recipes for trifles out there. A trifle is a layered dessert typically served in a see-through glass container so that everyone can see the layers.
- **Mince Pie** – Often called "minced meat" pie, this delicious pie has a combination of fruits, spices, like cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg which we all enjoy during the holidays. [This recipe](#) from The Food Network will cross all the T's and dot all the I's for you in a delicious version of mince pie that uses a cornmeal crust.
- **Dump Cake** – This is a super-easy dessert to make. They call it a [Dump Cake](#) because you literally dump the ingredients in a pan and bake it. You don't have to do a lot of prep and you really can't mess it up.
- **Slow Cooker Brownie Pudding** – Want a dessert that is not just easy to make but will make everyone warm and happy too?

This [Slow Cooker Brownie Pudding](#) is the answer to all your problems with cooking dessert, including having space for it.

Add some mint ice cream to make it extra festive.

- **Pumpkin Cobbler** – This is a wonderful twist on a pumpkin dessert that everyone will love. It's warm, gooey, pumpkin filled and just simply delicious. Since it's made in your slow cooker, it couldn't be any simpler or tastier than this. Want more pumpkin slow cooker desserts? [Just go here](#).

Making dessert for your Christmas cooking doesn't have to be hard. You can even go to the store and buy dessert if you prefer. No one is going to notice or care, to be honest. Of course, making desserts at

home does have the added benefit of making the house smell very festive, so do give one of these ideas a try.

# Chapter – 6 Drink Ideas for Christmas

It's fun to try new drinks during the holidays. You can make both kid-friendly and adults-only drinks easily and simply if you set that goal. Just don't choose difficult recipes.

You can have homemade and premixed combinations to make everything much easier.

- **Mint White Hot Chocolate** – This is a nice variation of hot chocolate and looks super-festive in clear mugs. Your kids and the adults will love this.

For adults, you can use a shot of peppermint schnapps instead of the peppermint extract:

<https://lilluna.com/mint-hot-cocoa/>

- **Ice Cream "Egg" Nog** – This is not a real eggnog because there are no eggs, but it's super-delicious. Instead, you'll use ice cream (which is often eggless) to make it.

This is a fun way to make egg nog that is safe and won't accidentally make your guests sick from raw eggs:

- **Homemade Non-Alcoholic Eggnog** – This is real eggnog. The recipe is simple even though you may think it's hard at first.

It really is just mixing ingredients in a pan and cooking it so that you don't harm your family and friends with raw egg. This one is so easy and delicious it's not likely you'll want to use store bought again.

- **Mulled Wine** – This is a very popular drink in Germany. If you ever get a chance to go to Germany, go to the Christ Kindles Market in Nuremberg to enjoy many wonderful Christmassy things, including the best mulled wine served right on the street from street vendors.

If you can't go, that's okay; make this [slow cooker spiced wine recipe](#) instead.



- **Gingerbread Hot Chocolate** – You can look for a recipe but really you can just use packaged hot chocolate mix, and then add spices such as pumpkin pie spice to the mix to bring out the flavors that you desire.

But, [this recipe](#) is really good too. For adults, consider adding spiced rum for a nice kick.

- **Cherry Bomb** – This cherry drink is great for kids and adults and is non-alcoholic. Just mix grenadine, club soda, and cherries.

[The recipe here](#) serves six. If you did want to make it more adult, you could also add a couple of ounces of vodka, gin, or rum. Because of all the cherries and red color, it makes it look super-festive. You could even add a green candy cane as a garnish.

Creating amazing holiday drinks doesn't require a full bar. Choose a theme and then stick with that so that you can spread yourself around without getting too tired (or tipsy) during your holiday celebrations.

# Chapter – 7 Appetizers & Snacks for

## Christmas Feast

Did you know that for some of the holiday, you could simply set out snacks and appetizers versus a full-on meal? Most people love snacking during the holiday.

Snacking is a great way to try different flavors without making a full-on commitment.

- **Triscuits Snack Ideas** – While a lot of Martha Stewart's ideas are time intensive, these snacks aren't hard and use a lot of leftovers to help make them really holiday worthy.  
You can also just put some tomato sauce, turkey pepperoni, and mozzarella cheese on a Triscuit and bake in the oven until the cheese melts.
- **Crescent Roll Ideas** – You know what a crescent roll is, but did you know that you can make all sorts of holiday appetizers and snacks that your family will absolutely love and come back for more? Since it's made with pre-made ingredients, it's super simple.
- **Sausage Balls** – This is almost a tradition in some parts of the country. Plus, they're super-easy to make using the [Bisquick Sausage Ball recipe](#). You can use hot sausage to make them spicy or you can use only mild if you prefer. You can also experiment with different types of cheese.
- **Cheese and Meat Tray** – This is a super-easy way to put out snacks and appetizers for the holidays. Just put a variety of cheese, meats, fruit, chutney, bread, and crackers on a tray.  
You can decorate it in any way you want, including making your food into the shape of a Christmas tree.

- **Cheese Balls** – Making a cheese ball is simple. You literally just put all the ingredients into a bowl and mix together, then form into the shape you desire and refrigerate.  
It makes cheese more festive and imparts all kinds of flavors depending on the recipe you use. Try these [cheese ball recipes](#) from Delish.com to get started.
- **Deviled Eggs** – There are so many ways to make this classic recipe, but mostly it starts with boiled eggs.  
You take the yellow part of the egg and mix it with different ingredients to make a filling. [This recipe](#) is interesting because you color your boiled egg-white to be holiday colors, making it extra festive.
- **Salad** – Yes, you can create a delicious salad as a snack or appetizer, because sometimes people want a break from heavy meals even though they are still hungry.  
This recipe for [Cranberry Almond Spinach Salad](#) meets the goal. You can buy prepackaged dressing to make it even easier.
- **Apples and Date Dip** – This is super-easy. You really don't need a recipe, although we'll link to one here. It's just soaked, pitted dates, blended with water until it's the smooth consistency you desire for dipping and then sliced apples.  
You can also add cinnamon to the date dip to give it more holiday flavor. This really is healthy and tastes like caramel. Your guests will be amazed. Hint: If you don't have a high-speed blender, soak your dates for a few hours before blending.

Hopefully, these snacks and appetizer ideas will get you started thinking about what you're going to make. Always consider how fast it is to make, including how you'll store it. Usually, during the holidays you already have a lot of food stuffed into the fridge, so make sure you plan.

# Chapter – 8 Dealing with Different Dietary Needs

Sometimes you'll have family members that have special dietary needs that cannot be broken, even during the holidays. If this is the case for you, it's a good idea to find recipes that can work for all, made with the ingredients that guest can eat.

Often, the people who don't have food issues will not even notice, but the one with the issues will be very thankful because often there is nothing for them to eat and they don't like making a big deal of it.

- **Try Vegan Options**

If you have family members who are gluten free and/or dairy free, you can often find delicious vegan options that work for both.

Dishes like Gluten-Free Rice Stuffing work well for those who have both requirements, and it tastes delicious to the other people too. It's not really even hard to make either, since you start with uncooked rice and cook it mostly in the oven:

- **Ask Them**

Create a Facebook group for everyone you've invited for the Christmas holidays. Then ask them as a group to let you know their food restrictions.

Most people won't talk much about it unless you ask them. Sometimes it does feel as if people with restrictions are picky and loud, but that's only because they're at your party and are hungry.

- **Send Out a Menu**

If you want to cook a menu regardless, the best thing you can do is send out the menu with your invitation so that people who know they cannot eat that meal will feel free to RSVP "no" or call you about bringing their own food.

The important part of the holidays is being together, even though food feels really important.

- **Pot Luck It**

If you know that enough of your family members have issues, ask everyone to bring their own dish to share. That way they'll have at least one thing they can eat.

Offer to cook the ham or turkey (or whatever your family eats as a main dish) and ask them to bring something that fits their dietary needs.

- **Use Fewer Ingredients**

Often, recipes with fewer ingredients are easier to eat for those with food allergies. But if you're inviting a lot of people, it is also important to label foods containing ingredients such as milk, eggs, and nuts that people are commonly allergic to.

Finally, just relax. You can't please everyone. Let your guests know what you're going to serve and let them know it's fine to bring something if they can't eat it. Don't single anyone out and ask them to try something.

Make everything self-serve so that people can make their own choices and don't feel as if the spotlight is on them.

Nothing is worse than really wanting that pumpkin pie but knowing you will have to visit the toilet several times if you indulge at a big family event. So, don't push people. If they say no thank you, smile and accept it.

# Chapter – 9 Tips and Tricks for Advanced Prep

When you're responsible for feeding a crowd, how you go about it will depend a lot on your budget, your health, your space and the food choices you and your family make.

These tips and tricks can work for any type of party, including your holiday dinner party.

- **Set Your Budget**

This is important to do before you start inviting people. More than likely you're going to spend on average 10 dollars a person for your holiday menu.

This is helpful to know so that you can set a budget and limit on how many people show up.

Alternatively, you may choose to provide the main course and let your guests bring dishes as they will, or that you assign if you have a theme that you want to stick to.

- **Decide Who Is Invited**

Once you have your budget, you can create your invitation list. Even if you aren't formally inviting people and just your family is showing up because this is the tradition, write it down anyway.

While you're at it, write down any food allergies or limitations of the guests that you know will be there.

- **Plan Your Menu**

Now that you're in the menu-planning stage, it's important to know whether you're cooking it all or whatever you can count on individuals to bring what you assign them to bring.

You can easily include the recipe you want them to use too if you do it this way. Alternatively, you can tell them to bring a green bean casserole and let them use their own recipe.

To ensure your guests will stick to the menu as assigned, explain in your invitation how it'll work.

- **Choose Simple Recipes**

While it might seem like a great time to try that complicated recipe you found, it's not. It's best to try those recipes out on your immediate family rather than at a holiday dinner with many people there. Instead, choose recipes that have fewer ingredients that are easy to prepare and take little prep time.

- **Consider Feeding Your Freezer**

Some people who have a nice-sized freezer like to serve a lot of different recipes at their holiday gatherings.

They will start feeding their freezer a few weeks prior to the event and then simply heat the food up when it's time to serve it. This works great for casseroles, dressing, and many desserts.

The important thing to remember is that people are there to be with you and the other guests. They're not just there to eat. You can make a great easy holiday dinner by letting everyone make their own personal pizzas or by having a potato bar. You don't have to do everything completely traditional to make it a wonderful event.



## Chapter – 10 Five Kid-Friendly Options

Kids love to help prepare food. If you want to get your kids or grandkids involved with food prep, this round-up of ideas will make you their favorite person.

These suggestions will get you started thinking about what kids like.

- **S'Mores** – Of course, of course. You can't have a kid-friendly holiday recipe without including s'mores. Everyone loves the delicious flavor combination of graham cracker, marshmallow, and chocolate.

But, did you know you can make them in the oven too? Let your child layer crackers, chocolate bar, and marshmallow in a pan, then bake in the oven on 350 degrees F until the marshmallow starts to rise and the chocolate starts to melt - about 10 minutes.

- **Holly Cookies** – These cookies are a firm favorite for kids. They look neat and are simple to make with the help of an adult.

They don't have a ton of ingredients; in fact, you may have most of them on hand during the holidays. Cornflakes, butter, marshmallows, and cinnamon candies make awesome cookies:

- **Gingerbread House** – A tradition for many, a pipe dream for others, an edible and easy-to-make gingerbread house is a fun way to keep kids busy for an entire afternoon of sugary goodness. Explore ideas using [graham crackers on Pinterest](#).
- **Sugar Cookies** – This is a tradition in many households. You can make sugar cookies in many ways, including using refrigerated cookie dough.  
The fun is in decorating them. You can cook them in advance and then let your kids decorate them. These [shortcut pie dough cookies](#) are the answer to simplicity.
- **Sandwiches** – Kids like sandwiches. You can put out sandwich ingredients and let them make them.

Give them some cookie cutters to cut out designs from the sandwiches to make them more holiday relevant. You can use turkey, ham, pimento cheese, hummus, and all kinds of ingredients.

- **Dippable Food** – Any type of food that can be dipped is loved by kids. You can make turkey nuggets and dip them in cranberry sauce.

Cut up carrots, celery, bell peppers and dip it into any type of dips such as pimento cheese, ranch dip, and others. Even fruit dipped in melted chocolate or different bread dipped in melted cheese will be delightful for them.

Kids love helping, but mostly they love being active. Find ways to get the kids involved, whether by getting them to help prepare food or making eating an active event with finger foods and dips. Your kids will love learning to cook, though, so the more you can involve them, the more likely they are to want to help you when they're older.

# Conclusion

Christmas cooking doesn't have to be difficult or take all night long.

If you choose the recipes carefully based on your budget, the number of people you must feed, and consider breaking some traditions, you'll find that you enjoy the holidays a lot more. Keep it simple yet delicious!

Merry Christmas!