HOST THOUGHTFULLY 011

Work Backward from Dinner Time



GIVE COOKING AND PLATING THEIR OWN TIME.

Start with the moment you want guests to receive their plates. Work backward through plating, finishing and cooking so each component has a place in the plan.

1 Write the final sequence

List the main, sauce and each plated side. Note what needs the oven, a burner or your full attention just before serving.

Why: A written sequence makes competing last-minute jobs easier to spot.

2 Make room for plating

Allow time to arrange every plate, add sauce, check the rims and carry the finished meals to the table.

Why: The meal is not ready to serve the instant the cooking ends.

3 Choose what can wait

Prepare suitable components ahead according to the recipe. Keep delicate finishing tasks for the final stretch.

Why: Fewer simultaneous tasks give you more attention for each guest's plate.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Start at the table

Picture the completed meal in front of each guest. Include the time needed to bring out all the plates.

Then move into the kitchen

Work back through garnish, sauce, vegetables and the main. Include resting time when the recipe calls for it.

Check equipment conflicts

Two dishes may both need the same oven at different temperatures. Adjust the menu or sequence before dinner day.

Leave a little breathing room

Keep the final few minutes simple. A realistic plan is more useful than one that assumes every task goes perfectly.

THE PLATING MINDSET

Plan through the moment the plates reach the table. Give the presentation the same attention as the cooking.