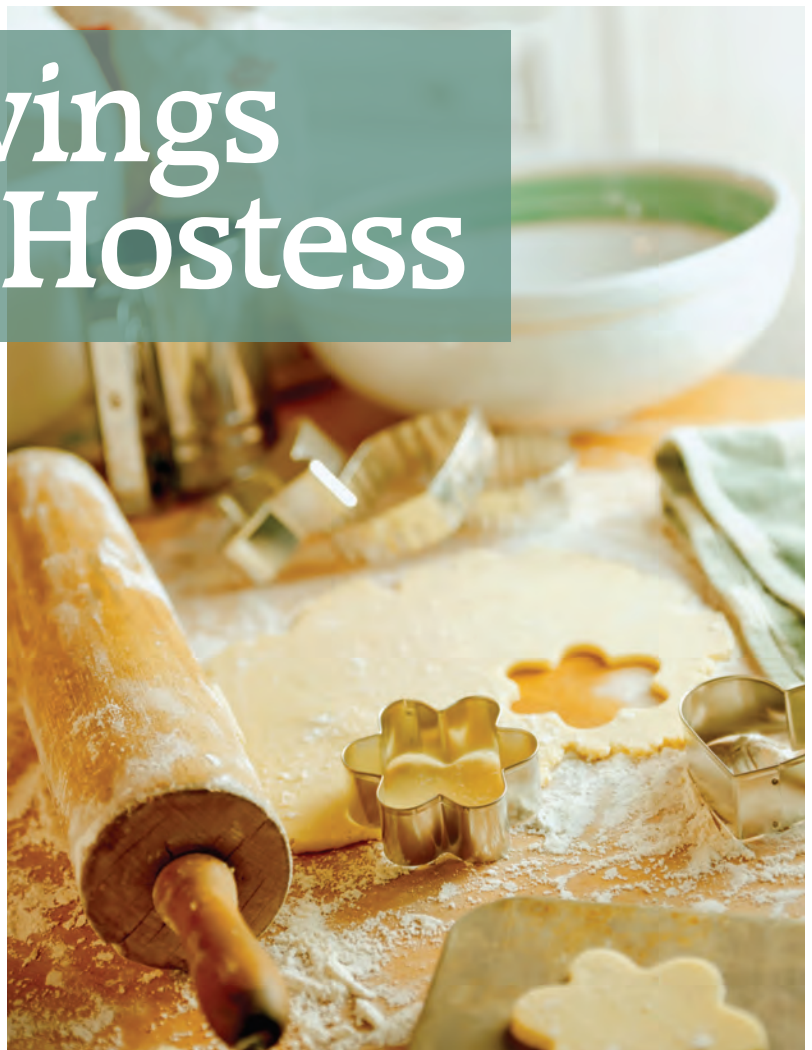


Time Savings for the Hostess

Save yourself hassles
and headaches by
“outsourcing” your
holiday meals

By Amanda N. Wegner

Instead of spending December days slaving over a hot stove, standing elbow-deep in flour, or struggling to find space in your refrigerator or freezer, consider cutting some corners for convenience. With an unending array of quality options for carryout, catering and sheer simplicity in the Madison area, outsource your holiday cooking and baking with these suggestions.



Tradition to-go

If you're pining for a traditional holiday turkey dinner but want to spare yourself the work, consider ordering a turkey (or ham) dinner from Fitchburg's SuperTarget. You'll still have to cook the meat and heat the sides, but these holiday dinners include the full spread. Peapod (www.peapod.com), a grocery delivery service, offers heat-and-serve holiday turkey, ham and prime rib dinners with all the trimmings.

Treats for a cause

The holiday season brings ample opportunities to support a cause while lessening your load in the kitchen. One such opportunity supports Coventry Village Scholarship Foundation. Through Tuesday, December 31, choose from an assortment of fresh-baked, ready-to-eat 10-inch pies; select eight-inch sugar-free options also available. Sales are bi-weekly and pies are \$9 each. Pick up an order form at Coventry Village Retirement Community, 7707 North Brookline Drive, Madison, or call 829-0603 for ordering information. Additionally, many nonprofits, churches and service organizations host bake sales. Check with your favorite group to see what they have planned.

Tasty takeout

Have a big crew coming? You rely on your favorite restaurant to deliver great taste and service when you need a break from the kitchen, so why not give them a try this holiday season? Some restaurants offer catering, while others offer family-size party trays of their beloved entrees.

One restaurant you can rely on is Gino's (540 State Street, www.ginosmadison.com), which offers family-size Italian takeout options for 12. Enjoy a pan of meat or vegetarian lasagna, Penne Provençal or four other authentic Italian favorites; bread and salad is available, too.

For a truly Wisconsin holiday, stop by Fromagination (22 S. Carroll Street, www.fromagination.com) and pick up an artisanal cheese box. Eat outside the box with Willy Street Co-op's party platters. From meal options such as the Co-op's popular Sake Roasted Salmon (for 10 people and up) to easy-to-serve sandwich and appetizer platters for meat eaters and non-meat eaters alike (1221 Williamson Street, www.willystreet.coop), there's something for every taste.



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**FITCHBURG/MADISON • MIDDLETON
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Frozen festival

The Madison area's five MyMenu stores provide delicious frozen goods for gatherings; the only stove slaving required is putting the food in and taking it out. Simplify your Christmas Eve with a colorful palette of party foods, or grab a sweet treat and defrost for decadent desserts.

UBake Madison (6632 Odana Road, www.ubakemadison.com) packs a lot of menu options into two rows of freezers. Soup, pasta and other entrees serve eight to 12, with frozen breads and rolls available. Or grab a quiche for Christmas morning. There are gluten-free options, too. No need to worry about toeless stockings, crooked candy canes or bloated gingerpeople, UBake Madison has an array of precut sugar cookies; just bake from frozen and decorate.

Stress-less shopping

Grocery shopping can take up a lot of time, especially during the holidays. Metcalfe's Sentry at Hilldale offers Metcalfe's on the Go with online ordering and grocery delivery at www.shopmetcafes.com. An added bonus is that the first delivery is always free. The aforementioned Peapod offers free delivery for the first 60 days after your first order, on orders of \$100 or more. Willy Street Co-op offers its Co-Shop for members; order online and have it delivered (limited delivery area in Madison), or pick it up in-store.

They don't deliver, but stopping by one of the area farmers markets, which are always quieter this time of year, will unveil a host of locally grown produce and homemade baked goods (and maybe some gifts, too) that will make your holidays all the more special. Check out the Dane County Winter Farmers Market at Monona Terrace Saturdays 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., or The Best of Wisconsin Indoor Farmers Market in McFarland (Village Municipal Center, 5915 Milwaukee Street), Saturdays 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Both markets run through Saturday, December 19. **mb**