

Staying on Schedule with the Holiday Meal Prep Despite My Erev Chag Wipeout

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The top three ingredients for productive and less stressful holiday preparations are make ahead what you can, delegate to the children, and minimize where possible!

Hello hello ladies! How are your Succos preparations coming along? I hit a bit of a snag this past Monday when I tripped over a patch in the road and wiped out. Turns out I broke my foot! Ugh, the timing of it!

There are a few parts to this broken foot story, but what I wanted to share with you today is how thanks to some

delegation and organizational tips I've implemented over the years; I am actually still able to stay pretty much on schedule with all the food preparation for chag and chol hamoed despite having spent hours waiting for an x-ray and cast and not being able to do much in the kitchen.

For me, the top three ingredients for productive and less stressful holiday preparations are make ahead what you can, delegate to the children, and minimize where possible.

Okay so one thing I've done for a while now is to prepare most or all of the chicken and meat dishes for chag, along with the Rosh Hashana meat cooking. I place these in my extra freezer and that is one thing out of the way. This year, I made brisket, corned beef, roast beef, turkey roulade with mushroom sauce, chicken paprika, schnitzel and meatballs in red cabbage sauce.

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For the chol hamoed meals, I serve 2 not 3 meals: brunch at 11am and dinner at 6pm. Brunch consist of fruit smoothies, a vegetable platter or Israeli salad, variations of shakshuka made by my son, fried potatoes, garlic bread and butter. For dinner, I place each of my kids aged 13 and over in charge of one meal. Thankfully, they each have at least one dish that they can and love to make really well!

So, this year, motzai chag my 13 year old will make french fries and popcorn; Wednesday my 15 year old will make cuscus with vegetables; Thursday my 19 year old will be preparing homemade pizza and Sunday my 21 year old will made Moroccan fish and rice. My 10 year old is in charge of cutting up all of the salads.

I must admit, I am not a very good delegator and that can be a problem when you have a lot of kids and a lot of meals to prepare. Yet the broken foot issue has given me no choice but to delegate even further: my 19 year old has his driving license so he will be doing the shopping. My 15 year old is really good with cleaning and laundry so I have put him in charge of the floors, ironing, and some of the laundry. My 21 year old is the only other dishwasher around here other than me so he is getting the dishes and part of the laundry. My 13 year old is basically my personal assistant and runner, and the 5 and 10 year old are learning not to call for my help every five minutes and are getting bathroom cleaning duty. I know – little kids in charge of bathroom duty? LOL! Believe it or not they actually do a pretty good job.

As far as desserts go, I ordered a bunch of baked goods from a neighbor who has a baking business. We've also had three birthday celebrations in the family this past week and a complication with putting up our succah that required last minute help from a handyman. Ever try to get a handyman on erev Succos? And for that matter an x-ray or an orthopedist? Good luck! So yes, the situation has been topsy turvy but it's definitely under control and things are moving along.



Little kids in charge of bathroom duty? LOL!

Surprisingly, I managed to stay calm during most of the ups and downs of the past few days. For me, not being in control of “doing everything” has allowed me to tune into the flow – **the reality of life going on and things getting done even when you are out of the picture** for a while. Bonus: I saw firsthand with our succah predicament, how Hashem provided extra special help when needed.

I have everything written down and posted on the fridge – that’s one good thing about being confined to the couch, it gives you time to make really good lists! I learned from my homeschool-parenting mentor Chana Rus to always meet with the kids and lay out the plan for them clearly and get their feedback, so I have done that too. Now I have to let the troops do their thing and see how things go.

Wishing you a wonderful chag and I hope you too are benefitting from some delegatory help!