Christmas Dinner Count-Back Plan

Pick the time you want to eat, then count backward from it. Below is a **worked example**: a roast dinner on the table at **6:00 PM**, with one oven. Swap in your own recipe times, or use the blank rows at the bottom of the table.

Roast (example: 2 hr 30 min) · Gravy · Mashed potatoes · A baked side (about 30 min) · Green beans · Rolls

Christmas Eve or Day: count back from 6:00 PM

EXAMPLE ONLY. USE YOUR OWN RECIPE'S TIME AND TEMPERATURE.

☐	**1:45 PM**	Roast out of the fridge to take the chill off (about an hour before it goes in). Season it. Set the table now while it's calm.
☐	**2:30 PM**	Preheat the oven to your recipe's temperature.
☐	**2:45 PM**	**Roast into the oven** (example: 2 hr 30 min).
☐	**3:30 PM**	Peel and cut potatoes; hold in cold water. Trim the green beans.
☐	**4:15 PM**	Assemble the baked side in its dish; cover and keep it cold.
☐	**5:00 PM**	Start checking the roast with a thermometer.
☐	**5:15 PM**	**Roast out only when the thermometer says it's done.** Tent with foil and rest about 30 minutes. Oven up for the sides. Baked side in (about 30 min). Potatoes on to boil (about 20 min).
☐	**5:20 PM**	Make gravy from the pan drippings.
☐	**5:30 PM**	Drain and mash the potatoes; keep them hot. Green beans on the stove (about 10 min).
☐	**5:45 PM**	Baked side out. Rolls in (8–10 min). Carve the roast. Rewarm the gravy.
☐	**5:55 PM**	Plate, platter, pour drinks.
☐	**6:00 PM**	**Dinner is served.**
☐	_____	Your own step: _____
☐	_____	Your own step: _____
☐	_____	Your own step: _____

Days before

- **About 5 days out:** Frozen roast or turkey? Move it to the fridge to thaw. Allow roughly a day for every 4–5 lb.
- **3 days out:** Final shopping list. Check you have a meat thermometer and enough foil.
- **2 days out:** Shop. Pick your serve time and write it at the top of this page.
- **Dec 23:** Make-ahead items: dessert, cranberry sauce, chopped vegetables. Chill drinks.

One oven? Plan for it

The roast's rest is your side-dish window. Everything that needs the oven goes in after the roast comes out.

Food safety first

- **Poultry:** 165°F.
- **Beef, pork or lamb roasts:** 145°F, then rest 3 minutes.
- **Fully cooked ham:** reheat to 140°F (165°F if it's leftover or wasn't USDA-packaged).
- **Holding:** keep hot food at 140°F or above.
- **Leftovers:** into the fridge within 2 hours; eat within 3–4 days.
- **Temperature comes before the clock.** If food isn't there yet, keep cooking and move the schedule.

Your times

Serving at a different time? Shift every line by the same amount.

Serve at: _____ Roast in: _____

Let Cleaver time it for you

Cleaver Kitchen's Cook Together works backward from your serve time and tells you when to start each step, with labeled timers and hands-free voice control. Practice first with the free 5-dish sample dinner. Free on the App Store for iPhone and iPad (Cook Together free for 2 dishes; Pro for 3 or more).