



Ready, Set, Celebrate Easter

Taste of Home
Reader's
digest

Let's Celebrate!



Is there anything that signals the start of spring more than a delightful Easter Sunday? Featuring your favorite people, savory foods, sweet treats, colorful decorations and lots of smiles, Easter brunch is a wonderful way to celebrate the season. With *Ready, Set, Celebrate Easter*, we're giving you everything you need to host a truly memorable Easter Sunday.

The best thing about brunch is filling your plate with a little bit of everything you love, so set up your buffet with a spread of *Taste of Home* specialties that will

make everyone happy. Breakfast classics get a fun twist with **Eggs Florentine Casserole**, **Apple & Cheddar Mini Scones**, **Pecan Bacon** and **Mini Sausage Quiches**. Or, brighten things up with **Strawberry-Quinoa Spinach Salad** and **Tangy Poppy Seed Fruit Salad**. And make sure to leave room for the sweet stuff, like **Banana Macadamia Muffins**, **Lemon-Blueberry Pound Cake** and **Baked Blueberry-Mascarpone French Toast**.

Turn to our **handy timeline** to ensure that preparing your Easter brunch is stress-free. We've even put together a **grocery list**, **food labels** for the buffet and loads of **helpful tips**.

Simple crafts instantly dress up a party and make great Easter gifts for guests. **Tinted Mason Jars**, for instance, take moments to make. Fill them with your favorite flowers for centerpieces, or set them on your buffet as cute utensil holders. And what would Easter be without beautifully decorated eggs? Check out delightful **Washi Paper Eggs** for a change-of-pace treatment that's sure to be a hit. You'll find these easy ideas and more inside!

We've also gathered some **fun Easter facts**, **vintage photos** and **heartfelt stories** that are guaranteed to put a spring in your step. So let's get crackin'! It's time to celebrate spring with a fabulous Easter Sunday soiree!

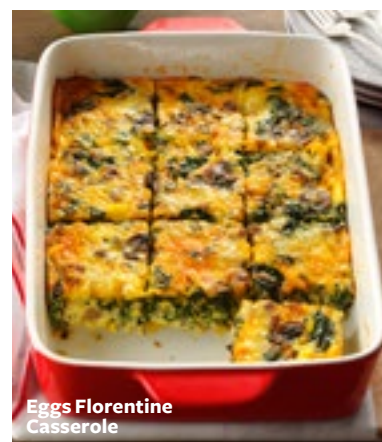
Your party planners,

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Strawberry Mimosas



Eggs Florentine Casserole



Lemon-Blueberry Pound Cake



Washi Paper Eggs

Six Secrets Behind Easter Traditions

From decorative eggs to cute bunny rabbits, Easter has a colorful list of customs. Learn the history behind some of this holiday's most popular practices from the team at **Reader's Digest**.

The Easter Bunny

The *ever-popular Easter bunny* is often included in the holiday...but why? It's possible that the answer lies in the name Easter itself. Some believe the goddess of spring and fertility, Eostre, is the inspiration behind the name of the holiday. (The goddess is said to have been accompanied by a hare.) While many sources debate this connection, there is no doubt that the tradition of the bunny was brought to the U.S. by Germans who settled in Pennsylvania and neighboring areas.



What's In a Name?

While some traditions connect the name Easter to the goddess Eostre, others turn to goddess Ishtar. Doubtless, the Christian holiday was modeled after celebrations of spring and fertility. However, its traditions also resemble those of Passover, and the Last Supper is believed by some to be a Passover Seder. European names still use this root for what they call Easter; in Spanish and Italian it is Pasqua, and the French call it Paques.



Bountiful Breads

Hot cross buns and other breads marked with an X to symbolize the cross are a tradition on many Easter tables. Different sweet breads are also used all over the world. Choreg (Armenia), *Paska* (Ukraine), *Babka* (Poland) and Tsoureki (Greece) are just a few. A traditional Italian Easter bread offers decorated eggs baked right in! These breads are risen breads, and this may indicate a desire for Easter traditions to be different from those of Passover—which features *unleavened breads*.



Show-Stopping Main Course

A considerable percentage of Americans serve ham at Easter, ending the abstinence from meat that typically happens during Lent. The tradition of *eating ham at Easter* most likely came from the act of preserving meat in salt over winter for a spring feast.



A Colorful Tradition

The stars on Easter tables are surely all those brightly decorated eggs. Without any *proven origin story*, legends abound about the connection between Easter and this delightful symbol of life. That said, the eye-catching eggs are brought to churches, given as gifts and hidden for Easter egg hunts all over the world.



When Is Easter This Year?

Easter is a moveable feast, meaning the date changes from year to year. The council of Nicea that was held in 325 A.D. determined that Easter would occur after the full moon following the vernal equinox on the next occurring Sunday...unless this happened to *interfere with Passover*, in which case it should be the Sunday after that. Got it? Simply remember that the holiday always occurs between March 22 and April 25. This year, Easter falls on April 16.



Easter Memories

Before celebrating Easter this year, take a moment to look at a few celebrations from the past. These sweet stories and photos were shared by readers of **Reminisce** magazine.



From left: Karen, Kathleen, Jayne, Peggy and Jim show off their Sunday best as well as the goodies that the Easter Bunny brought for them in 1959.

Mom Made A Beautiful Holiday

KATHLEEN R. SURMA ST. CLOUD, MN

My mother was one of the most creative people I've ever known. She could sew, cook, can foods from the garden and *decorate the house for every season*. Each year for Easter, Mom would take the Easter hats, headbands, and dresses from the previous year and "make them new." She bought new flowers, ribbons and lace and stayed up late at night finishing her creations. I remember getting up on Easter morning to see our outfits ready for us to wear to church. We felt so proud to dress in the items she made for us. Dad would always smile and tell us how pretty we looked. Even our little brother, Jim, was sharply dressed! In the picture above, we are sitting in the bay window of our home, which overlooked the Mississippi River in Rice, Minnesota. We had found our hidden *Easter baskets* and were ready to head to church.

The Pink Parade

RITA COX CHICAGO, IL

I *learned to sew* as an 8-year-old 4-H Club girl in Utica, Nebraska. As years went by, my family grew to include four daughters and one son. In 1965, I decided to create matching Easter clothes for all. Photographed below (along with a family friend on the far left), Kathy, 15, and Marge, 13, had three-piece suits in dusty rose. Luanne, 9, and Janet, 5, each wore a pink A-line dress with a jacket. Bob sported a pink necktie and a pocket square to match. I sewed the final stitches at 2 a.m. on Easter. Now every Easter reminds me of our pink Easter parade.



Let's Do Easter Brunch

Welcome family and friends to your home with an eye-opening buffet! Turn to these recipes from **Taste of Home** for your best Easter yet. See the buffet markers, grocery list and timeline that follow for easy preparation.



Baked Blueberry-Mascarpone French Toast

When I want something special to serve my guests for a Saturday or Sunday brunch, I turn to this recipe. It never fails. It's wonderful during the spring and early summer because the **blueberries** are particularly good this time of year.

—PATRICIA C. QUINN OMAHA, NE

PREP: 15 MIN. + CHILLING • **BAKE:** 1 HOUR + STANDING • **MAKES:** 10 SERVINGS

- 8 slices French bread ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick), cubed (about 4 cups)
- 2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 2 cartons (8 oz. each) mascarpone cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' sugar
- 10 slices French bread (1 inch thick)
- 8 large eggs
- 2 cups half-and-half cream
- 1 cup whole milk
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- Additional confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup sliced almonds, toasted
- Additional fresh blueberries, optional

1. In a greased 13x9-in. baking dish, layer bread cubes and blueberries. In a small bowl, beat mascarpone cheese and confectioners' sugar until smooth; drop by tablespoonfuls over blueberries. Top with bread slices. In a large bowl, whisk eggs, cream, milk, granulated sugar and vanilla; pour over bread. Refrigerate, covered, overnight.
2. Preheat oven to 350°. Remove French toast from refrigerator while oven heats. Bake, covered, 30 minutes. Bake, uncovered, 30-40 minutes longer or until puffed and golden and a knife inserted near the center comes out clean.
3. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. Dust with additional confectioners' sugar; sprinkle with almonds. If desired, serve with additional blueberries.



Strawberry Mimosas

Here's a *tasty twist* on the classic mimosa. To make this refreshing drink kid-friendly, just substitute lemon-lime soda or ginger ale for the champagne.

—**KELLY MAXWELL** PLAINFIELD, IL

START TO FINISH: 15 MIN.

MAKES: 12 SERVINGS (1 CUP EACH)

7 cups sliced fresh strawberries

3 cups orange juice

4½ cups champagne, chilled

GARNISHES

Fresh strawberries and orange slices, optional

Place half of the strawberries and orange juice in a blender; cover and process until smooth. Press through a fine mesh strainer. Repeat with remaining strawberries and orange juice. Pour a scant $\frac{2}{3}$ cup strawberry mixture into each champagne flute or wine glass. Top with about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup champagne. If desired, serve with a strawberry and an orange slice.

Pecan Bacon

This bacon dresses up any buffet. When my girls see it, they know they're in for a special breakfast.

—**CATHERINE ANN GOZA** LELAND, NC

PREP: 10 MIN. • **BAKE:** 30 MIN. • **MAKES:** 12 SERVINGS

24 bacon strips

½ cup packed brown sugar

½ cup finely chopped pecans

¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

¼ tsp. pepper

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Place bacon in a single layer in a foil-lined 15x10x1-in. baking pan. Bake 16-18 minutes or until lightly browned.
2. Remove bacon from pan. Discard drippings from pan, wiping pan clean if necessary.
3. In a shallow bowl, mix remaining ingredients. Dip both sides of bacon in brown sugar mixture, patting to help coating adhere; return to pan.
4. Bake 8-10 minutes longer or until caramelized. Remove immediately from pan.



Banana Macadamia Muffins

These muffins taste even better the next day, so to save time, I often make them the night before. They stay moist for days.

—**STASHA WAMPLER** CLINCHPORT, VA

PREP: 15 MIN. • **BAKE:** 20 MIN. • **MAKES:** 2 DOZEN

- 3 cups all-purpose flour**
- 2 cups sugar**
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 3 large eggs**
- 1 cup canola oil**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- 3 medium ripe bananas, mashed**
- 1 cup flaked coconut**
- 1 can (8 oz.) crushed pineapple, drained**
- 1 cup macadamia nuts, coarsely chopped**

- 1.** In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking soda and salt. In another bowl, combine the eggs, oil and vanilla. Stir into the dry ingredients just until moistened. Fold in the bananas, coconut and pineapple.
- 2.** Fill greased or paper-lined muffin cups two-thirds full. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake at 375° for 18-20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks.



MAKE IT AHEAD
Freeze cooled muffins
in plastic freezer bags.
To use, thaw at room
temperature or, if desired,
microwave each muffin on
high for 20-30 seconds
or until heated
through.

Eggs Florentine Casserole

For special brunches, I make eggs, sausage and spinach into a snappy casserole. Sometimes I mix in fresh peppers or green chilies, so feel free to make this recipe your own!

—KAREN WEEKLEY WASHINGTON, WV

PREP: 20 MIN. • **BAKE:** 30 MIN. + **STANDING** • **MAKES:** 12 SERVINGS

- 1 lb. bulk pork sausage**
- 2 Tbsp. butter**
- 1 large onion, chopped**
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms**
- 1 package (10 oz.) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry**
- 12 large eggs**
- 2 cups 2% milk**
- 1 cup shredded Swiss cheese**
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese**
- ¼ tsp. paprika**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°. In a large skillet, cook sausage over medium heat 6-8 minutes or until no longer pink, breaking into crumbles; drain and transfer to a greased 13x9-in. baking dish.
- 2.** In same skillet, heat butter over medium-high heat. Add onion and mushrooms; cook and stir 3-5 minutes or until tender. Stir in spinach. Spoon vegetable mixture over sausage.
- 3.** In a large bowl, whisk eggs and milk until blended; pour egg mixture over vegetables. Sprinkle with cheeses and paprika. Bake, uncovered, 30-35 minutes or until the center is set and a thermometer inserted in center reads 165°. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.





Strawberry-Quinoa Spinach Salad

We enjoy *quinoa* with spinach and strawberries year-round, but this recipe is a great way to perk up special menus. It's easy to double when hosting a group.

—**SARAH JOHNSON** INDIANAPOLIS, IN

START TO FINISH: 30 MIN. • **MAKES:** 4 SERVINGS

- 2 cups water**
- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed**
- 6 cups torn fresh spinach (about 5 oz.)**
- 2 cups sliced fresh strawberries**
- ½ cup chopped walnuts, toasted**
- ½ cup reduced-fat red wine vinaigrette**
- ¼ cup shredded Dubliner or Parmesan cheese**
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper**

1. In a small saucepan, bring water to a boil. Add quinoa. Reduce heat; simmer, covered, 12-15 minutes or until water is absorbed. Remove from heat; fluff with a fork. Cool slightly.

2. In a large bowl, combine spinach, strawberries, walnuts and quinoa. Drizzle with vinaigrette; toss to coat. Sprinkle with cheese and pepper.

NOTE To toast nuts, bake in a shallow pan in a 350° oven for 5-10 minutes, or cook in a skillet over low heat until lightly browned, stirring occasionally.

Mini Sausage Quiches

These bite-size quiches are loaded with sausage and cheese. Plus, their crescent roll base makes preparation a breeze. Serve the cute “muffinettes” at any brunch or potluck gathering, and they’ll disappear quickly.

—**JAN MEAD** MILFORD, CT

PREP: 25 MIN. • **BAKE:** 20 MIN. • **MAKES:** 4 DOZEN

- ½ lb. bulk hot Italian sausage**
- 2 Tbsp. dried minced onion**
- 2 Tbsp. minced chives**
- 1 tube (8 oz.) refrigerated crescent rolls**
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten**
- 2 cups shredded Swiss cheese**
- 1 cup 2% cottage cheese**
- ⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese**
- Paprika**

1. In a large skillet, brown sausage and onion over medium heat for 4-5 minutes or until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in chives.

2. On a lightly floured surface, unroll crescent dough into one long rectangle; seal seams and perforations. Cut into 48 pieces. Press pieces onto the bottom and up the sides of 48 greased miniature muffin cups.

3. Fill each cup with about 2 tsp. of the sausage mixture. In a large bowl, combine the eggs and cheeses. Spoon 2 teaspoonfuls over sausage mixture. Sprinkle with paprika.

4. Bake at 375° for 20-25 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks. If desired, sprinkle with additional minced chives. Serve warm.



Apple & Cheddar Mini Scones

Cheese and sage go well with apples, so why not put them all in a scone? These mini bites make special brunches even more fun.

—SUE GRONHOLZ BEAVER DAM, WI

PREP: 25 MIN. • **BAKE:** 10 MIN. • **MAKES:** 32 SCONES

- 3 cups all-purpose flour**
- 3 tsp. baking powder**
- ½ tsp. salt**
- ½ tsp. baking soda**
- 1 cup cold butter**
- 1 large egg**
- ¾ cup vanilla yogurt**
- 3 Tbsp. 2% milk, divided**
- ⅓ cup shredded peeled apple**
- ⅓ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese**
- 1 Tbsp. minced fresh sage**
- 1 Tbsp. sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 425°. In a large bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In another bowl, whisk egg, yogurt and 2 Tbsp. milk; stir into crumb mixture just until moistened. Stir in apple, cheese and fresh sage.

2. Turn onto a lightly floured surface; knead gently 10 times. Divide dough in half; pat each portion into a 6-in. circle. Cut each circle into eight wedges; cut each wedge in half.

3. Transfer to parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Brush tops with remaining milk; sprinkle with sugar. Bake 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm.



CHANGE IT UP
For another flavor option, substitute orange juice for the lime juice and grated ginger for the peel.

Tangy Poppy Seed Fruit Salad

For a fruit salad that's delightful, we combine berries and citrus with a honey-lime dressing flecked with poppy seeds.

—CARRIE HOWELL LEHI, UT

START TO FINISH: 20 MIN. • **MAKES:** 10 SERVINGS

- 1 can (20 oz.) unsweetened pineapple chunks, drained**
- 1 lb. fresh strawberries, quartered**
- 2 cups fresh blueberries**
- 2 cups fresh raspberries**
- 2 medium navel oranges, peeled and sectioned**
- 2 medium kiwifruit, peeled, halved and sliced**

DRESSING

- 2 to 4 Tbsp. honey**
- ½ tsp. grated lime peel**
- 2 Tbsp. lime juice**
- 2 tsp. poppy seeds**

Place all fruit in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk dressing ingredients. Drizzle over fruit; toss gently to combine.



Lemon-Blueberry Pound Cake

We like to pair a slice of this moist cake with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. It's a staple at our *family gatherings*.

—REBECCA LITTLE PARK RIDGE, IL

PREP: 25 MIN. • **BAKE:** 55 MIN. + COOLING • **MAKES:** 12 SERVINGS

- ⅓ cup butter, softened**
- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened**
- 2 cups sugar**
- 3 large eggs**
- 1 large egg white**
- 1 Tbsp. grated lemon peel**
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract**
- 2 cups fresh or frozen unsweetened blueberries**
- 3 cups all-purpose flour, divided**
- 1 tsp. baking powder**
- ½ tsp. baking soda**
- ½ tsp. salt**
- 1 cup lemon yogurt**

GLAZE

- 1¼ cups confectioners' sugar**
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour a 10-in. fluted tube pan. In a large bowl, cream the butter, cream cheese and sugar until blended. Add eggs and egg white, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in lemon peel and vanilla.
- 2.** Toss the blueberries with 2 Tbsp. flour. In another bowl, mix the remaining flour with baking powder, baking soda and salt; add to the creamed mixture alternately with yogurt, beating after each addition just until combined. Fold in blueberry mixture.
- 3.** Transfer batter to prepared pan. Bake for 55-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes before removing to wire rack; cool completely.
- 4.** In a small bowl, mix confectioners' sugar and lemon juice until smooth. Drizzle over cake.

Buffet Markers

Don't make your guests play the guessing game. Just print, cut, fold and set these labels next to each dish to identify the awesome goodies that make up your Easter spread.

Instructions

STEP ONE Print out the labels. Get creative with some colorful 8½x11-inch card stock from your favorite craft store.

STEP TWO With scissors or a craft knife and ruler, carefully cut along the dotted lines.

STEP THREE Fold cards on the solid line, and place next to the appropriate dish on the buffet.



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**Banana Macadamia
Muffins**

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**Tangy Poppy Seed
Fruit Salad**

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**Mini Sausage
Quiches**

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**Eggs Florentine
Casserole**

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**Baked Blueberry-
Mascarpone
French Toast**
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**Strawberry-Quinoa
Spinach Salad**
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**Apple & Cheddar
Mini Scones**
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Pecan Bacon
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**Lemon-Blueberry
Pound Cake**
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**Strawberry
Mimosas**
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Grocery List

Whether you're making them all or just a couple, everything you need to whip up these spring recipes can be found here. Print it, tuck it into your purse or pocket and go!

Grocery List includes the following recipes:

- Baked Blueberry-Mascarpone French Toast, [page 6](#)
- Strawberry Mimosas, [page 7](#)
- Pecan Bacon, [page 7](#)
- Banana Macadamia Muffins, [page 8](#)
- Eggs Florentine Casserole, [page 9](#)
- Strawberry-Quinoa Spinach Salad, [page 10](#)
- Mini Sausage Quiches, [page 10](#)
- Apple & Cheddar Mini Scones, [page 11](#)
- Tangy Poppy Seed Fruit Salad, [page 11](#)
- Lemon-Blueberry Pound Cake, [page 12](#)

BAKERY

- ___ 1 loaf French bread (1 lb.)

BEVERAGES

- ___ 4½ cups champagne
- ___ 3 cups orange juice

CANNED & PACKAGED

- ___ 1 can (8 oz.) crushed pineapple
- ___ 1 can (20 oz.) unsweetened pineapple chunks
- ___ 1 cup macadamia nuts (about 4½ oz.)
- ___ 1 cup sliced almonds (about 4½ oz.)
- ___ ½ cup chopped walnuts (about 2¼ oz.)

- ___ ½ cup chopped pecans (about 2¼ oz.)
- ___ 1 cup flaked coconut
- ___ 1 cup quinoa (6 oz.)
- ___ ½ cup reduced-fat red wine vinaigrette

DAIRY

- ___ 32 large eggs
- ___ ¾ lb. butter (24 Tbsp.)
- ___ 2 cups half-and-half cream
- ___ 1 cup whole milk
- ___ 2¼ cups 2% milk
- ___ 4 oz. cream cheese
- ___ 2 cartons (8 oz. each) mascarpone cheese
- ___ 1 cup (8 oz.) 2% cottage cheese
- ___ ¼ cup shredded Dubliner or Parmesan cheese
- ___ ⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ___ 3 cups (12 oz.) shredded Swiss cheese
- ___ 1½ cup (5.3 oz.) shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- ___ 1 cup (8 oz.) lemon yogurt
- ___ ¾ cup (6 oz.) vanilla yogurt
- ___ 1 tube (8 oz.) refrigerated crescent rolls

FRESH PRODUCE

- ___ 3 medium ripe bananas
- ___ 1-2 large apples (⅓ cup shredded)
- ___ 2 medium kiwifruit
- ___ 2 medium navel oranges
- ___ 4 cups fresh or frozen blueberries (about 20 oz.)
- ___ 2 cups fresh blueberries (about 10 oz.)

- ___ 4½ lbs. fresh strawberries
- ___ 2 cups fresh raspberries (about 10 oz.)
- ___ 1-2 limes (juice and peel)
- ___ 1-2 lemons (juice and peel)
- ___ 6 cups fresh spinach (about 5 oz.)
- ___ 1 large onion
- ___ 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms (about 3 oz.)
- ___ 1 Tbsp. minced fresh sage
- ___ 2 Tbsp. minced chives

FROZEN

- ___ 1 package (10 oz.) frozen chopped spinach

MEATS

- ___ ½ lb. bulk hot Italian sausage
- ___ 1 lb. bulk pork sausage
- ___ 1½ lbs. bacon strips (24 strips)

PANTRY STAPLES

- ___ Vanilla extract (4 tsp.)
- ___ Ground cinnamon (2¼ tsp.)
- ___ Poppy seeds (2 tsp.)
- ___ Dried minced onion (2 Tbsp.)
- ___ Paprika (¼ tsp.)
- ___ Baking powder (4 tsp.)
- ___ Baking soda (2 tsp.)
- ___ All-purpose flour (9 cups)
- ___ Confectioners' sugar (about 2 cups)
- ___ Granulated sugar (about 4½ cups)
- ___ Brown sugar (½ cup packed)
- ___ Honey (about 2-4 Tbsp.)
- ___ Canola oil (1 cup)
- ___ Salt
- ___ Pepper

Easter Brunch Planning Timeline

Follow this timeline to help your Easter event go off without a hitch. Space out tasks and prepare foods ahead so you can take it easy the morning of.

3 Weeks Before

PARTY TIP

Check out evite.com or paperlesspost.com for dozens of fun, free, customizable party invitations that go straight to your guests' inboxes.

- Send *invitations*
- Take inventory of tables, chairs, plates, cups, napkins and utensils

2 Weeks Before

PARTY TIP

Need more tables and chairs? Borrow from friends or family instead of renting.

- Print, cut and fold buffet markers (see page 13)
- Buy any additional plates, cups, napkins or utensils needed

1 Week Before

PARTY TIP

Write the name of the person you borrowed from on a piece of masking tape and stick it to the bottom of the chair or table. That way, every piece goes back to its rightful owner.

- Borrow any additional tables and chairs as needed
- Clean the house
- Review grocery list; *purchase nonperishable food* ingredients
- Follow up with guests who have not RSVP'd
- Do a test run of your buffet setup to ensure everything will fit
- Make and freeze Banana Macadamia Muffins

PARTY TIP

Set food labels on each platter so you know exactly where to put which dishes when it's time to set up the buffet table.

3 Days Before

- Purchase perishable food ingredients
- *Wash serving dishes*

1 Day Before

- *Spot-clean the house*
- Set out party decorations
- Prepare juice for Strawberry Mimosas; add champagne when guests arrive
- Make Lemon-Blueberry Pound Cake; drizzle with glaze morning of brunch
- Prepare fruit for Tangy Poppy Seed Fruit Salad, refrigerating in separate containers; assemble morning of brunch
- Make Mini Sausage Quiches; reheat morning of brunch

- Prepare Eggs Florentine Casserole; bake morning of brunch
- Prepare Baked Blueberry-Mascarpone French Toast; bake with Eggs Florentine Casserole morning of brunch
- Prepare components of Strawberry-Quinoa Spinach Salad, refrigerating in separate containers; assemble morning of brunch
- Measure ingredients for Apple & Cheddar Mini Scones; add apples and bake morning of brunch
- Measure Pecan Bacon ingredients for quick prep the next morning
- Thaw muffins

Morning Of

- Set serving dishes/platters on buffet
- Set out plates, cups, napkins and utensils
- Drizzle pound cake with glaze
- Bake casseroles
- Assemble salads while casseroles bake
- Prepare Pecan Bacon
- Bake Apple & Cheddar Mini Scones
- Reheat Mini Sausage Quiches

1 Hour Before

- *Hold warm food* in 200° oven

30 Minutes Before

- Set out food with corresponding markers on buffet table

Just Before Guests Arrive

- Relax and get ready for some memorable Easter fun!

Handcrafted With Love

Celebrate the season with these three easy ideas from **Country Woman** magazine. Use them to decorate your table or buffet and they'll add instant pretty to your party!

Tinted Mason Jars

Fill these with flowers or use them as utensil holders on your buffet table. No matter where you place the simple *hand-tinted jars*, they bring a bit whimsy to the celebration.

Materials

- Plastic squeeze bottle
- Glazing medium (we used Liquitex)
- Liquid food color (mix primary colors for variety)
- Mason jar
- Waxed paper
- Straight pin

1. In a squeeze bottle, mix about four Tbsp. glazing medium with a few drops of food color. Gently swirl to blend to desired hue.
2. Hold jar horizontally; pour the mix over the outer sides of the jar, avoiding the screw threads and rotating until jar is fully coated. Break any bubbles with a straight pin.
3. Set jars upright on waxed paper to dry. Periodically wipe off excess glazing medium from the jar bottom with a paper towel.



QUICK RINSE
Hand-wash
these tinted jars
—they're not
dishwasher-
safe.



EGG SHELLS
Make a hole in top and bottom of egg with a tack. Set a straw over top hole, and blow out the egg's contents.

Washi Paper Eggs

Skip the messy dyes and decorate eggs with colorful washi paper to create a cheerful Easter centerpiece.

Materials

- Egg shells, liquid contents removed
- Washi or origami paper in various colors
- Measuring tape
- Ruler
- Cutting mat
- Decoupage glue
- Craft knife
- Paint brush

1. Gently wash empty egg shell. (See egg shells tip above.)
2. Cut washi paper $\frac{1}{8}$ in. bigger than the circumference and height of the egg.
3. Fold paper in half lengthwise, then again crosswise.
4. Cut $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. strips along the long side of the paper, stopping $\frac{1}{4}$ in. before the center fold.

5. Trim ends of each $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. strip to a point. Unfold the paper and place wrong side up on a piece of parchment paper.
 6. Use a brush to spread on a thin layer of glue.
 7. Lay egg against a short side and wrap the paper around the egg. Press each strip toward the tip of the egg, one piece at a time. Each strip should slightly overlap the previous one. Work your way slowly around the egg, smoothing out the paper strips with your fingers. Brush glue over the top of each strip of paper as you go. Repeat on bottom half of the egg.
 8. Apply a layer of glue over the entire egg and set on parchment paper to dry.
- Note:** Washi, or origami paper, can be found at most craft stores and online.

Peeps Stick Together

Bring vibrant marshmallow Peeps out of the Easter basket and make them the life of the party! We used floral pins for stability, so our version is strictly for decorating. Want yours to be edible? Use toothpicks instead of pins, and assemble shortly before serving—Peeps harden quickly.

Materials

- Several packages of colored Peeps (we used chicks)
- Acrylic craft paint, green and blue
- Clear acrylic sealer (optional)
- Flat paintbrush
- ½x18-inch wooden dowel rod
- 4- to 5-inch-tall terra cotta pot
- 5-inch-wide white Styrofoam ball
- Small piece of floral foam to fit pot
- Metal floral pins
- Permanent glue
- Green paper grass (½- to 1-inch-wide)
- Patterned ribbon

1. Paint the dowel rod green and the pot's exterior blue. Use as many coats as needed for full coverage, allowing to dry fully between coats. Apply sealer to rod and pot if desired and let dry.
2. Glue floral foam into bottom of pot. Put a small amount of glue on end of rod and insert in foam.
3. Fill pot top with green paper grass. Tie a bow around rod slightly above grass.
4. Use the rod to poke a hole, 1½-2 in. deep, in the Styrofoam ball. Beginning at the hole, draw a line around the center of the ball.
5. Leaving hole open, use floral pins to attach a row of pink Peeps, sides touching, along the drawn line. (We pinned through the tails to hide the pins.) Next, attach a row of blue Peeps, followed by rows of yellow and pink, ending with a blue one in the center. Repeat rows on ball's opposite side.
6. Put a small amount of glue on the top of the rod. Insert rod into hole in Styrofoam ball; let glue dry.



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INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BOOK NUMBER:

978-1-61765-689-7 ePub Version
978-1-61765-690-3 Adobe Version

Last Look

Hop, Hop, Hooray!

Kick off Easter Sunday with a breakfast that's as tasty as it is cute. Start with pancake mix so you can hightail it out of the kitchen in no time.



Make a tail with a dollop of whipped cream. Then fuzz it up with coconut.