

“After countless hours planning, preparing, and cooking for Thanksgiving, the meal itself becomes more than just a moment—it’s a culmination of care, tradition, and effort. Thanksgiving doesn’t end at the table—it thrives in the leftovers. With 96% of hosts planning for extra food, retailers can win big by inspiring creative reuse: think sandwich kits, freezer-ready packs, and bold ‘leftover recipes.’ Turn food waste concerns into opportunity with portion planners and storage tips that keep holiday value stretching well beyond the feast. It’s important to note consumer concern about and interest in reducing food waste continues to grow and is an opportunity for the industry. NIQ proudly partners with and is one of the data sources that fuels the ReFED Insights Engine. ReFED works across the food system to reduce food loss and waste.

We recommend all retailers and manufacturers check out the ReFED Insights Engine to learn more about where they can make the greatest impact with this challenge: [ReFED Insights Engine](#).”



Sherry Frey
Vice President,
Thought Leadership
Total Wellness,
NielsenIQ

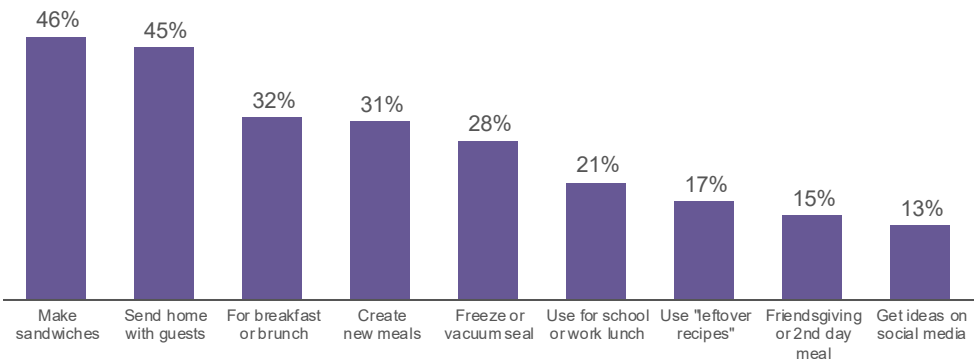
Thanksgiving hosts embrace smart leftover strategies

Implications for the Food & Beverage Industry

Hosts plan for leftovers so retailers should plan on inspiring creative uses

Thanksgiving hosts are planning for leftovers—96% expect them, and a third intentionally overcook to repurpose meals later. Retailers and manufacturers can turn this behavior into an advantage by promoting creative leftover solutions, bundling complementary products, and inspiring hosts with easy recipes that extend holiday value beyond the table.

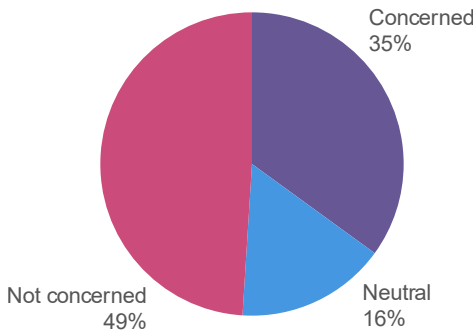
STRATEGIES FOR USING THANKSGIVING MEAL LEFTOVERS⁴



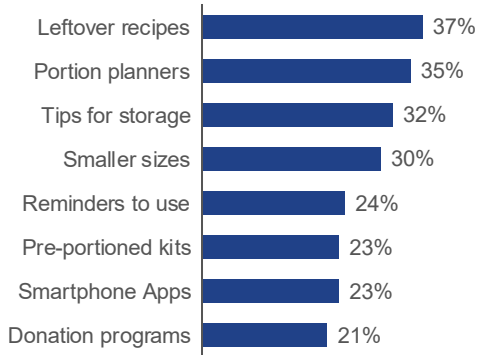
Meet shoppers’ waste-reducing mindsets

Over a third of Thanksgiving hosts—especially Gen Z—are concerned about food waste, prompting demand for smaller sizes and pre-portioned meal kits. Millennials, meanwhile, want help using leftovers through apps, reminders, and clearer guidance. Meet distinct needs by innovating around portioning, packaging, and post-holiday engagement.

CONCERN ABOUT THANKSGIVING FOOD WASTE⁴



PREFERRED WAYS TO HELP REDUCE THANKSGIVING FOOD WASTE⁴



What your NIQ Thought Leaders are most excited about this Thanksgiving...



I’m all about the leftovers and can’t wait for turkey and dumpling soup the next day!



Stuffing — my mom’s homemade recipe! A close second: turning those leftovers into a turkey pot pie.



For me, it’s all about the turkey — we get ours from a local butcher, and it’s absolutely delicious every year.



All the sides that make the plate complete — but if I had to choose just one, it’s stuffing with plenty of gravy.

Industry Analysis Sources: *NIQ, BASES Quick Question, Thanksgiving Survey, October 2025, n=1,025
Author: Chris Costagli, Vice President, Thought Leadership, Food & Beverage Insights Lead