

# Stress Free Easter

Enjoy A Fun And  
Relaxed Holiday With  
Family And Friends



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# Introduction



Easter is a great time to get the family together for a nice meal, some Easter egg hunting and going to church if that's your cup of tea. And who doesn't love a good excuse to go buy a pretty [spring dress](#)?

As fun as it is to get everyone together for a big Easter celebration, it's easy for things to get pretty stressful if you're the one hosting. There's a meal to plan, the house to clean, decorations to be put up, in addition to finding [cute Easter outfits for the kids](#) to wear. And of course there are plenty of Easter activities leading up to the holiday weekend like Easter Egg Hunts, Meeting the Easter Bunny, Church Services on Good Friday, and of course [decorating Easter Eggs](#).

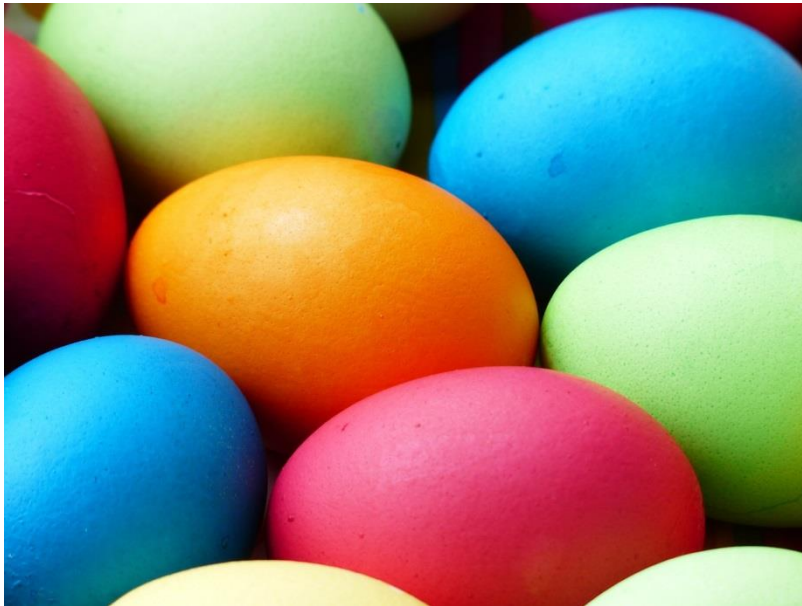
It's easy to get overwhelmed with everything that's going on. That's why we've put together this short report for you. My wish is that you are able to host Easter and enjoy a fun and relaxed holiday with family and friends. The key is to prepare, plan and do as much as you can ahead of time. Then relax and enjoy this special time with your loved ones. We'll cover how-to, inspiration and the spiritual side of Easter in this report. Let's dive right in and get to work.



# Planning Easter Activities and Decorations Ahead Of Time

There is nothing worse than having Easter sneak up on you and realizing there's no time to do the fun [Easter egg decorating](#) or making a pretty wreath for the front door before your guests arrive for Easter dinner. Or how about the disappointment of reading in the paper how much fun the Easter egg hunt at the local park was that you meant to take the kids to.

I get it... we're all busy and it's easy to have high hopes and big ideas for the weeks leading up to Easter only to find everyday life taking over and before you know it, Good Friday is here. Let's talk about a solution to this little dilemma that can take the fun out of your Easter celebrations.



I like to plan for Easter (and other big holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas and even 4th of July), 30 days in advance. Make up a 30 day calendar, or grab your regular wall calendar. Of course you can also use your favorite digital calendar or even a spreadsheet. Start by noting any regular obligations in black. Then go through and make a note of any scheduled holiday activities you'd like to participate in with your family in a different color. At this point

you'll have everything that's time sensitive noted.

Think about and make a list of everything else you would like to do as far as activities and decorations go. Do you want to make candies with the kids, [decorate Easter eggs](#), grow wheat grass nests or make a big wreath for the front door? Put everything on the list and then go back to your calendar. If you need a few more ideas, head on over to [Pinterest](#). (Be sure to follow [Family Breakfast Recipes](#) while you are on Pinterest.) It's full of fun Easter activities, recipes and decorating ideas.

Once you have your list, it's time to head back to the calendar and schedule each craft and activity. It is helpful to note about how much time you need to block off for each thing. If you don't have that information, take a guess, and give it a try. It's helpful and more enjoyable if you spread the crafts and activities out over several days instead of trying to cram everything into one Saturday afternoon.





Leave some time in your schedule for house cleaning and [decorating for the holiday](#) and keep any planned activities light the days right before Easter. It will take some time to shop, prepare and cook the big holiday meal.

The scheduling will help ensure you have time to do everything you want to get done this holiday season, but don't feel like you're tied to the plan you made. There's always room for some spontaneous fun as well. If you don't feel like dyeing Easter eggs on Friday night, do work on your spring wreath instead, boil the eggs and decorate them with the kids on Saturday morning instead. In other words, don't feel like you're tied to the schedule you're making. Use it as a tool and make it work for you and your family. Above all, make sure you're having fun doing the decorating and activities. Having fun and making memories with your little ones is what's important.

## Hosting Easter Without The Stress

There are three keys to hosting an Easter get-together without stress. They are to **plan, prepare and keep it simple**. If you follow these three simple rules, you'll be able to enjoy a fun and relaxing celebration. Don't let "keeping it simple" freak you out. You can still have a great meal and celebration that will impress your family and friends. Most of all there will be plenty of time for you to enjoy your loved ones and make memories with your family. And really, that's what these family celebrations are all about.

### Plan

The first key is to sit down and plan the festivities before you do anything else. It helps if you can get a rough headcount about a month or so before Easter. This will help you plan your meals, but also figure out how and where guests will be seated, if you need to rearrange furniture, or if you're better off serving the food buffet style.

Once you have a pretty good idea of who's coming over, you can plan what type of meal you'll prepare and what food you want to offer. Think about what you need to do to the house, [decorations you want to have up](#), when you'll set up tables and chairs if needed, and what you need to cook when and in what order. The more you plan ahead of time, the easier it will be to pull everything off without going into full panic mode.



## Prepare

The next key is to prepare as much as you can. As you plan the meal, think about dishes you can make ahead of time. You'll enjoy yourself more if you're not spending all day in the kitchen. It's much more fun to be able to spend time with your guests. For example, pick appetizers and desserts that you can make a week or two ahead of time and freeze. Pick side dishes you can prepare the day before and store in the fridge. Get a ham that's fully cooked and sliced, so all you need to do is warm it up in the oven or slow cooker and it's ready to serve.

Preparing also means getting the house cleaned and decorated well ahead of time. All you should need to do on Easter Saturday is a little spot cleaning. Then spend the rest of the day with meal prep as needed, setting tables and making sure the Easter outfits are laid out and ready for Sunday morning.

## Keep It Simple

As you plan and prepare, remind yourself to keep things simple. There's no reason to have 5 different side dishes and 3 desserts. Pick something most of your guests will like and prepare that. Believe me, your family and friends aren't coming over because of your impressive five course meal. They are coming over to enjoy each other's company and share some good food. A smaller number of dishes will be just as appreciated. And less dishes means a quicker trip to the store, less mess in the kitchen and an easier time getting everything ready to eat on time. Pick a few tasty dishes, and don't feel bad about picking up a frozen pie or casserole to round out the meal. Keep it simple and focus on enjoying your loved ones.



[Check out our Easter Brunch ideas and recipes on the blog.](http://familybreakfastrecipes.com/easter-brunch-ideas/)

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# Breakfast, Brunch, Lunch Or Dinner?

One of the fun things about hosting Easter (as opposed to Thanksgiving or Christmas for example), is that you can entertain for any meal. In other words, you're not just limited to a big dinner. Instead, consider inviting everyone over for breakfast after a sunrise service at church. Or how about brunch or lunch a little later in the day. And of course dinner is also always an option. Here are some quick and simple ideas to entertain for any meal.

## Easter Breakfast

One of our favorite family Easter traditions is to have everyone over after the Sunrise service for a hardy breakfast. I have a big bowl of fresh cut-up fruit and orange juice waiting in the fridge. A French toast casserole cooks in the slow cooker overnight, and I make a big batch of homemade cinnamon rolls the night before and store them on the baking sheet in the fridge.

Here's a link to our Facebook post for [Cinnamon Roll French Toast Casserole](#). (Like us on Facebook for more recipes.)





As soon as we get back from church, I preheat the oven to bake the rolls and make a big pot of coffee. By the time the rest of our family arrives, breakfast is just about ready to be served. Of course you could also bake up some bacon in the oven and fix a big pan of scrambled eggs and a batch of homemade biscuits.

Breakfast is quick and easy to fix and there are plenty of dishes you can make ahead of time. Look up some recipes for [overnight breakfast casseroles](#) and slow cooker breakfast dishes to make serving Easter breakfast quick and easy.

### [Easter Brunch](#)



The same dishes mentioned above will also make great additions to your Easter brunch. Just add a couple of savory dishes like sliced ham, strata or [frittata](#) and you're good to go. Of course, some [good bread](#) never goes amiss as well and since this is brunch, you can add a few dessert dishes as well.

If you want to dress your brunch up a bit, serve some champagne along with your orange juice for delicious mimosa drinks.

One of the reasons I love brunch is because you can serve just about anything and it's easy to make this a buffet style meal. Just line up the bowls, platters, pans and casserole dishes and let everyone serve themselves. Grab a cup of coffee or a mimosa and enjoy the company. What a great way to spend a large part of Easter Sunday together in a relaxed way.

When everyone's done eating and socializing, set up an [Easter egg hunt](#) in the yard for the little ones to round out the day.



## Easter Lunch

Lunch also gives you a lot of flexibility. You can go all out and fix the same food as you would for a traditional Easter dinner (think baked ham, rolls, casseroles, salad and desserts), or you can keep it relatively simple with some hot ham sandwiches, chips and a pretty carrot cake for dessert.

Some of the hardier dishes we talked about in the brunch section also make great additions to your Easter lunch. One of the reasons I like serving lunch is that we usually have plenty of leftovers for our own dinner after the guests leave. And there's time to clean up and get the house back in order in time for the work week.

## Easter Dinner

The traditional holiday meal is of course dinner. Around here we have many of the same dishes we enjoy each holiday. A ham is traditional for Easter, as is lamb, but there's no reason you can't serve a ham and a turkey for a large family gathering.

Fix your favorite make ahead casseroles, veggies and side dishes. If you have a lot of young children in the family, macaroni and cheese is always a good bet. And of course there should be plenty of dessert. Carrot cake is a favorite, but if making the traditional cake is too much work (and you don't want to buy one at the bakery), consider making a carrot cake dump or poke cake instead. And of course a yummy pie never goes amiss.

No matter what meal you serve, keep in mind that you don't have to go all out and make 20 different dishes. Focus on a few family favorites and make larger batches as needed. After all, it's not about the most impressive dishes, but good food shared with company.





# Share the Joy - You Don't Have To Do Everything Yourself

One of the beautiful things about family gatherings is that you don't have to do everything yourself. We may feel like we do, but we really don't. Think about the last time you were asked to bring your famous apple pie or that German potato salad everyone loves. Did you mind making it, or did you appreciate being asked and like the fact that your mother, aunt or sister-in-law likes it enough to ask you to bring the dish to share?



Chances are that you felt proud and were happy to prepare the dish. And guess what... your loved ones feel the same way. Share the joy of the Easter celebration and ask the cooks in your family to bring a dish to share. But it doesn't stop there. Let's take a closer look at how you can share the joy and the workload by not doing everything yourself.

## **Get Your Spouse And Kids To Help Get The House Ready**

Instead of doing all the cleaning, decorating and setting the table for your guests by yourself, put your family to work. Assign tasks depending on age and skill level. It's a family celebration and your own family should help you get the house ready for your guests.



Start early and spend a few weekends in spring getting the yard and porches in order. Dust, vacuum and decorate a few days before Easter. Set out tables and chairs if needed on Good Friday or Easter Saturday. Set the table Saturday evening so everything is ready on Sunday morning when you get up.

### **Share The Cooking With Your Guests**

Instead of doing all the cooking yourself, think about who makes great side dishes and desserts in your extended family. Ask them to bring a certain dish to share. That leaves you with the ham and maybe a side dish or two to prepare along with some biscuits or rolls. That's a lot more manageable than fixing everything on your own.

As mentioned earlier, I'm sure your guests won't mind bringing a dish to share. If you're not sure what someone could bring, just ask. Plan all this at least a week before Easter so you can make plans for anything that isn't taken care of. And don't feel bad about picking up a frozen broccoli casserole or a store-bought cake to round out the meal.

### **Dish Out Leftovers**

A big bulk of the clean-up after a big holiday meal is taking care of all the leftovers. Instead of putting it all up and freezing, pick up a pack of sturdy paper plates and some plastic wrap or inexpensive [plastic containers](#). Invite your guests to fix a plate of leftovers for lunch the next day before they head out the door. You'll end up with a lot less food to deal with and if you've asked people to bring a dish to share, there won't be a whole lot of dishes left to do either.



### **Many Hands Make For Quick Clean-up**

Since your guests will likely be family and close friends, don't be afraid to ask for help cleaning up before everyone leaves. Ask everyone to bring their plate to the kitchen, rinse it and stick it in the dishwasher. Set the rest of the dishes to soak as needed and get the guys to help put away any extra tables and chairs you set up. With that done, it won't take you more than half an hour to finish clean-up after your guests leave. It'll be nice to have the house back in order and a little time to put up your feet before heading to bed. Best of all, you don't have to worry about coming home to a messy house after work on Monday.



# It's Not Just About the Easter Bunny - A Short History

One of the beautiful things about planning a stress free Easter celebration is that you have plenty of time for the spiritual side of this holiday. Easter is about so much more than colored eggs and the Easter bunny. It is [the single most important holiday in the Christian faith, marking the day Christ rose from the dead.](#)

The Easter celebration starts on Good Friday, the day Jesus died on the cross. It's an important date in the Christian calendar because of what Jesus died for. He came to earth, lived, preached and finally died to forgive our sins. His purity and his willingness to be crucified are the reason he is sometimes referred to as the lamb sent to slaughter (and a reason why we now often see little stuffed animal lambs in Easter baskets). Good Friday marks the end of Lent and is a day often spent fasting and praying.



Easter Sunday marks the day Jesus rose from his grave. His Father called him back to his side in heaven and that's what we are celebrating on Easter. Think about this as you walk out of the Sunrise Service this Easter Sunday.

Why then, if this is a deeply spiritual and sometimes emotional holiday, do we celebrate with colored eggs, spring chicks and Easter bunnies? For this we have to go back in time to the early days of Christianity.

As the Christian faith was starting to spread across much of Europe, early church leaders were looking for ways to grow their reach and make Christian holidays more approachable to pagans. Thus Christmas, the day of Jesus's birth was celebrated in December around the time of the Winter Solstice and the ancient roman celebration of Saturnalia. Easter on the other hand is celebrated in spring, a time of new life and fertility.



Many pagan symbols of fertility including eggs, chicks and rabbits were incorporated into the Easter holiday traditions. They made the idea of Easter more approachable and eventually more popular. This morphing of existing pagan holidays and





traditions with the Christian faith is a big reason why Christianity spread so quickly throughout a large part of the world.

Should we then ignore bunnies and eggs as symbols of Easter since they are rooted in Paganism? Probably not, but we do need to make sure we don't make Easter only about chocolate bunnies and Cadbury eggs. Let's remember and share with our kids what this Holiday is really about: Jesus Christ died so our sins may be forgiven.

## Dealing With Leftovers - Without Getting Sick Of Ham and Eggs

The main leftovers you usually have around Easter are ham and eggs. And a good portion of the eggs will likely be hard boiled. If you've been dyeing Easter eggs with the kids, you'll have plenty of hard boiled eggs. Let's take a look at what you can make with hard boiled eggs and ham without getting sick and tired of either over the coming days and weeks.



Let's start with the eggs. If you bought plenty of eggs and didn't get around to boiling all of them yet, use them to make scrambled eggs or French toast for breakfast. French toast is also a great way to use leftover Easter bread. Stratas, [frittatas](#) and omelettes are great dishes to enjoy for lunch and dinner. Best of all you can use various other bits and piece of leftovers in all three of these dishes. Use what you have and start cleaning out the fridge.





If the eggs are already boiled, you have a couple of simple options. Peel them and turn them into deviled eggs or egg salad. You may end up with a little extra color on your eggs from the dye, but provided you used food safe coloring, they will still be fine to eat.

Another option is to slice the peeled eggs and use them on sandwiches. Last but not least, you can make scotch eggs for a hearty and portable breakfast treat. These are hard boiled eggs that are covered in pork sausage and rolled in breadcrumbs. They are either baked or deep fried and eaten cold or at room temperature.

[Read our Eggstravanza article with lots of egg recipes. Click here](#)

Now that the leftover eggs are taken care of, let's talk about ham. One of my favorite things about Easter and Christmas when it comes to food is the fact that I end up with plenty of ham leftovers. Set aside any slices and either fry them up in the morning and serve with eggs, make sandwiches for lunch, or freeze the ham slices to fry up later. They will keep in the freezer for up to a year. [Click here for our breakfast recipes that include ham.](#)

All leftover random pieces of ham are chopped and used in soups, stews, omelettes and casseroles throughout the coming weeks and months. Keep what you know you will use in the next day or two in the fridge and freeze the rest in 1 cup servings. Toss a bag of these into your Mac and Cheese for a quick weeknight meal.

Let's not forget about the ham bone. Save it and use the bones to make ham and bean soup or cook up a pot of pinto beans. The bone adds a lot of flavor to anything you're cooking low and slow.

I hope these ideas are helpful and inspire you to get creative with your Easter leftovers. Take what you've got and turn it into delicious meals for the coming days and weeks.

## Closing Words

I hope you find this report inspiring and take the advice to heart. Celebrating Easter with your loved ones should be about spending time together as a family, not stressing about getting the house cleaned, the table set and a big dinner ready on time.

Take the tips and ideas in this report and see what works for you and what doesn't. Maybe asking for help with food preparation isn't an option for you. That's ok. Just keep it simple, do what you can but don't wear yourself out. The company in the end is much more important than having a bunch of different dishes on the table. Keep it simple, focus on what really is important to everyone, and make sure there is plenty of time and energy for you to enjoy this special day.

Make memories, but don't feel like you have to cram every single possible spring and Easter activity in your busy week. Take time to slow down, smell the roses and enjoy a pretty sunny



day with your kids. Focus on making memories instead of recreating a Pinterest-perfect holiday. Then and only then will you have a stress free Easter and are able to enjoy a fun and relaxed holiday with family and friends.

**Happy Easter!**



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