

NY Times:

By The Numbers | A Meal For 5,000 ...

By [HELEN ZHANG](#), 20 Cooper Square



Curt Hencye, the head chef and a volunteer from Calvary Chapel in Sarasota, Fla., dashes between stations in the kitchen as the Bowery Mission prepares its annual Thanksgiving meal.

As we scramble to figure out how much turkey and trimmings are needed to feed five or 10 people imagine planning for 5,000 Thanksgiving dinner spreads.

That's exactly what the Bowery Mission has been doing for since 1879 for the city's needy, and, as expected, the staff and volunteers have the preparations down to a routine.

A week in advance, thousands of pounds of donations begin rolling in from local residents and businesses like Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and City Harvest.

Cooking starts on Sunday and continues twenty-four hours a day until Thanksgiving. But the scale of the production doesn't mean patrons won't get a quality meal. When asked if they would be using Stove Top stuffing (my family's favorite), Clyde Edey, a chef at the Mission, scoffed, "There's no comparison between the box and the fresh."

So how much food does it take to pull the Bowery Thanksgiving off, with 5,000 to 7,000 expected guests?

More than 500 turkeys, 1,000 pounds of fresh bread for stuffing, 1,500 pounds of elbow pasta and 600 pounds of cheese for macaroni and cheese, 1,350 pounds of loose potatoes, 500 pounds of loose sweet potatoes, 1,950 pounds of canned yams, 6,000 pounds of various canned vegetables and 500 pumpkin, apple and pecan pies, donated from various churches and bakeries.