

Design a Date

Holiday Prep Date

Whether you host Thanksgiving or Christmas or not, the holidays seem to bring about a lot of extra work in the kitchen. There are church potlucks, family gatherings, and cookie exchanges. Then you have the family's favorite recipes everyone expects to have at the holiday gatherings! You might even give cookies, pies, cinnamon rolls, or homemade hot chocolate to family, friends, teachers, and neighbors.

What if you started earlier on your holiday food prep and what if you did it together?

Certainly not every recipe can be prepared ahead of time, but baking lends itself to early prep. Things like homemade hot chocolate can be prepared months in advance and packaged up in a mason jar topped with a ribbon or bow and a gift tag that includes the recipe! (Yep, we're providing that for you!)

Think ahead to what you usually do or what you'd like to do when it comes to holiday baking or food prep. Make a list of recipes that could be done ahead of time. (If you don't do a lot of food prep or baking during the holidays, you could turn this date into a freezer meal date that will also reduce your stress during the holiday season when there is an increase in travel, activities, shopping, and wrapping!)

Remember, just about any cookie recipe can be prepared ahead of time. Make the cookie dough and roll the dough into balls. Then place the cookie balls on a cookie sheet to freeze. Once frozen, drop the balls into a gallon size baggie and throw the bag in the freezer. When you're ready to bake cookies, place the frozen cookie balls on a cookie sheet to thaw. Once thawed (about 30 minutes), bake according to the recipe.

Cut out cookies can be frozen ahead of time, too. Make the dough, roll out and cut the cookies, and bake according to the recipe. Decorate if you have the time and then freeze them decorated. You can also freeze undecorated cookies in storage containers until you're ready to decorate them at a later time!

Does your family have to have mashed potatoes at holiday meals? Yep, you can [make those ahead of time and freeze them](#) too. You'll find the instructions for dozens of make ahead and freeze holiday recipes including appetizers, cheese balls, sweet potato casserole and stuffing [here](#)!

Set the date, crank up the holiday music, and get ready for the holidays TOGETHER! You'll reduce the stress, enjoy the time together, and knock quite a few things off your food prep to do list! Enjoy!