

Renovation, Week Two: THX and Floors



Here's an easy way to free up space in your oven when you are making Thanksgiving dinner.

While most of you are probably brining your turkeys, whipping your cream, or stuffing that bird, we're being a little non-traditional with our family time this holiday season. Yes— we will still eat a full Thanksgiving dinner, but no... the renovation is not complete. No kitchen? No problem!

The goal this holiday weekend is to install about 600 square feet of hardwood floors in the kitchen (and throughout the family room). Last week, in [Week One](#), we stripped everything down to the subfloors. We received great news about our cabinets being ready ahead of schedule, but we need to get the wood down first!

At this point, most people think I'm crazy for doing so much

of the work ourselves, but it's been really therapeutic. Haven't you ever wanted to take a crow bar to some part of your own house?! The floors though– this was legit remodeling work. Lucky for me, my husband has a masters degree in pure awesomeness and together, with a little help from friends and family, we were able to get the job done.

But let's focus on what is important– what we are eating! Again– I have NO KITCHEN. I've got a workable sink in the basement, a stack of paper/plastic everything from Costco, and some prepped foods in the freezer.

Here's how Week Two panned out in our bellies. Thanksgiving dinner was the big challenge. I was all set to do [Crock Pot Turkey Legs](#)– it's a family favorite. But after checking three grocery stores for turkey legs with no success, I gave in and just bought cooked turkey meat. I did manage to make [Crock Pot Green Bean Casserole](#) and reheated some mashed potatoes. My boys wouldn't call it Thanksgiving dinner though if I didn't have the “secret” cranberry sauce. You know, the one that has the ridges on the sides from the shape of the can. I did find organic cranberry sauce this year that didn't have high fructose corn syrup in it, so that seemed like a win-win to me.



It's easy to keep all of

these ingredients on hand
for a delicious dinner
anytime!

On Friday and Saturday, we worked on THX dinner leftovers. I also made [Crock Pot Chili](#)– it's the easiest recipe ever. You might have also seen my [Crock Pot Tortellini Soup](#) on social media, that was a huge hit. I used [this recipe](#), but also added a can of white beans to add more protein. It's so easy and there was no prep work and no clean up. The ingredients for both of these meals are easy to keep on hand in the pantry and freezer and I recommend adding them to your next shopping trip.

You might not be remodeling this holiday season, but I'm guessing you too will have crazy days, impromptu gatherings and festive celebrations. You don't need a demolition to save yourself time and energy in the kitchen. Save time, cook slower. Savor the flavors and the moments.

[Crock Pot Green Bean Casserole](#)

It doesn't have to be Thanksgiving to enjoy a side dish that can be a year round favorite. I like to go to restaurants and just order an array of side dishes as my meal– green bean casserole, mac and cheese, mashed potatoes and scalloped apples are some of my favorites. Let's be honest, it's a good thing Cracker Barrel doesn't have a buffet.

Side dishes can be dangerous though. All these creamy, cheesy, salty tastes can be brief in moments, but high in fat and calories. This crockpot version of green bean cassarole saves some calories by using fresh onions instead of fried ones and also adds water chestnuts for the crunchy texture.

Try this crockpot cassarole with any of your favorite meals. And if you eat it as a main course... I'm ok with that too.

1 28 oz. can green beans

1 can diced water chestnuts

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1/2 c. milk

1 t. soy sauce

1 clove garlic, minced

1/2 medium onion, sliced thin

1/2 t. pepper

Mix together soup, milk and soy sauce. Put green beans, water chestnuts and onion in crockpot and then dump liquid mixture and mix through once. Don't overmix it or else the canned green beans will fall apart. Cook 4 hours on low.