



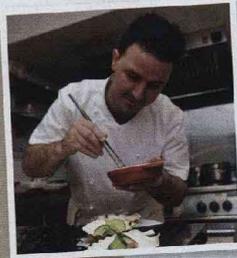
Food extra

Chef knows best

Have a panic free kitchen this Christmas thanks to tips from the experts

MARTIN O'DONNELL, THE TWELVE, GALWAY

Prepare and peel all vegetables on the December 23, also use the throw-away metal foil containers, they are super to eliminate the washing up! Try to make the dessert in advance on the 23 too, along with the mulled wine, it generally gets better the longer it matures. And use your outside garden shed for drinks, beers and milk which will free up much-needed space in the fridge (it's usually nearly freezing outside anyways).



RORY O'CONNELL, BALLYMALOE COOKERY SCHOOL

1. Serve Christmas lunch buffet style at a side table to allow your family and guests to help themselves, much calmer and allows guests to have as little or as much as they would like.
2. The cooked turkey will keep hot for at least one hour after cooking in an oven reduced to 100°C. The bird does not need to be red hot but have hot plates and bubbling hot gravy.
3. Make a list and share out the cooking tasks among family and include washing up duty and don't cook too much food.



JENNY FLYNN, FAITHLEGG HOUSE HOTEL

1. The best tip I can give you to avoid dry turkey is let the bird rest after you take it out of the oven. Cover with tin foil and leave it to rest for 20 minutes before you start to carve. This will help the turkey relax and keep all juices inside the meat. And always baste your turkey during cooking as this helps to keep the turkey moist.
2. Don't take on more than you can do. If you spend the whole day cooking, it takes up time that could be spent with your loved ones. Which is what Christmas is all about!
3. Dessert is the one course that you can prepare the night before which will save you time on the big day. If you're making chocolate mousse or trifle put them into individual glasses which will save you room in the fridge.

JESS MURPHY, KAI, GALWAY

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail. This is so true for Christmas. Act like a chef in the week before Christmas, do your grocery shop with a list of what you actually need and when you will actually prep your essentials for Christmas. Don't let the Christmas frazzle throw you, shop locally and decide what you will need and cook before you even embark on the food shop.



NOEL MCMEEL, LOUGH ERNE RESORT

To get your turkey golden on the outside without it becoming dry, cook it longer than you normally would, at a lower temperature, 60°C or around that temp.

Then take it out, put the oven up to 200°C and put it back in for 30 minutes to avoid the skin shrivelling as it cools, baste the turkey as soon as it comes out. One of the biggest challenges is to take into account that the legs take longer to cook than the breast. I like to push stuffing between the turkey's skin and breasts, so it takes the same time to cook as the legs. Remove from the oven, cover tightly with foil and leave for about 30 minutes before you carve. Just cut as much as you need - the meat will not only keep warm and be juicier on the bone, but it will be easier to carve when cold.



STEFAN MATZ, DELPHI ADVENTURE RESORT

Decide on meal choices well in advance, consider being able to do as much preparation as possible one or two days in advance of Christmas. Write shopping lists days in advance (this will save money, time and hassle).

Prepare anything possible one day in advance, e.g. dressings, sauces, vegetables, potatoes, brines, salads, desserts etc. Brine using salt, sugar and liquid - something like orange juice will work for turkey - brine the main meat at least 24 hours before cooking, this will ensure a satisfying taste and moisture (even if it will be slightly over cooked). Keep the cooking on Christmas to a minimum to enjoy the day too!

