

kristen browning-blas

Pre-holiday thanks for a bounty of help

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My first step in preparing for Thanksgiving is a moment of reflection and gratitude (seriously). In addition to the roof-over-my-head (especially poignant this year), good job, healthy family thanks, my gratitude goes to the 15-plus Denver Post staffers in writing, editing, photography and design who worked on this project. It truly takes a village to create a Thanksgiving menu.

A giant "thank-you" goes to Lyle Davis and Sylvia Tawse, the Boulder couple who opened their cookbooks, kitchen and dining room for the photos and recipes you will see on these pages through Nov. 23.

Lyle, who runs Big Bang Catering and Pastures of Plenty farm (where the couple lives, north of Boulder), cooked an entire Thanksgiving meal the week before Halloween.

Denver writer Kuvy Ax procured everything from pottery to an extra pumpkin pie when one went missing.

Tawse took time away from her public relations firm, The Fresh Ideas Group, to translate Lyle's creativity into printable recipes. She made sure every detail of the photos was authentic, and put Colorado heart and soul into the project:

"During this time of thanks, it seems only fitting to focus on things closer to home. This menu is a celebration of Colorado autumn bounty, which is more abundant than most may presume. It features ingredients that are classic to Colorado and relatively easy to find. It is also proof that one may enjoy tastes of Colorado throughout the cold winter months by stocking the pantry with local and regional fare. Colorado always has embraced a pioneering spirit, and that is now evident in our food and wine offerings. Stock up at the few remaining farmers markets while you can, and seek out traditional foods that are native to Colorado."

What to do now

Seek inspiration: "Giving Thanks: Thanksgiving Recipes and History from Pilgrims to Pumpkin Pie" (Clarkson Potter, \$22.50) delves into the evolution of the holiday and the meal. Makes a nice hostess gift too.

Check gear: serving pieces, roasting pan, baster, big spoons, sharp carving knife, instant-read thermometer, potato masher, baking dishes.

Reserve anything you plan to rent: china, linens, chairs, tables.

Make a guest list.

Choose recipes: be realistic about how much you can do and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Think about shortcuts: grocery stores, specialty markets and restaurants have more prepared dishes than ever. It's OK to buy what you don't want to make.

Make a shopping list or go to diane

phillips.com for a downloadable checklist from the author of "Perfect Party Food" (Harvard Common Press, \$25), an excellent guide to every detail of entertaining.

Decide on what type of turkey, frozen or fresh. If using fresh, order this week.

Homegrown ingredients

Colorado growers still are selling their fall harvest at local farmers markets and grocery stores. For these recipes, we used the sources listed below. For more, go to coloradoproud.org.

First Fruits Farm, Paonia: honey crisp, Jonathan, red delicious, winesap, Rome, and empire apples; Bartlett, bosc, d'anjou and Asian pears

Mr. B's or Ela Family Farms, Hotchkiss: apple and pear cider

Morton's Organic Orchards, Palisade: peach, apricot, cherry-almond, peach- and apricot-pepper (great with grilled pork)

Hazel Dell Farms, Fort Collins: exotic mushrooms

Monroe Farms, Kersey, and Ernie Nue, San Luis Valley: baby red, Yukon gold, russet and Peruvian blue potatoes

Abbondonza Farms, Boulder: carrots with tops (to use in stock)

Pastures of Plenty or Red Wagon Farm, Boulder: turnips and parsnips

Grant Family Farms, Wellington, or Pastures of Plenty: delicata, butternut, acorn, buttercup and kabocha squash

Pumpkin Ranch, Longmont: roasted green chiles

Wisdom Turkey, (distributed by Maverick Ranch and sold at Marczyk Fine Foods): free-range turkey

White Mountain Farms, San Luis Valley: quinoa

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