



RETAILER'S GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL THANKSGIVING PRODUCE SEASON

As the busiest food holiday of the year approaches, it's time to make sure your produce department is ready to meet the high demand. This year, Thanksgiving falls on Thursday, November 27th. Early planning and organization are key for optimizing sales and a stress-free holiday. So how do you get your produce department Thanksgiving-ready? Read on for some winning strategies for a successful Thanksgiving.



ORDERING AND PLANNING FOR THANKSGIVING



Review past data for forecasts. Start with last year's sales and order records to forecast demand. Thanksgiving trends are generally consistent year to year. Use your past numbers for key items as a baseline, then plan for a modest increase, around 2% growth is a good rule of thumb.



Order early. The earlier you communicate your needs, the easier it will be for suppliers to secure inventory. Place larger orders (including pallets, half pallets and bins) with your Account Manager at least 2-3 weeks in advance.



PRE-BOOKS key holiday items. You can always back off on your orders following the holiday, but you cannot sell what you don't have in your store. Certain key items such as green beans and mushrooms do get limited so get your orders in early to ensure availability.



Bring in items before the rush. Plan your deliveries so core items are in-store well before the rush:

- **Hard goods (pumpkins, squash, potatoes):** receive Thursday 11/20 – Saturday 11/22.
- **Fresh items (herbs, mushrooms, greens):** receive Saturday 11/22 – Monday 11/24.
- **Final fill-ins:** schedule for Tuesday 11/25 – Wednesday 11/26 to cover last-minute sales and Friday sales.



Have a back up plan: Weather and logistics challenges can disrupt even the best laid plans. It is always good to have other sources to pull from in case your original plan falls through.



Future orders: The week following Thanksgiving tends to be quieter as customers recover from holiday festivities. Review your future produce orders with your Account Manager to to adjust volumes accordingly. **Tip:** Banana sales typically slow down after Thanksgiving, so pre-orders may need to be reduced.

THANKSGIVING ORDER CHECK-LIST

Place your produce orders as early as possible for Thanksgiving!

Talk to your Account Manager for recommended quantities and your order schedule.



VEGETABLES

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Beans - Green (25#) | ☐ Rosemary | ☐ Mushrooms |
| ☐ Broccoli | ☐ Sage | ☐ Crimini |
| ☐ Crowns | ☐ Thyme | ☐ Portabella |
| ☐ Baby Bunch | ☐ Garlic | ☐ Specialty Chef Sampler |
| ☐ Brussels Sprouts (10#) | ☐ Colossal | ☐ Onions |
| ☐ Carrots | ☐ Super Colossal (30#) | ☐ Red |
| ☐ Bagged | ☐ Greens | ☐ White |
| ☐ Bunched | ☐ Collard Greens | ☐ Yellow |
| ☐ Celery | ☐ Dino Kale | ☐ Potatoes |
| ☐ 24 count | ☐ Rainbow Chard | ☐ Red |
| ☐ Bins with tops | ☐ Red Kale | ☐ Russet |
| ☐ Fresh Herbs | ☐ Hard Squash | ☐ Yellow |
| ☐ Chives | ☐ Acorn | ☐ Sweet Potatoes |
| ☐ Curly Parsley | ☐ Butternut | ☐ Garnet |
| ☐ Flat Parsley | ☐ Delicata | ☐ Hannah |
| ☐ Holiday Mix | ☐ Kabocha | ☐ Japanese |
| ☐ Poultry Mix | ☐ Spaghetti | ☐ Jewel |
| | ☐ Sugar Pie Pumpkin | |
| | ☐ Bins | |

FRUIT

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| ☐ Apples | ☐ Citrus | ☐ Pears |
| ☐ Fuji | ☐ Orange | ☐ Bartlett |
| ☐ Granny Smith | ☐ Lemon | ☐ Starkrimson |
| ☐ Honey Crisp | ☐ Cranberries | ☐ Persimmons |
| ☐ Pink Lady | ☐ 18 x 8-Ounce Bags | ☐ Fuyu |
| ☐ Berries | ☐ 24 x 12-Ounce Bags | ☐ Hachiya |
| ☐ Blackberry | | ☐ Pomegranates |
| ☐ Blueberry | | ☐ 36ct and larger |
| ☐ Strawberry | | |

Download a [printable version](#) of the checklist!



Veritable
Vegetable

MERCHANDISING TIPS & REMINDERS

1. **Offer Convenience.** Convenience and Fresh-Cut Products save time for busy shoppers and sell well the week before Thanksgiving. Customers will be looking for pre-packaged and pre-bagged products. Offer ready-to-use products that are washed, trimmed and peeled, and cut such as broccoli or cauliflower florets, trimmed green beans, cubed butternut squash, and salad mixes.



2. **Assess Your Storage Needs.** Will you need more dry space? More cold storage? Prepare your coolers and storage area as much as possible to maximize holding Thanksgiving product. Some retailers source a temporary refrigerated unit that will be placed outside to store turkeys and holiday overflow. **Bonus:** Customers will be able to pick up pre-orders outside, reducing the traffic inside the store.
3. **Add Some Signage.** When customers are trying to get in and out of stores as efficiently as possible, bright, eye-catching signage is a great way to get their attention and improve their experience. Highlight a farm or label, post product information, provide storage recommendations, or share recipes. In addition to creating beautiful displays, signage is a great way to keep shoppers informed about operational changes during the holidays (extended hours, pre-order pick-up areas, etc.)

Brussels Sprout ORGANIC

- Rich, nutty flavor
- Roast, sauté or thinly shave raw into salads & slaws
- Store in a ventilated container in the fridge



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Download and print **Thanksgiving Shelf Talkers** for your store!

Need a laminated set? Talk to your Account Manager!

MERCHANDISING TIPS & REMINDERS

4. Load up on Staples: Potatoes & Onions. This is the time of year to build large displays of bagged and loose Potatoes, Onions, and Garlic.

- The best varieties for mashing are Yellow (for creamy flavor,) Russet (for fluffy texture) and Red (for smooth texture or skin-on recipes).
- Fingerling varieties and small "C" size potatoes are ideal for roasting and do not need to be peeled.
- For both potatoes and onions, check daily for breakdown and soft or sprouting product.
- Peeled garlic is a helpful item to carry during Thanksgiving for shoppers looking to save time during meal preparation.



5. Think Big for Sweet Potatoes! Promote a variety of sweet potatoes including specialty varieties. Garnet, Hannah, Japanese and Jewel are common varieties with Garnets being the most popular during Thanksgiving.

- Make tote bags full of potatoes for convenient grab & go.
- Orange flesh Garnet & Jewels are moister and ideal for pie, baking, roasting and mashing.
- White flesh Japanese & Hannah are drier and ideal for steaming, roasting and making into fries.
- Purple is trending! Add Stokes Purple Sweet Potatoes for health-conscious shoppers and those looking for a unique side dish.



MERCHANDISING TIPS & REMINDERS

6. Pre-Book your Fresh Herbs.

Fresh herbs are essential for many Thanksgiving recipes. Plan ahead so you're well stocked during the 6 days leading up to Thanksgiving. Chives, Curly & Flat Parsley, Poultry Mix, Rosemary, Sage, and Thyme will be in high demand.



7. Sides, Stuffing and Filling ingredients. While turkey is the main event, customers will be also shopping for ingredients for side dishes, stuffing and filling.

- Celery and Yellow Onions are on almost everyone's shopping list.
- Chestnuts, Bunched Parsley, Mushrooms, Sage, Apples, and Cranberries are key stuffing ingredients in many recipes.
- Many classic side dishes include cranberries for sauce, green beans, and Brussels sprouts.



8. Greens Sell! Collards, Kales and Chards sell surprisingly well during Thanksgiving. Don't get caught with too short supply!

9. Build Nut and Baking Displays as early as the beginning of November. In addition to being a baking ingredient, nuts sell well as healthy snacks and accompaniment for salads and other fall dishes. Expect nuts and baking products will sell well through New Year's. What to Include: In-shell & Shelled Mixed Nuts and Walnuts, Fresh Chestnuts, Pistachios, Almonds, Raisins, and Medjool Dates. Don't forget maple syrup as a natural sweetener and substitute for sugar in many recipes.

LABOR PLANNING FOR THANKSGIVING

During the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving and the week of, having enough staff scheduled can have a huge impact on your sales.

-  **Schedule extra staff.** You will need extra hands the week prior to receive orders and do a big Thanksgiving reset. During Thanksgiving week, the extra staff can assist with keeping displays fully stocked, keeping the department clean, and helping customers. Extra closing shifts can focus efforts on making sure displays are fully reset for the morning.
-  **Get ahead.** Do all the work you can before the week of Thanksgiving. Whether it's schedules, POS, pricing, or payroll – anything related to office or administration – get it out of the way! This will free up your time to work the floor and back up your team.
-  **Be prepared for the rush.** Monday through Wednesday (AKA Turkey Wednesday) before Thanksgiving are usually the busiest shopping days. Make sure your produce department is 100% set up and ready for customers on Monday morning open.

Pro Tip: To be in stock for the Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday rushes, you need to have product ordered and delivered 2-3 days ahead of these peak selling days.

2025 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY DELIVERY SCHEDULE

Plan ahead for Thanksgiving week! On Thursday, **November 27th**, our Sales department will be closed and there will be no deliveries. To ensure all your Thanksgiving and post-Thanksgiving orders arrive smoothly, please note our schedule for next week.

Monday, November 24th: Business as usual.

Tuesday, November 25th: Business as usual.

Wednesday, November 26th: **Orders due by 3pm for Friday delivery.**

Thursday, November 27th: **Sales closed for Thanksgiving. No deliveries.**

Friday, November 28th: Business as usual.

