

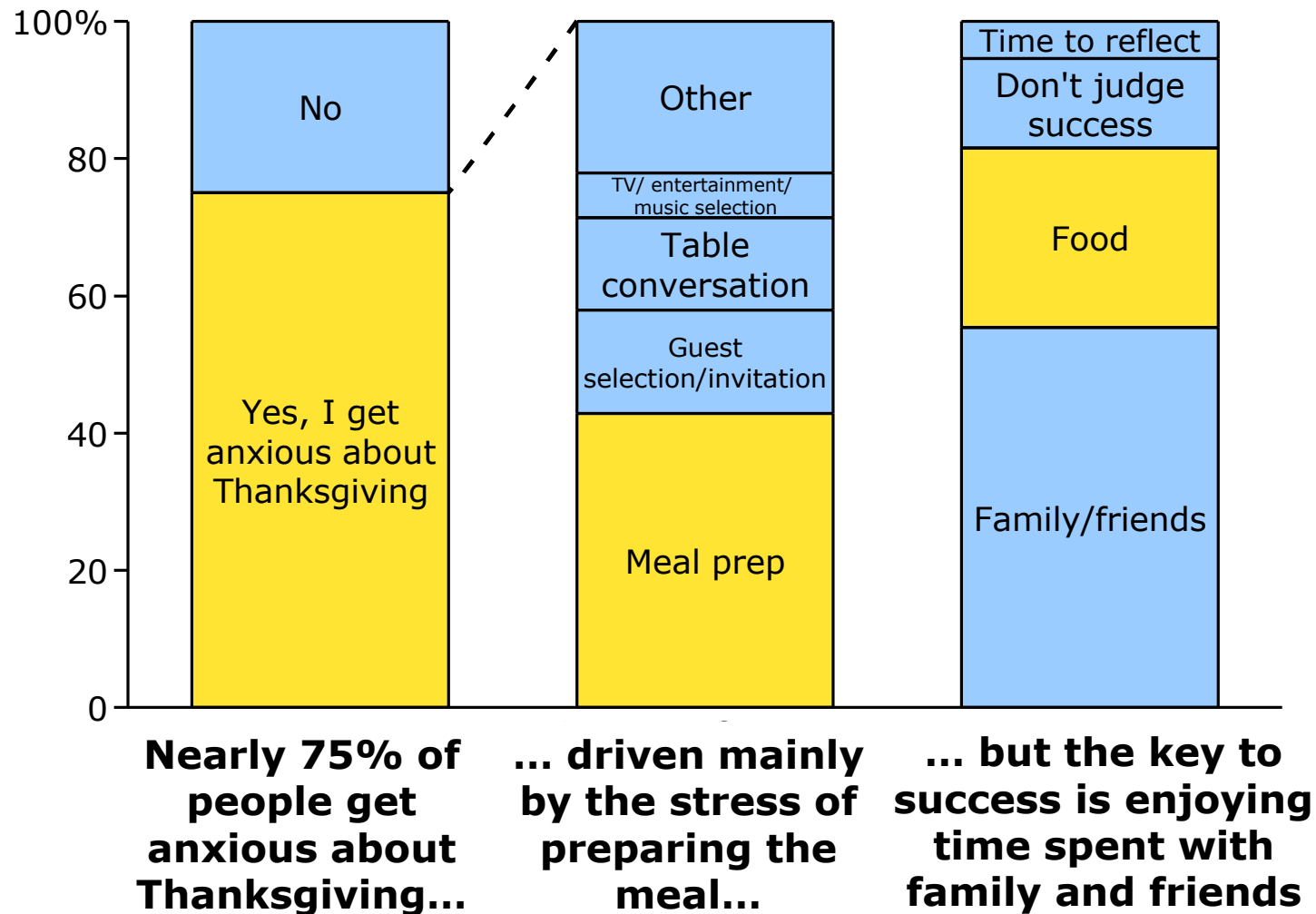
**BAIN & COMPANY**

**2005 Thanksgiving Holiday  
Management Analysis**

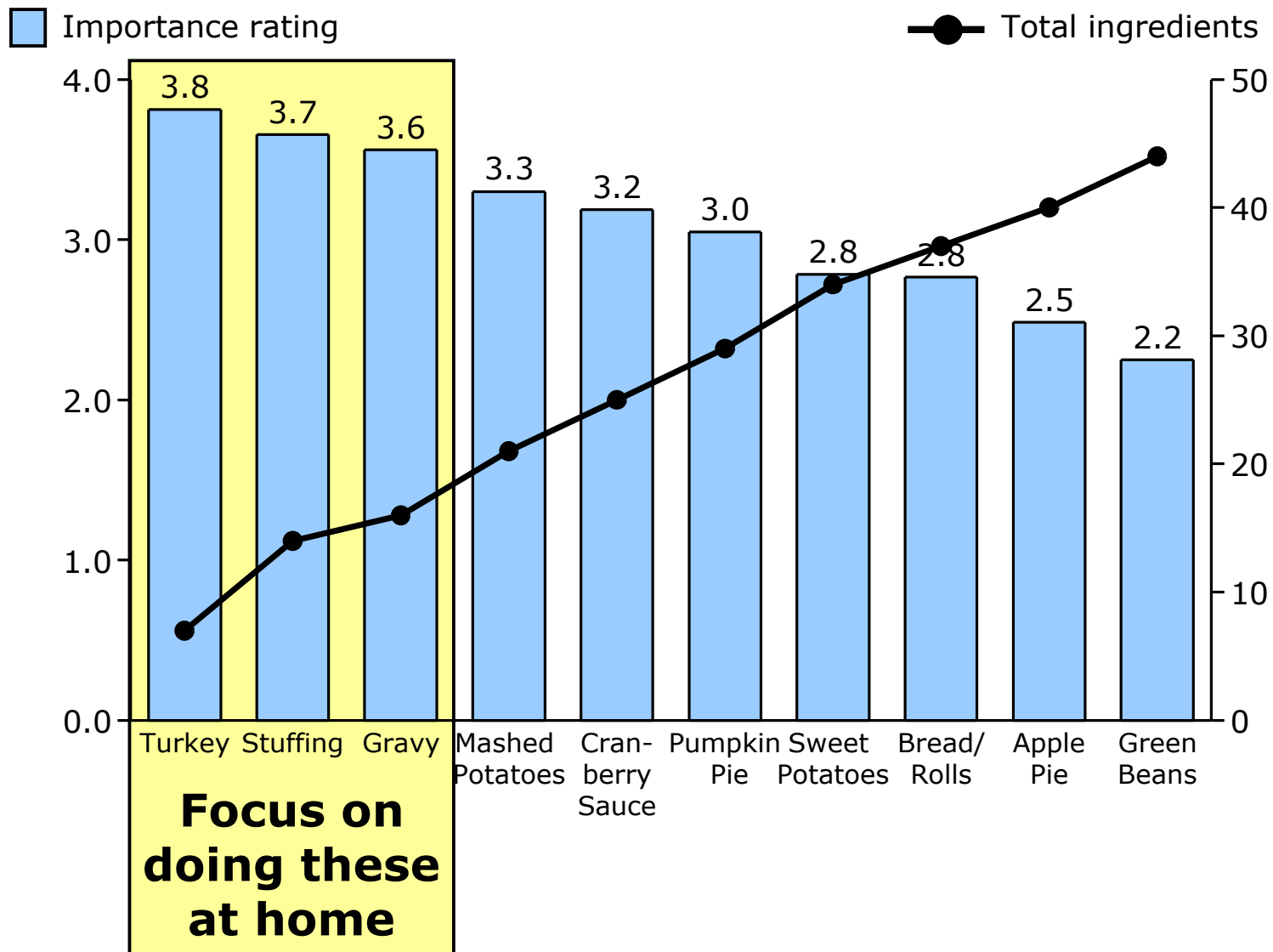
“Focus on the Essentials”

November 2005

# Sources of Thanksgiving stress and success



# Simplify the menu to focus on the essentials



Source: Bain 2005 Thanksgiving Holiday Management Survey, n=280

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# Bain's Top 5 Thanksgiving Simplification Tips: #1 Complexity Reduction Planning

## Complexity Reduction Planning

- *Use the Thanksgiving checklist as the master plan.* Start by talking to your guests to find out what they want, identify any dietary requests or constraints, and the activities where they're able to contribute – from food to entertainment to cleaning-up
- *Plan and delegate the menu.* Confirm with your guests what they'll bring and how much. If you don't want leftovers, make less or forego the dish altogether. The time saved can then be reallocated to decorating the house, getting the turkey cooked on time and relaxing, etc.
- *Postpone complexity.* For example, create a vegetarian version of the stuffing by using vegetable stock and adding sausage to a portion at the end, thereby avoiding the need for multiple stuffing dishes
- *Optimize logistics.* Increase the odds of guests arriving on-time, or at least at the same time, by having pre-selected area to park and by organizing carpools

# Bain's Top 5 Thanksgiving Simplification Tips:

## #2 Guest-Sourcing

### Guest-Sourcing

- *Ensure everyone shows off their world-class skills – whether culinary, creative or entertainment.* Many non-food items can be guest-sourced, such as extra tables and chairs, decorations, wine, etc. Bain suggests having guests bring extra pots or platters is a great way to ensure they have to clean-up before going home
- *Set-up teams according to core competencies.* Assign guests beforehand to the set-up, food, entertainment and clean-up teams for greatest efficiency. Even the kids can join in with some of the easier tasks and less-fragile items
- *Assign someone to manage the guest-sourcing relationships.* Let the cook focus on the food by having someone else marshal resources outside the kitchen. If faced with guest capacity constraints, Bain suggests considering other supply and catering options – or the ultimate Thanksgiving outsource option, enjoying your holiday meal and get-together at a restaurant

# Bain's Top 5 Thanksgiving Simplification Tips: #3 Rapid-Results Cooking

## Rapid-Results Cooking

- *Plan how long everything takes to cook.* Focus on doing a few dishes exceptionally well. Prepare the day before where possible. Prevent last minute chaos by writing down how and when dishes will be reheated before serving (in oven versus microwave versus stove-top, etc.)
- *Process dishes in parallel.* For example, the turkey needs to cool before carving. This is the time to finish the stuffing, making the gravy and microwaving side dishes
- *Consider a self-basting turkey.* Reduce the effort from basting and increase in cooking time due to opening the oven
- *Plan for emergencies.* Make sure 1-800-Butterball® is on speed-dial for those emergency questions, like "Why is my turkey turning blue?"

# Bain's Top 5 Thanksgiving Simplification Tips: #4 Smart-Seating

## Smart Seating

- *Use 'factor analysis' for seating.* Seat guests with common interests together to ensure the best conversation. Use Meyers-Briggs® personality tests, or other personality assessment techniques, to maximize a healthy conversation flow. Pre-empt potential conflicts by seating known arch-rivals on the same side of the table, as far apart as possible
- *Seat people for rapid clean-up.* Have the clean-up crew closest to the kitchen. Seat kids away from expensive rugs
- *Consider a kitchen assembly line.* Consider a break with tradition and plate food in the kitchen to avoid the bottleneck of dishes being passed around a large dinner table
- *Warm the plates.* Use the time when the turkey is cooling to heat plates and increase the buffer between serving and eating
- *Line up the caffeine.* Serve lots of coffee relatively soon after eating to avoid the effects of 'turkey coma' and boost motivation of the clean-up crew

# Bain's Top 5 Thanksgiving Simplification Tips: #5 Crash the Clean-up

## Crash the Clean-up

- *Delegate before dinner entertainment of kids and non-cooks/servers.* Guest-source pre-dinner entertainment to one of the more creative guests. Use the one-hour arrival time buffer before dinner for any more energetic games, mindful of the turkey coma to come
- *Use meeting leadership and facilitation skills during dinner.* Have a list of opening gambits to kick-start conversations or divert arguments (before they become blow-ups)
- *Motivate the clean-up crew.* At the end of the meal, thank all the guests for their contributions, and the clean-up crew in particular for their upcoming efforts while the remaining guests decamp to the living room
- *Focus the clean-up crew on highest impact activities.* Pack up the less delicious leftovers that won't fit into the fridge for the guests to take away. Fill the dishwasher. Leave any hard to clean pots or platters soaking until morning



# Create an integrated schedule for a successful, stress-free Thanksgiving

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

## Survey guests

by phone to:

- confirm availability
- get preferences and lessons learned from last year
- assess interests and willingness to help: cooking, buying wine, planning entertainment, bringing flowers etc.

## Plan menu,

car-pooling, overnight accommodation (as required)

- Negotiate with priority guests/ sell the plan** for outsourced dishes, entertainment and flowers

## Design and send invitations

confirming details with directions

- Arrange to rent extra tables,** chairs, place settings and glasses (as necessary)
- Order 24lb turkey**

## Shop for ingredients

(see shopping list on next page)

- Ensure storage** in place for Turkey on Wednesday night
- Pick up the extra tables** etc.

## Clean and

**decorate** the house, set up tables (outsourcing opportunity or the kids help out)

- Pick up the turkey** and refrigerate
- Prepare stuffing** and refrigerate uncooked

## **Relax/enjoy latte**

- 10am** preheat oven to 350, prep turkey
- 10.30am** roast turkey for ~5 hours

## **Relax/baste turkey**

- 3.30pm** cook stuffing in oven (while turkey rests)

- 4pm** Keep food and plates warm in oven. Make gravy

- 4.30pm** Reheat other dishes in microwave

- 5pm** Serve, eat and clean-up

# Impact of complexity and outsourcing strategies on shopping and budget

## If you don't get help from family and friends:

## World-class cooking of top 3:

### Dishes:

- Baked ham
- Mashed potatoes
- Sweet potatoes
- Green beans
- Cranberry sauce
- Pumpkin Pie
- Apple Pie
- Beverages

- Turkey
- Stuffing
- Gravy

### Shopping list:

Almonds	Eggs	Poultry seasoning
Apple juice	Flour	Pumpkin chunks
Baking powder	Fuji apples	Pumpkin spice
Bread crumbs	Garlic	Salt
Brown sugar	Granny smith apples	Sausage
Butter	Green beans	Sea salt
Buttermilk	Ground ginger	Shortening
Celery	Ground nutmeg	Sour cream
Chicken bouillon	Honey	Sweet potatoes
Cinnamon	Jalapenos chillis	Sugar
Corn	Milk	Thyme
Corn bread	Onion salt	Whole turkey
Cranberries	Oranges	Wine and beverages
Cream cheese	Pepper	Yeast
Dill weed	Pie crusts	
Dried parsley	Potatoes	

Butter  
Celery  
Chicken bouillon  
Corn  
Corn bread  
Dried Parsley  
Flour  
Garlic  
Jalapenos chillis  
Onions  
Pepper  
Poultry seasoning  
Salt  
Sausage  
Thyme  
Whole turkey

**Total items:**

46+ items

**Weight\*:**

~150 lbs

**Cost\*:**

\$217-528

16 items

~45 lbs

\$72-136

**Saving**

**65%**

**70%**

**40-85%**

\* Depends on guest appetite and shopping preferences

# Simple but delicious recipes for 24 to reduce complexity on the day

## Prepare and cook on Thanksgiving

### Turkey

- 1 (24 pound) whole turkey
  - 12 tablespoons butter, divided up
  - 8 cups warm water
  - 6 tablespoons chicken bouillon
  - 4 tablespoons dried parsley
  - 4 tablespoons dried thyme
  - 2 tablespoons seasoning salt
- 1 Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Rinse and wash turkey.
  - 2 Place turkey in roasting pan. Separate skin over the breast to make little pockets and put 6 tbsp butter on both sides between the skin and breast meat.
  - 3 In a medium bowl, combine the water with the bouillon. Sprinkle in the parsley thyme. Pour over the top of the turkey. Sprinkle seasoning salt over the turkey.
  - 4 Cover with foil, and bake in the preheated oven for 5 hours, until the internal temperature of the turkey reaches 180 degrees F (80 degrees C). Remove foil for the last 45 minutes so the turkey will brown.

### Gravy

- 10 cups chicken stock and/or drippings from turkey
- 2 cups water
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons poultry seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

In a saucepan, bring the stock and drippings to a boil. In a small bowl, dissolve flour in water. Gradually whisk into the turkey stock. Season with poultry seasoning, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes, or until thickened.

## Prepare on Weds, cook on Thurs

### Stuffing

- 6 ears of corn
  - 1 pound chorizo sausage, peeled
  - 2 sticks unsalted butter (1 stick melted)
  - 2 sweet onions, minced (3 cups)
  - 4 celery ribs, finely diced (2 cups)
  - 4 large garlic cloves, minced
  - 4 large jalapenos, seeded and diced
  - 2 tablespoons chopped thyme
  - Corn bread, coarsely crumbled (20 cups)
  - 4 cups chicken broth
  - Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 Preheat broiler with rack 8 inches from heat. Broil corn until slightly charred, ~7 mins. Let cool, then cut the kernels from the cob.
  - 2 Chop chorizo into 1/2 inch pieces. Cook over medium heat in skillet for 5 mins. Drain and transfer to paper towel-lined plate. Discard the fat.
  - 3 Melt 1 stick of butter in skillet. Add onion, celery, garlic, jalapenos and thyme. Cook over moderate heat until softened, about 10 mins. Scrape into large bowl. Add chorizo, corn kernels, corn bread, melted butter and broth. Season with salt and pepper and stir well. Let cool. Refrigerate uncooked stuffing overnight.
  4. While turkey cooling, bake stuffing in dish at 375F for about 30 mins or until heated through and crisp on top.



**Plan B for the seriously cooking challenged:  
purchase store-cooked turkey and pre-packaged stuffing mix**

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