



Fine Cooking's
15 Favorite
Thanksgiving Sides

COMPILED BY JOANNE McALLISTER SMART

Of course there will be turkey at your Thanksgiving table—the fun part is figuring out what else to serve. If you want to make this year's Thanksgiving dinner just a little bit different, add a new side dish to your menu. Choose from among these fifteen recipes, including colorful green beans and full-flavored gratins that you can make ahead or ask someone to bring. Mix and match the recipes yourself or look to the menus below for inspiration.



Give your side dishes a regional spin

Traditional	Italian	New American	New Southern
Classic Bread Dressing	Italian Bread & Sausage Dressing	Cornbread Pecan Dressing	Cornbread Pecan Dressing
Cranberry-Citrus Compote	Cranberry-Citrus Compote	Cranberry-Pear Salsa	Cranberry-Orange Relish with Ginger
Pearl Onion Gratin	Mashed Potatoes with Olive Oil & Parsley	Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes (with Horseradish)	Molasses Mashed Sweet Potatoes
Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes (hold the horseradish)	Butternut Squash Gratin with Onion & Sage	Sweet Potato & Leek Gratin	Pearl Onion Gratin with Parmesan, Savory & Thyme
Green Beans with Toasted Slivered Almonds	Long-Cooked Green Beans with Oregano	Green Beans with Toasted Slivered Almonds	Orange-Dijon Green Beans

Whipped Yukon Gold Potatoes with Horseradish

Serves ten to twelve.

- 4 lb. Yukon Gold potatoes
- 2 Tbs. kosher salt
- 12 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1¼ cups light cream
- Ground white pepper to taste
- ½ cup prepared horseradish

Peel and quarter the potatoes and put them in a large pot. Cover with cold water and add 1 Tbs. salt. Bring to boil, reduce to a gentle boil, and cook until easily pierced with a fork, about 20 minutes. Drain the potatoes.

In an electric stand mixer with the whisk attachment or with an electric hand mixer, whip the potatoes until smooth, about 1 minute; add the butter and mix until melted and combined, about 30 seconds. Add the cream, 1 Tbs. salt, and white pepper to taste. Starting on low and gradually increasing the speed to prevent splattering, whip until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl frequently. Alternatively, use a food mill to purée the potatoes and then beat in the remaining ingredients by hand. Fold in the horseradish and combine well.

—Michael Brisson,
Fine Cooking #29

Mashed Potatoes with Olive Oil & Parsley

Serves eight.

- 4 lb. Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch cubes
- 2 Tbs. kosher salt; more for seasoning
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- ½ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Put a large pot of cold water on high heat. Add the potatoes and 2 Tbs. salt and bring to a boil. Boil just until a skewer or knife can easily penetrate the center of the potatoes, 20 to 30 minutes.

When the potatoes are done, draw off about 1 cup of the cooking liquid; set aside. Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot in which they were cooked. Mash them with a potato masher. With a wooden spoon, stir in



the olive oil. Add some of the reserved cooking liquid until you reach the consistency you like. Season generously with salt and several grinds of black pepper.

Just before serving, check the consistency of the potatoes and add a little more of the reserved cooking liquid if they need loosening. Mix in the parsley. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

—Josh Eisen,
Fine Cooking #25



Molasses Mashed Sweet Potatoes

Serves eight.

- 4 medium sweet potatoes (2 lb. total), peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 8 small carrots (1 lb. total), peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 4 medium parsnips (1 lb. total), peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- Kosher salt
- 4 Tbs. unsalted butter
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ¼ cup molasses
- 1 Tbs. finely grated fresh ginger
- ½ cup half-and-half
- Freshly ground black pepper

In a large saucepan, combine the sweet potatoes, carrots, and parsnips; cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, add 1 Tbs. salt, and simmer until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain and return to the saucepan. Set the pan over low heat, uncovered, and let the vegetables dry in the pan for about 2 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally so they don't stick. Pass the vegetables through a food mill or mash them by hand, if you prefer. Stir in the butter, sour cream, molasses, grated ginger, and half-and-half (if you're preparing the potatoes ahead, save 2 Tbs. of the half-and-half for reheating). Add ½ tsp. salt and pepper to taste, adjust the seasonings, and serve.

—Karen & Ben Barker,
Fine Cooking #47



Mashed Potatoes

Be sure to whip potatoes only until smooth, and never use a food processor to mash them—they'll get gummy.



Classic Bread Dressing

Serves ten to twelve.

1-lb. loaf good-quality white bread or baguette, cut into ½-inch cubes (10 to 12 cups)
8 Tbs. unsalted butter
3 cups ¼-inch diced onion
2 cups chopped celery (including inner leaves)
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1½ Tbs. chopped fresh sage (or 1½ tsp. dried)
1½ Tbs. chopped fresh thyme (or 1½ tsp. dried)
1 tsp. celery seeds
Pinch grated nutmeg
Pinch ground cloves
1 tsp. kosher salt
½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
2 cups homemade or low-salt chicken broth

Put the bread cubes on a rimmed baking sheet and either leave them on the counter to dry overnight or bake in a 275°F oven, tossing occasionally, until dry but not golden, 30 to 35 minutes. In a 12-inch skillet over medium heat, melt half the butter. Add the onion, celery, garlic, sage, thyme, celery seeds, nutmeg, cloves, and salt. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft, about 10 minutes. Set aside to let cool.

Heat the oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, toss the sautéed vegetables with the bread; season with pepper. Melt the remaining butter. Brush the inside of a 3-qt. baking dish with some of the butter. Pour the remaining butter, along with the broth, over the dressing; toss well. Spread in the baking dish and cover with foil. Bake until heated through, 20 minutes. Uncover and continue to bake until the top is crisp and golden, 20 to 30 minutes.

—Molly Stevens,
Fine Cooking #24

Cornbread Pecan Dressing

Serves ten to twelve.

4 Tbs. unsalted butter
5 slices bacon, cut crosswise into ¾-inch pieces
1½ cups chopped onion
1½ cups chopped celery (including inner leaves)
½ cup finely chopped shallots
1 Tbs. dried sage leaves
2 tsp. dried thyme
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
3 cups (10 oz.) pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped
2 lb. cornbread, coarsely crumbled (to yield about 6 cups lightly packed)
1½ cups homemade or low-salt chicken broth
3 large eggs, beaten

Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish. Melt the butter in a 10-inch sauté pan over medium heat. Add the bacon and brown slowly until crisp, 8 to 10 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to paper towels to drain; leave the fat and caramelized bits in the skillet. Add the onion, celery, shallots, sage, and thyme; sprinkle with salt and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until the vegetables are just tender,



10 to 15 minutes. In a large bowl, toss the vegetables, pecans, bacon, and cornbread. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Whisk together the broth and eggs; stir into the dressing and mix until well combined. Spread the mixture in the baking dish, cover tightly with foil, and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover and continue to bake until the top is lightly browned and crisp, another 20 to 25 minutes.

—Scott Peacock,
Fine Cooking #18

Italian Bread & Sausage Dressing

Serves eight to twelve.

1¼ lb. slightly stale Italian bread, like ciabatta, cut into ½- to ¾-inch cubes (to yield about 12 cups)
⅓ cup olive oil
1 lb. bulk sweet Italian sausage (or stuffed sausage, casings removed)
2 cups ¼-inch diced yellow onions
1 cup ¼-inch diced celery
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves (or 1½ tsp. dried)
1½ tsp. dried sage leaves
1 tsp. kosher salt
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 cup sweet Marsala wine

Heat the oven to 350°F. Oil a 9x13-inch (3-qt.) baking dish. Pile the bread cubes into a very large bowl and set aside. Set a 10-inch sauté pan over medium heat and add the olive oil and sausage. Cook, breaking up the sausage with a wooden spoon or spatula into ½- to 1-inch bits, until browned on all sides, 5 to 7 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the sausage to the bowl of cubed bread. Raise the heat under the pan to medium high, add the onions, celery, and garlic, and sauté until the onions are translucent and just beginning to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in the thyme, sage, salt, and pepper, cook for 1 minute, and then add the mixture to the cubed bread.

With the pan off the heat, carefully pour in the Marsala. Keep your face away from the pan as the wine may sputter. Set the pan over medium-high heat and bring the liquid to a boil, stirring to scrape up any flavorful bits in the pan. Boil for 2 minutes and then add the Marsala to the bread mixture; stir until well combined. Taste and add salt and pepper if needed. Spread the mixture in the baking dish, cover tightly with foil, and bake for 20 minutes. Remove the foil and continue to bake until the top is lightly browned and crisped, about 15 minutes.

—Greg Atkinson,
Fine Cooking #35

Dressings



Slightly stale bread is ideal for dressing, so leave bread on the counter overnight or bake cubes in a low oven until dry and golden.

Green Beans with Toasted Slivered Almonds

Serves eight.

- 6 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 2/3 cup slivered almonds**
- 1 lb. fresh green beans, trimmed**
- 4 tsp. minced garlic (2 to 3 cloves)**
- 1 tsp. kosher salt**
- Freshly ground black pepper**

Melt 4 Tbs. of the butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the almonds and cook, tossing frequently, until they're light brown and toasted, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer them with a slotted spoon to a plate lined with paper towels.

Add the green beans, garlic, and salt to the pan. Toss to coat the beans with the residual butter. Add 1 cup water and simmer gently, tossing occasionally, until the beans are fork-tender and fully cooked (taste one to check), 15 to 20 minutes. If the water evaporates before the beans are cooked, add more as needed, about 1/4 cup at a time. By the time the beans are cooked, the liquid should be reduced to about 1/4 cup or less; if there's too much liquid, increase the heat to a boil and let it reduce briefly. Add the remaining 2 Tbs. butter and toss to coat the beans and emulsify with the liquid. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Scatter the slivered almonds over beans on a serving platter or over each serving.

—Eve Felder,
Fine Cooking #53



Long-Cooked Green Beans with Oregano

Serves six to eight.

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 6 cloves garlic, chopped coarsely**
- Leaves from 6 large sprigs fresh oregano (scant 1/4 cup)**
- 1 3/4 lb. (preferably mature) green beans, trimmed**
- 2 tsp. kosher salt**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice**

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-based pot (like an 8-qt. Dutch oven) over medium heat. Add the garlic and oregano and cook, stirring, until fragrant and the garlic is softened but not browned, about 2 minutes. Put the beans in the pot, add the salt, and grind a little pepper over all. Add the lemon juice and 1/2 cup water and bring to a boil. Immediately reduce to a simmer, cover the pot, and cook the beans for 20 minutes. Remove the cover and simmer the beans gently over medium-high heat until nearly all the liquid in the pot has evaporated, about 30 minutes. During this time, occasionally turn the beans over upon themselves with tongs to mix them and coat them with the reducing juices. Let cool briefly before serving.

—Paul Bertolli,
Fine Cooking #17

Orange-Dijon Green Beans

Serves eight.

- 1 1/2 lb. fresh green beans, trimmed and cut or snapped in half crosswise (not lengthwise)**
- 1/4 cup fresh orange juice (from about 1 small orange)**
- 2 Tbs. Dijon mustard**
- 2 tsp. light brown sugar**
- 4 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 1 medium red onion (8 to 10 oz.), very thinly sliced**
- 1 tsp. lightly chopped fresh thyme**
- 1 tsp. kosher salt; more to taste**
- Freshly ground black pepper**

Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add the beans and cook until crisp-tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Drain in a colander, rinse with cold water to stop the cooking, and drain well. (This step may be done several hours ahead; refrigerate the beans if not using within 2 hours.)

In a small measuring cup, whisk together the orange juice, mustard, and brown sugar. In a 10- to 12-inch nonstick skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the red onion and toss to coat. Turn the heat to medium high and sauté, stirring often, until the onions are very shrunken and many are browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the beans, thyme, salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Add the mustard mixture, immediately turn the heat to medium low (the sauce will begin to thicken), and stir vigorously (or use tongs) to toss and combine the beans with the sauce. Continue cooking to heat the beans through and to thoroughly coat them, 1 to 2 minutes. Season to taste with more salt and pepper.

—Susie Middleton,
Fine Cooking #45



For added color, substitute yellow wax beans for some of the green beans.



Green Beans

Gratins



When preparing gratins, cut your vegetables uniformly to ensure that they cook evenly.

Butternut Squash Gratin with Onion & Sage

Serves four to six.

To make butternut squash easier to handle, cut off the neck, peel it, and cut it into pieces to use in this gratin. Reserve the bottom of the squash, which contains the seed cavity, for roasting.

- 1 Tbs. olive oil**
- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 4 cups 1-inch diced yellow onions**
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh sage (or 1 Tbs. dried)**
- 3 lb. butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into ½-inch cubes (about 7 to 8 cups)**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ½ cup plus 2 Tbs. heavy cream, heated until warm**
- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs**
- 1½ Tbs. melted unsalted butter**

Heat the oven to 350°F. Lightly butter a shallow 8x11-inch gratin dish.

In a 12-inch skillet, heat the 1 Tbs. butter and oil over medium-low heat. Add the onions and sage, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, while you prepare the squash.

Put the squash in a steaming basket and set over simmering water. Cover and let steam until the squash is tender, about 10 minutes. Put the squash in the prepared dish with the garlic and ¾ tsp. salt. Toss gently to combine.

Continue to cook the onions, stirring frequently once they begin to color, until they're very soft and brown, 30 to 45 minutes total. Season with salt and pepper and add them to the gratin dish, mixing them with the squash. Pour the warm cream over the vegetables. Toss the breadcrumbs with the 1½ Tbs. melted butter and a large pinch of salt; sprinkle the crumbs evenly over the gratin. Bake until the top is lightly browned and the cream is bubbling, about 40 minutes.

—*Deborah Madison, Fine Cooking #17*

Pearl Onion Gratin with Parmesan, Savory & Thyme

Serves eight.

- 2 lb. frozen pearl onions, thawed**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 3 4-inch sprigs fresh thyme**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 3 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted**
- 1 cup coarse fresh breadcrumbs**
- ¼ cup freshly, finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano**
- ½ tsp. dried savory leaves, crumbled**

Heat the oven to 400°F. Put the onions and ¾ cup water in a large saucepan over high heat. Stir and separate the onions with a fork as they heat. When the water boils, reduce the heat to medium, cover, and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain well and pat dry.

Combine the cream, thyme, and ½ tsp. salt in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. When the cream comes to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, brush a shallow 2-qt. gratin or baking dish with 1 Tbs. of the butter. In a small bowl, toss the breadcrumbs, Parmigiano, savory, the remaining 2 Tbs. melted butter, ½ tsp. salt, and several grinds of pepper.

Spread the onions in the baking dish. Pick out and discard



the thyme sprigs from the cream. Pour the cream over the onions and scatter the breadcrumbs on top. Bake until the breadcrumbs are deep golden brown and the cream is bubbling furiously around the edges, about 30 minutes. Let rest for 10 minutes before serving.

—*Jennifer Armentrout, test kitchen manager*



Sweet Potato & Leek Gratin

Serves six.

- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 2 Tbs. olive oil**
- 6 oz. pancetta, cut in ¼-inch dice**
- 2 large leeks (1 lb. total), trimmed, halved lengthwise, rinsed well, and sliced crosswise ¼ inch thick**
- ¼ cup minced garlic**
- 2 cups heavy cream**
- 3 Tbs. fresh thyme leaves**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 medium sweet potatoes (1 lb. total), peeled**
- 3 medium russet potatoes (1¼ lb. total), peeled**

In a medium saucepan, heat the butter and oil over medium heat. Add the pancetta and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 9 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to paper towels. Put the leeks and garlic in the pan, cover, turn the heat to low, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the leeks are softened but not browned, about 5 minutes. Add the cream, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer uncovered for 5 minutes. Stir in the pancetta, thyme, 1 tsp. salt, and pepper to taste; set aside.

Heat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 2-qt. casserole dish. Slice the sweet potatoes and russet potatoes ⅛ to ¼ inch thick. Arrange one overlapping layer of russets on the bottom of the casserole. Season lightly with salt and pepper; spoon 2 Tbs. of the leek cream evenly over the potatoes. Add a layer of sweet potatoes, season lightly, and spoon on another 2 Tbs. of the leek cream. Repeat with the remaining potatoes until all are used. Press firmly on the potatoes; drizzle the remaining leek cream over them. Bake until the top is golden and the potatoes in the center feel tender when pierced with a fork, 50 to 60 minutes. Let rest in a warm place for 15 minutes before serving.

—*Karen & Ben Barker, Fine Cooking #47*

Cranberry-Pear Salsa

Yields 3 cups.

- 12 oz. fresh cranberries, picked over and stemmed**
- 1½ cups peeled, cored, and coarsely chopped pears (about 2 medium or 1 large pear)**
- ½ cup diced green bell pepper**
- ¼ cup honey**
- ½ cup granulated sugar**
- 1 fresh serrano chile, cored, seeded, and minced**
- 1 tsp. finely grated orange zest**
- 2 Tbs. fresh orange juice**
- 1 Tbs. canola oil**
- Pinch salt**

Coarsely chop the cranberries (or pulse them in a food processor until coarsely chopped). Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl and toss gently. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

—*Abigail Johnson Dodge, Fine Cooking #18*



Cranberry-Orange Relish with Ginger

Yields 3 cups.

- 12 oz. fresh cranberries, picked over and stemmed**
- 1 small navel orange, including the peel, cut into eighths**
- Generous ⅓ cup roughly chopped crystallized ginger**
- 1 Tbs. granulated sugar**
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt**

In a food processor, combine the cranberries, orange, crystallized ginger, sugar, and salt. Process until coarsely ground, stopping once or twice to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Transfer to a serving bowl, cover, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

—*Diane Morgan, Fine Cooking #53*



Cranberry Citrus Compote

Yields 5 cups.

- 24 oz. fresh cranberries, picked over and stemmed**
- Finely grated zest of 1 lemon**
- Finely grated zest of 1 orange**
- 2 shallots, finely chopped (about ¼ cup)**
- 2 cups granulated sugar**
- ½ cup orange juice**
- ½ cup thinly sliced scallions (3 large)**

Up to one week ahead: Heat the oven to 350°F. Combine the cranberries, lemon zest, orange zest, shallots, and sugar in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Turn into a 3-qt. glass baking dish and drizzle the orange juice over the cranberry mixture. Bake, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved and a few berries have popped open, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, let cool thoroughly (the pectin in the excess liquid will firm up when cool), cover, and refrigerate.

On the day of serving: Remove the compote from the refrigerator early in the day to bring it to room temperature. Fold in the sliced scallions and scrape into a serving bowl.

—*Michael Brisson, Fine Cooking #29*



Before using cranberries, pick them over for stems and shriveled berries. Any stray white cranberries are fine to leave in—they're sweeter than red ones.

Cranberry Sauces

Getting a jump on things

To save stove space as well as your sanity, make some dishes ahead

Bake the gratins a day or two ahead and reheat them, combine the dressing ingredients a day before baking, and make and chill the cranberry sauce a few days ahead and bring it to room temperature before serving. To keep mashed potatoes warm, put an inch of water

in the pot the potatoes were cooked in and set it over low heat. Put the potatoes in a metal mixing bowl, cover with foil, and put the bowl on top of the pot. You can hold the potatoes like this for at least 2 hours; just maintain the water level and keep the heat low.

Fine Cooking magazine features hands-on, how-to cooking information for cooks of all skill levels. The magazine is published seven times a year.

Visit FineCooking.com to subscribe today.