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Okeechobee  
News**

# Holiday Traditions

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# RECIPE SWAP & COOKIE CONTEST

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Congratulations  
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Recipe Contest  
Winner

## Peppermint Iced Chocolate Cookies

Pre-Heat Oven: 350 degree oven  
Baking time: 8-10 min.

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 cups unsalted butter (Room Temperature)
- 2 Cups white sugar
- 2 eggs (room temperature)
- 2 tsp. Vanilla Extract
- 2 Cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 Cups unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. Baking soda
- 1/8 tsp salt

In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar until smooth. Beat eggs one at a time. Then stir in vanilla. Combine flour, cocoa, baking soda, and salt; into creamed mixture until just blended. Drop by spoonfuls onto ungraded cookie sheets.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in the pre-heated oven. Let cool on cookie sheet 1 minutes. Then place on wire racks.

Let cool before icing.

### Icing Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, softened (Room Temperature)
- 1/4 tsp. peppermint extract / or 1/4 vanilla
- 1 1/2 Cups powdered sugar
- 2 tsp to 3 tsp whipping cream (to desired consistency)
- 4-6 crushed candy canes

Blend unsalted butter, peppermint extract, powdered sugar add whipping cream to desired consistency. Sprinkle with crushed candy canes.



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# “Hot Chocolate” & Toasted Marshmallow Cookies

Servings: 30 Cookies

## Ingredients

¾ cup 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Baking Chips (for melting)

1 cup plain flour/ all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon Ghirardelli Unsweetened Cocoa Powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

¼ teaspoon salt

6 tablespoons butter, softened

1 cup soft brown sugar

2 small eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

2 ¼ cups 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Baking Chips (for mixing)

30 large marshmallows

## Directions

1. Melt the ¾ cup of chocolate chips gently in the microwave or over a pot of simmering water (bain marie). Set aside to cool.

2. Sift all of the dry ingredients together in a bowl and stir together.

3. Beat the butter and sugar together until thick and creamy.

4. Beat in the eggs one by one.

5. Add in the cooled melted chocolate and vanilla extract. Continue beating until the ingredients are well mixed.

6. Fold dry ingredients into the mix and the remaining chocolate chips and mix until combined.

7. Scoop your cookie with a 1 tablespoon scoop.

8. Bake at 350°F for 8 - 9 minutes. Take care not to over bake as these cookies should be almost brownie-like.

9. Once baked, pop a marshmallow on top and put it back in the oven on broil for 1-2 minutes for a lovely toasted effect.



**Vicki Anderson**  
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# Anderson

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**Vicki S. Anderson, Licensed Real Estate Broker**  
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## INTERESTING FACTS!



Gingerbread is a broad term that can describe anything from a firm and crispy cookie to a moist, soft cake.

Traditionally, gingerbread is seasoned with ginger, cloves, nutmeg, and other aromatic spices. Molasses and brown sugar counteract the spice with sweetness.

North Americans have been baking gingerbread in various shapes or forms for more than 200 years, and the recipes even pre-date the American revolution. However, gingerbread dates back even further to the Shakespearean era, with The Bard having mentioned it in one of his plays.

Gingerbread's name can be traced to medieval England and once referred to any kind of preserved ginger. The term went on to reference ginger-flavored cakes in the 15th century, and gingerbread eventually became popular throughout the world. Even though gingerbread cakes and cookies have been made for centuries, Germans are often credited with creating gingerbread houses, according to Smithsonian.

They were probably modeled after the witch's candy cottage in the German fairy tale, 'Hansel and Gretel.'

Even though gingerbread can be made any time of year, it is particularly associated with the Christmas season, with gingerbread men and other fanciful shapes turning up on cookie platters.

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# White Chocolate Cranberry Oatmeal Mason Jar Cookie Recipe

Yield 1 quart jar dry cookie mix

## Ingredients:

- 1-1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/3 cups rolled oats
- 1/2 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 – 3/4 cup white chocolate chips (fill to the top)

## Directions:

1. Layer ingredients in the order listed above into a clean 1-quart Mason jar. Make sure to pack down each layer before adding a new layer. Tip: It's easy to add ingredients into a jar if you use a wide mouth funnel.

2. Add a gift tag with the following directions:

3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and melt 1/2 cup butter in a microwave safe dish. Let butter cool slightly and add 1 egg and 2 teaspoons vanilla extract. Pour in entire contents of jar and mix well. Shape into walnut size balls, space 2 inches apart on a cookie sheet and bake for about 12 minutes until slightly brown. Enjoy!





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Season's Greetings



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## INTERESTING FACTS! - PETS CHRISTMAS

Holiday shoppers who are busy making lists and checking them twice should make sure they don't overlook the family pet. Christmas has gone to the cats and dogs, as a greater number of people include their companion animals when selecting gifts each year.

A study by OnePoll conducted by Rover.com, the nation's largest network of dog sitters and walkers, found that 95 percent of pet owners have bought holiday gifts for their pets. Gifts can range from everyday needs, like food and treats, to more lavish extravagances like spa treatments.

Pet owners who plan to get their pets gifts this year may want to consider some of the emerging pet trends as they browse wares and services. The Balance, a business, career and industry information site, says pet industry trends point toward these segments seeing growth.

### Natural pet products

Just as people are interested in protecting the health of the planet and their own personal health, so, too, are they extending this concern to companion animals. Natural pet products, which can include natural flea and tick remedies, holistic foods, organic items, and all-natural grooming products, can make great gifts.

### Specialty pet services

The American Pet Products Association says the demand for



high-end pet grooming and other services is substantial. In addition, personalized training, behavioral consulting, portrait photography, dog sitting, and upscale spa treatments like pet Reiki and massage are booming.

### Mobile pet grooming

Mobile pet grooming has become the norm in many areas. Mobile pet grooming can reduce the potential stress on animals, and tends to be very convenient for customers, particularly seniors and others who have mobility issues.

Beyond these growing trends, pet owners have a bevy of other ideas from which to choose. Here are just a few different suggestions:

- tests to detect pets' DNA and trace breed and ancestry,
- interactive puzzles to keep pets engaged and banish boredom,
- stylish storage baskets for pet toys,
- hidden cat litter or dog crate items that camouflage commonly used pet items,
- heated pet bed for cozy nights and mornings, and
- signature vests, coats and sweaters to look good and remain comfortable.

Pet gifts are popular this time of year, ensuring all members of the family have a treat to open.

## INTERESTING FACTS! - 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

'On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree.'

The familiar lyrics of this tune are sung as part of Christmas caroling and holiday celebrations, reaching a crescendo each time singers belt out 'five golden rings.' The song is an English Christmas carol that was written in 1720. While it references plenty of gift-giving, it's easy to assume the song is about giving Christmas gifts. However, the 12 days in the song actually refer to the birth of Jesus Christ.

The 12 days of Christmas, also known as the Twelvetide, refers to the festive Christian season that celebrates the Nativity of Jesus.

In fact, the start of these days occurs on December 25 and extends until the evening of January 5th, the day before the Epiphany, known as Twelfth Night. Each day corresponds to a remembrance of different religious events or people.

Christmas celebrants can celebrate well into the new year. Commemorating the 12 days of Christmas can include small festivities from December 25 to January 5. On Twelfth Night, historically known for parties, modern-day fanfare can mark the culmination of the Christmas season with the last of gift-giving occurring on the Epiphany.

Gift-giving, hosting friends and family, attending religious services, participating in charitable events, or opening one's home to neighbors and those who can use some companionship are all ways to make the 12 days of Christmas more special.







# Merry Christmas

Have a Blessed New Year!

During this holiday season, we at Mixon Real Estate would like to extend our appreciation to you, and all our clients, for allowing us to market and sell your homes. We are grateful for the trust you have put in us to walk you through this most exciting time. We look forward to continuing to serve you and our community for many years to come. Thank you, again, for a wonderful year. May your home be filled with warm memories with those you hold most dear.

**Cindy, Priscilla, Patrick, Melody,  
Natalie, Lori, Lairen  
and Erica**



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# Cowboy Cookie Mason Jar

Mason jar Christmas gifts are irresistible. However, during the busy holiday season it can be difficult to find the time to experiment with mix recipes or create mason jar labels. I've done all of the work for you.

## The Lid

Gather these supplies: green felt, red felt, mason jars (quart-sized), twine, craft glue, red buttons, scissors, and a pen.

Trace the mason jar lid onto felt and cut it out. Personally, I think that the red felt looks cuter than a lid label and it adds some texture.

Cut two holly leaves out of the green felt and adhere them to the red felt. Also glue on three red buttons to resemble berries. Cute!

## The Mix

Using the recipe below, sift together the dry ingredients for your mix. The labels will give full recipe instructions for your recipient.

## Sugar Cookie Dry Ingredients Recipe

2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1 cup white sugar



Add sprinkles to the very top of the mix. It's easy to scoop these out upon opening the jar and they add a perfect pop of holiday color to the gorgeous white mix.

## The Label

Merry Christmas Sugar! These labels are so sweet. You can create separate printables, one for the front of the label and one for the back. Print both labels, cut them out, and then glue them to each other, back to back. Punch a hole into the completed label and hang it with twine around the base of the lid.

This is a Christmas gift that won't be forgotten. People appreciate a handmade touch, especially in the hustle and bustle of life these days. Maybe you'll get lucky, and they'll invite you over when they bake the sugar cookies. Can't you just smell them baking?



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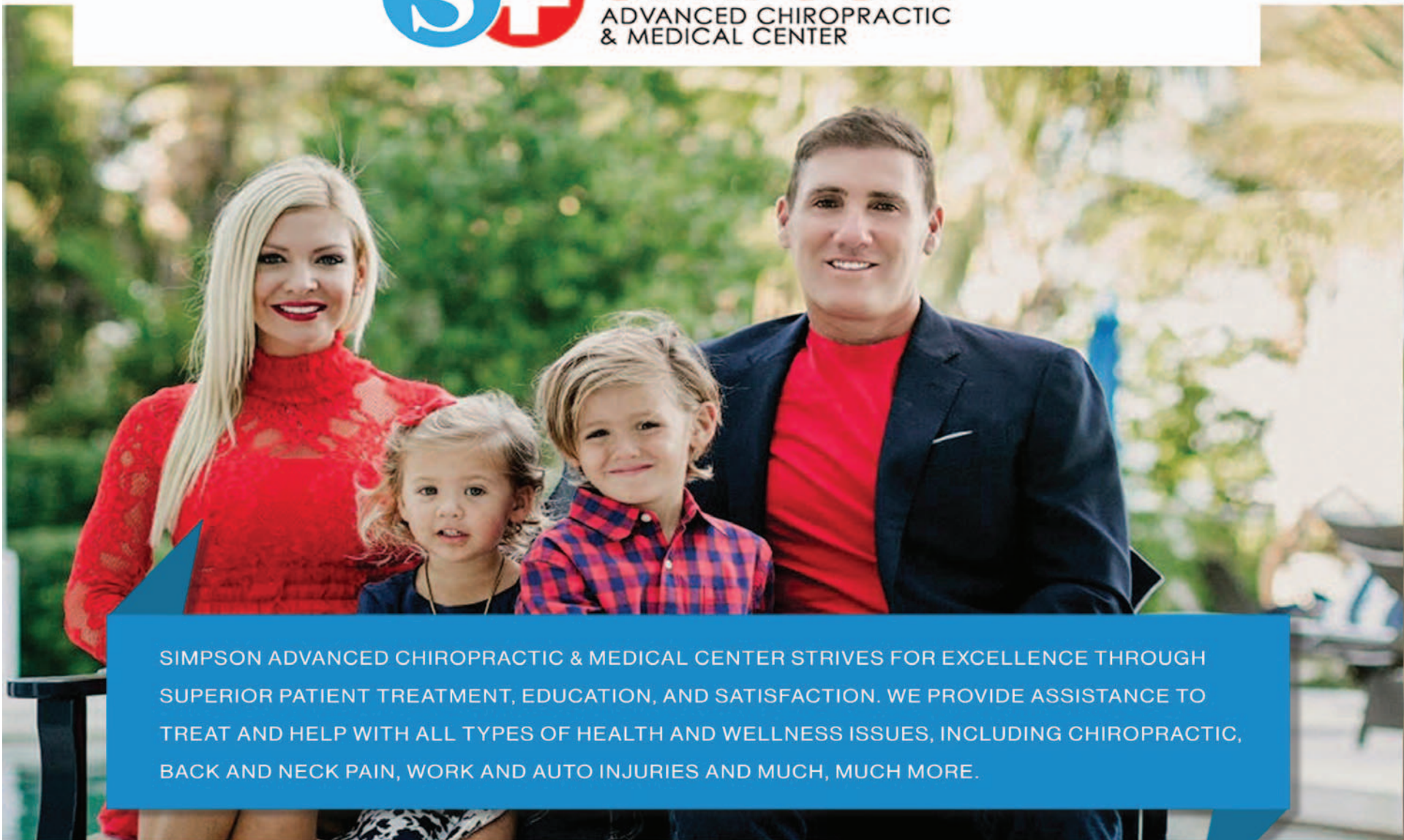
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# Double Chocolate Mason Jar Cookie Recipe

Yield 1 quart jar dry cookie mix

## Ingredients:

- 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3/4 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder (not Dutch processed)
- 1 cup dark chocolate chips

## Directions:

1. Layer ingredients in the order listed above into a clean 1-quart Mason jar. Make sure to pack down each layer before adding a new layer. Tip: It's easy to add ingredients into jar if you use a wide mouth funnel.
2. Add a gift tag with the following directions:
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and empty cookie mix into bowl. Add in 3/4 cup softened butter, 1 beaten egg and

1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Shape into walnut size balls, space 2 inches apart on a cookie sheet and bake for about 12 minutes until slightly brown. Enjoy!



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# Chocolate Candy Mason Jar Cookie Recipe

Yield 1 quart dry cookie mix

## Ingredients:

1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour

3/4 teaspoon baking soda

3/4 teaspoon kosher salt

1-1/2 cups M&M candies

3/4 cup dark brown sugar

1/2 cup white sugar

## Directions:

1. Layer ingredients in the order listed above into a clean 1-quart mason jar. Make sure to pack down each layer before adding a new layer. Tip: It's easy to add ingredients into jar if you use a wide mouth funnel.
2. Add a gift tag with the following directions:
3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F and beat 3/4 cup room temperature butter, 1 large egg and 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract in large bowl. Add cookie mix, blend and drop

tablespoon-sized balls onto baking sheet. Bake for about 10 minutes until golden brown. Enjoy!



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# Salted Butterscotch Pretzel Cookies

## Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups Gold Medal™ all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 box (4-serving size) butterscotch instant pudding and pie filling mix
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups mini pretzel twists, coarsely crushed
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup milk chocolate toffee bits

1 teaspoon coarse sea salt

## Directions

1. Heat oven to 350°F. In medium bowl, mix flour, baking soda and 1/2 teaspoon salt; set aside.
2. In large bowl, beat softened butter, granulated sugar and brown sugar with electric mixer on medium speed about 1 minute or until fluffy; scrape side of bowl. Beat in dry pudding mix. Beat in eggs, one at a time, just until smooth. Stir in vanilla. On low speed, beat flour mixture into sugar mixture until well blended. Stir in crushed pretzels, chocolate chips and toffee bits until blended.
3. Drop dough by rounded tablespoonfuls about 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheet. Sprinkle each cookie lightly with coarse salt.
4. Bake 9 to 11 minutes or until light brown. Cool 2 minutes; remove from cookie sheet to cooling rack. Cool completely, about 15 minutes. Store covered in airtight container at room temper



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## Chocolate Shortbread Cookies

### Make the holidays a little sweeter

What would the holidays be without platters full of homemade cookies? It's that time of year for pulling out favorite recipes and filling the house with delicious aromas and delectable treats. This recipe for "Stareos" from "Classic Stars Desserts" (Chronicle Books) by Emily Luchetti adds a gourmet spin to a popular chocolate sandwich cookie.

Stareos  
Makes 18 cookies

### Chocolate Shortbread

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
Pinch of kosher salt  
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted  
8 ounces (16 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
Flour for dusting

### Filling

1 cup mascarpone cheese  
1 tablespoon granulated sugar  
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

To make the chocolate shortbread: In a bowl, stir together the

flour, salt and cocoa powder and set aside. Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on low speed until the butter and sugar begin to incorporate, about 15 seconds.

Add the dry ingredients and continue to mix until the dough comes together, about 3 minutes.

It will look dry just before it comes together.

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the dough 1/4 inch thick. Using a 2-inch star cutter, cut out as many cookies as possible. Gather together the scraps, reroll, and continue cutting out cookies until you have 36 cookies.

Place the cookies on the prepared baking sheets, spacing them 1 inch apart. Refrigerate until firm, at least 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 300 F. Bake the shortbread until firm, about 35 minutes.

At the midway point, switch the baking sheets between the racks and rotate them 180 degrees to ensure even baking. Let cool on the baking sheets to room temperature.

To make the filling: In a small bowl, stir together the mascarpone, sugar and vanilla until smooth.

Turn 18 of the cookies bottom-side up on a work surface. Using a table knife or a small icing spatula, spread about 1 tablespoon of the filling on the bottom of each cookie. Top with the remaining cookies, bottom-side down.

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# Merry Christmas

*From my home to yours,  
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**B**

ehold a virgin shall be with child, and shall  
 bring forth a son, and they shall call his name  
 Emmanuel, which being interpreted is,  
 God with us.  
*Matthew 1:23*



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# TIPS FOR MAKING BETTER COOKIES

Cookies and other baked treats are everywhere come the holiday season. It's not uncommon to give cookies as gifts or arrive at holiday gatherings with cakes and other decadent desserts. Cookies are a classic holiday treat, and some families even build entire traditions around baking Christmas cookies. Novice bakers making cookies for the first time may be a little overwhelmed when perusing recipes. Baking is a science, and sometimes it takes practice to get the results just right. However, there are some tips that can help yield better, buttery bounties.

## **Handle butter with care**

Butter can make or break a cookie recipe, as butter is often the glue that holds the cookie together. Therefore, it is key to follow the directions carefully regarding how to handle butter. Smithsonian.com says to leave butter at room temperature for 30 to 60 minutes to properly soften it. This takes patience, but fiddling with butter too much can damage its delectable integrity. While purists may say butter is best, margarine may be acceptable if it has a high fat content; otherwise, cookies may spread out and flatten. When it comes time to cream the butter with sugar, be sure to do so thoroughly to incorporate air into the butter and remove the grainy texture of the sugar.

## **Measure flour properly**

Measuring flour the right way can ensure cookies come out right. The Cooking Channel says to spoon the flour lightly into a dry measuring cup, then level it off with a knife. Do not dip the measuring cup into the flour or tap the knife against the cup. This will pack too much flour into the measuring cup and result in dry, tough cookies.

## **Slow down the eggs**

Add eggs one at a time to make sure each will emulsify properly



with the fat in the butter. Adding eggs en masse may cause the emulsification to fail.

## **Chill out**

Follow recipes that call for chilling cookie dough carefully. This process is important for making sliced and shaped cookies. By chilling, the dough becomes more malleable for rolling and even slicing.

## **Use a bottom rack**

Too much heat may compromise cookie integrity. The food experts at Delish say to try moving cookies onto a lower rack in the oven if they aren't retaining their shape when baked. Put an empty cookie sheet on the top rack. That will block the cookies from the most intense heat that rises to the top of the oven.

Mastering cookies takes a little patience and some trial and error. Once bakers get their feet wet, Christmas-cookie-baking becomes even more special.

## Holiday Happenings

### **Festival of Lights**

OKEECHOBEE — The City of Okeechobee will kick off the holiday season on **Dec. 3**, at 5:30 p.m. with a tree lighting ceremony in the City Hall Park. Okeechobee County schools chorus group will participate. Santa will be visit.

### **Dolly Hand Festival of Trees**

BELLE GLADE — The Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center annual Festival of Trees is under way. Twenty-three trees and wreaths decorated by local businesses, schools and individuals will be sold through a silent auction, with all proceeds to benefit Dolly

Hand. The auction will close after The Nutcracker performance on Dec. 5. The Bank of Belle Glade's tree is decorated with \$200 in Florida Lottery scratch-off tickets, and will be raffled off with the drawing to be held on **Dec. 5**. Tickets for that raffle tickets cost \$1 each and can be purchased at the Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center. The Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center is located on Palm Beach State College's Belle Glade Campus at 1977 College Drive in Belle Glade. For more information, call the box office at 561-993-1160 or visitdollyhand.org.

### **Christmas market is Dec 7**

INDIANTOWN — The Brady Ranch, off State Road 710, will host a Christmas Market, planned for **Dec. 7**, from 3 to 8 p.m. will include vendors, children's activities, a petting zoo, a corn pit, photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. There is no admission fee, but participants are asked to bring a donation for Trail of Hope Animal Rescue.

### **Mission hosts toy run**

OKEECHOBEE — Big Lake Missions Outreach, along with Reno's Motorcycle Service and Defenders Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club, are sponsoring their 25th

Annual Bike Run to benefit local children in our area. The money raised will go toward the local toy drive. Motorcycles, rods and trucks are all welcome to come meet at the Brahman Theater, 1500 S. Parrott Ave., on **Dec. 7** at 8 a.m. The ride begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. and lasts for three hours. The route will be determined later. Upon return to Okeechobee, all will gather at the Cypress Hut Eagles, 1401 U.S. 441 S.E., for a BBQ lunch. Donations for the ride can be made in cash or check made out to Big Lake Missions Outreach. For more information, call Roy Reno at 863-634-2275, Scott Anderson at 941-286-1377, or Stephen

**F**or to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 9:6*



*As we celebrate this blessed season, we take this moment to wish your family and you a Merry Christmas.*

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## Holiday Gift-Giving Ideas

(StatePoint) Everyone has had to scurry around to find a last minute holiday gift at some point, whether you procrastinated, you were searching for the perfect gift or you forgot to add someone to your gift list, but don't let these scenarios cause you stress.

The discount experts at Dollar General are offering advice to help you find something for everyone this holiday season.

### Those Who Have Everything...

For the family and friends who have everything, consider purchasing small decorative items for them to use around their homes. Blankets, candles, picture frames and even holiday decorations are great last-minute items recipients will enjoy. Food baskets with delicious snacks and holiday candy placed in a decorative canning jar are simple, affordable and useful

items that are sure to make loved ones smile this season.

### Great Go-To Gift Items

For recipients who are hard to shop for, gift cards and technology items are great go-to gifts. Consider headphones, DVD players and TracFones. Gift cards to favorite restaurants, retail stores and coffee shops are always a great choice, giving them freedom to choose exactly what they want.

### Gifts for Mom and Dad

Don't forget about mom and dad this holiday season. For Dad, save on Emerson men's gifts like outdoor lanterns, portable tools for camping and winter clothing. You can also find sleepwear, scarves and handbags that are sure to make Mom happy this holiday.

## Great Holiday Gifts for Hunters and Outdoor Enthusiasts

(StatePoint) Will you be shopping for any hunters or outdoor enthusiasts this holiday season? Thoughtful, useful gifts will be well-appreciated. "When it comes to hunters, think lightweight and packable," says Louis Chalfant, director of product development at Smith's Consumer Products.

Here are a few ideas to consider:

### Sharpen their Game

Those who hunt, fish and go on outdoor expeditions know just how important it is to keep tools sharp. You can hone gamesmanship with essential gear like a knife sharpener. For instance, a versatile tool like the Jiffy-Pro Handheld Sharpener is quick, safe and easy to use whether one is in the field, back at camp, or at home. It functions both to set the edge on a dull or damaged blade and to achieve razor sharpness. Plus, the scissors sharpening slot is large enough to accommodate game shears as well.

Lightweight enough to be a

stocking stuffer, consider, the 4" Diamond Combination Bench Stone, which features coarse and fine grit sharpening surfaces. Its innovative design speeds sharpening by collecting and holding the metal filings which ordinarily build up during use. These tools are available at various sporting goods, outdoors and hardware retail stores, as well as online at SmithsProducts.com.

### Get them Prepared

Those whose adventures take them off the beaten path need certain lightweight, compact tools to be prepared for a variety of situations. A fire starter is a must-have for any avid outdoorsman, hunter or backpacker. Other handy items to consider for gifts are a high-quality first aid kit with all the essentials, a multifunctional pocket knife or even an IOU promising to cover the cost of this seasons' hunting and fishing licenses.



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## Fun and Practical Holiday Gifts for Gardeners of all Levels

(StatePoint) The holiday season is a great opportunity to give those with green thumbs the tools they need to support their hobby.

Here are a few thoughtful gift ideas to make the holidays brighter for the gardeners you love.

### **Handy Items**

Every gardener needs top-notch tools to make regular tasks more comfortable and convenient. For example, pruning is no fun with shears that are rusted or hard to handle. To upgrade your gift recipient's gardening tool box, look for a rust-resistant stainless steel blade and a no-slip rubber grip. For safety, the shears should be able to lock into place when not in use.

### **Gifts that Keep on Giving**

When there's a chill in the air, consider focusing your attention

on gardening gifts that can be used indoors. One unique gift for a gardener of any level is an indoor garden kit, such as those from the Miracle-Gro AeroGarden line of gardens.

Hydroponic gardens like the AeroGarden grow fresh herbs, vegetables, and flowers in water, not soil. And they actually grow five times faster than soil gardens. Automated LED lights and reminders to add water make growing fun for seasoned gardeners and easy for even those with no gardening experience.

Well-suited for a kitchen countertop -- this is a safe, healthy and easy way to grow fresh herbs and vegetables year-round. To learn more visit [AeroGarden.com](http://AeroGarden.com).

### **Enjoy the Results**

Half the fun of gardening is reaping the benefits of one's labor. Help gardeners turn their harvest into something deli-



Gift an indoor garden kit to make year-round gardening easy.

cious. An herb chopper makes a great stocking stuffer. To speed up herb preparation and help gardeners avoid bruising the leaves they worked so hard to grow, look for one with multiple rounded blades.

Another great gift for herb and vegetable gardeners is a

salad dressing maker that has pre-marked settings for oil, vinegar and herbs, which can take the guess work out of meal preparation during busy week nights.

With a few creative ideas, it's easy to make a gardener smile this holiday season.

## Books for everyone this Holiday Season!

(StatePoint) No matter who is on your list this holiday season, great books make for great gifts.

Here are five titles to consider giving knowledge-seekers to enjoy during the season, or as stocking stuffers:

### **Gem Lovers**

Produced in association with the Smithsonian Institution, "Gem" is a visual guide to precious and semiprecious stones, organic gems, and precious metals, and features over 1,000 specially commissioned images. "Gem" reveals the science, natural history, mythology, and true stories behind the most celebrated gems and jewel-laden artifacts, including the Hope Diamond and Queen Elizabeth's

pelican brooch.

Readers can learn about the exquisite jewelry of cultures around the world, find out what characteristics are needed for a record-breaking gem, and follow the history of the world's most famous jewelry houses and designers.

### **Star Gazers**

Chart the wonders of the cosmos with "The Stars." Packed with three-dimensional artworks of each constellation and new imagery from the Hubble Space Telescope, ground-based observatories and more, this guide features fascinating objects like glittering star-birth nebulae and supermassive black holes.

The position, size and color of every night-sky object are re-



This holiday season, give a gift that inspires endless wonder.

vealed and a three-dimensional model of the celestial sphere that surrounds Earth charts all 88 constellations. From the Big

## BOOKS

Continued From Page 21

Bang to the search for extra-terrestrial life, astronomy and cosmology topics are covered in an easy-to-digest visual format.

### Automotive Enthusiasts

Classic car collectors and enthusiasts will enjoy "Classic Car," a visual guide created in association with the Smithsonian Institution. Featuring the most iconic classics of every decade from the 1940s to the 1980s from the Aston Martin DB5 to the Chevrolet Corvette, the book offers detailed profiles of trademark models, as well as the famous designers and manufacturers behind them, featuring more than 1,300 photographs and two prints suitable for framing.

### Inventors

Readers can build and explore 28 kid-safe experiments, crafts and activities with "Maker Lab." Created in association with the Smithsonian Institution and supporting STEAM education initiatives, the book will get young inventors' wheels turning, making science fun.

Explaining science through photographs, facts and real-world examples, each activity is appropriate for kids ages 8-12 years old. Requiring only household materials, young makers can build an exploding

volcano, make bath fizzies, construct a solar system and more.

### Budding Builders

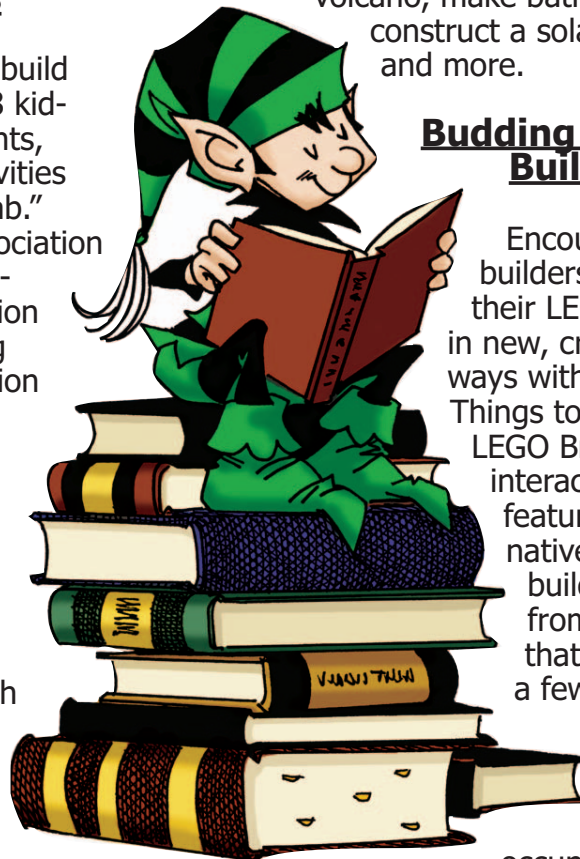
Encourage builders to look at their LEGO bricks in new, creative ways with "365 Things to do with LEGO Bricks," an interactive book featuring imaginative play and building ideas, from projects that take just a few minutes to those that keep one occupied for

hours. Activities include building a LEGO pet, challenging friends to make the tallest tower while

working against the clock, and organizing a LEGO bricks treasure hunt.

### American Girl Fans

Offer American Girl fans a treasured bookshelf addition with "American Girl: Ultimate Visual Guide," which includes images of every BeForever and Girl of the Year doll, an expanded section on the TrulyMe dolls and a detailed timeline of the company. Readers can learn about favorite dolls, historical eras, outfits, pets, accessories and more.





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## Indulge Your Peanut Cravings

Peanuts are a beloved snack that are as healthy as they are tasty. Despite their somewhat misleading name, peanuts actually are legumes and grow beneath the ground. Legumes are edible seeds enclosed in pods, whereas true nuts grow on trees. Regardless of their botanical classification, peanuts are enjoyed in many different recipes, both savory and sweet. However, peanuts and peanut butter can be truly delicious when incorporated into desserts. Such is the case when peanut flavoring becomes the basis for treats. In this recipe for 'Peanut Butter and Jelly Cookies' from 'A Decade of Cooking the Costco Way' (Costco Wholesale Corporation), edited by Tim Talevich, the popular sandwich pairing of PB&J puts a flavorful spin on cookies.



2 large eggs  
1/4 cup milk  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

3 1/2 cups Pillsbury™ Best All Purpose Flour  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 teaspoon salt  
3/4 cup Smucker's™ Strawberry Jelly, or any jam, jelly or preserves

Preheat the oven to 375 F. In a large mixing bowl, combine sugar, brown sugar, shortening, and peanut butter. Beat with an electric mixer until creamy. Beat in eggs, milk and vanilla.

In a separate bowl, stir together flour, baking soda and salt. Add to the peanut butter mixture and beat until blended. Shape the dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in sugar. Place balls 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake for 7 minutes. Remove from the oven. Using the back of a teaspoon, make a rounded indentation in the top of each cookie. Fill each with about 1/2 teaspoon jelly. Bake an additional 2 minutes. Remove to a wire rack to cool.

### Peanut Butter and Jelly Cookies

Makes 5 dozen

1 cup sugar, plus extra for coating dough  
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar  
1 cup Crisco Butter Flavor Shortening  
1 cup Jif™ Creamy Peanut Butter

## Coping with the Holidays

Holidays are filled with good food, companionship and fun but they can be difficult for those who have lost a loved one. At a time when most people are happy and enjoying themselves, the bereaved can feel sad, lonely, and depressed. Everyone's grief is as unique as a snowflake, while some remember all the good times of past holidays and find the memories comforting, others find it difficult to deal with. The bereaved can take some actions to help make the holidays less stressful and to find joy again. Here are some suggestions to help with the transitions in your life during the holidays:

- Plan ahead, hiding from the holidays should not be an option. So be proactive and make plans to spend time with relatives and or friends instead of being alone.
- Accept your limitations, but make decisions that will allow you to be part of the holiday season. Make sure you give yourself hope and room for new memories.
- Give yourself permission to discontinue activities that do not fit anymore.
- **Attend "An Evening of Remembrance" coming up on November 30th, 2019 at 6:00 P. M. at Buxton & Bass Funeral Home.**

Hospice of Okeechobee Counseling service is a non-profit program dedicated to providing grief support to anyone in our community who has experienced a loss of a loved one. It offers two free grief support groups at our volunteer building: Tuesdays 10:00-11:00 and Thursday 10:00-11:00. Hospice also offers free individual counseling as well.

Please contact us at (863)-467-2321.

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# Christmas Cookie Recipes

Yields: 12

Prep Time: 10 mins

Total Time: 20 mins

## Best Cookie Monster Oreos

### Ingredients

2 c. white chocolate chips

1 tbsp. coconut oil

Blue food coloring

12 oreos

Blue sanding sugar

24 Candy eyes

Mini chocolate chip cookies, for garnish

### Directions

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment or wax paper.
2. In a medium bowl, combine white chocolate chips, coconut oil and 4 to 5 drops of blue food coloring. Microwave on 50% power in 30 second intervals until the chocolate has melted. Stir until smooth.
3. Toss each Oreo cookie in the blue chocolate mixture until fully coated and transfer to the baking sheet. Sprinkle immediately with sanding sugar then stick two candy eyes on top. Let the chocolate set completely before serving, about 10 minutes.



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# Just for **KIDS** to Make

Prep Time 10 mins Cook Time 10 mins Total Time 20 mins

## Jello Cookie Recipe

Jello Cookies - A yummy cookie recipe that can be turned into playdough! So fun and perfect for Summer. The kids will love these easy jello cookies!

### Ingredients

1 1/2 cups unsalted butter (softened)  
 1 cup sugar  
 1 egg  
 1 teaspoon vanilla  
 3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
 1 teaspoon baking powder  
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar  
 12 ounces jello mix (4 packages)  
 food coloring (optional)



### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F degrees. In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar with a mixer until light and fluffy. Blend in egg and vanilla.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda and cream of tartar. Gradually add flour mixture to the wet ingredients.
3. Divide the dough into four sections. Sprinkle two tablespoons of jello mix into each section and then knead the dough until combined. You can add a few drops of food coloring in, if you'd like the color to be more vibrant.
4. Roll dough into 1-inch balls. If desired, you may roll the balls into the extra jello powder or sugar for a sweeter cookie. Then place dough onto the baking sheet about two inches apart. Flatten the dough with the bottom of a cup or bowl to allow the cookies to cook evenly.
5. Bake cookies for 8-10 minutes. Remove cookies from the pan and allow to cool on a wire rack.



Yields: 1 dozen  
 Prep Time: 45 mins Cook Time: 15 mins  
 Total Time: 1 hour 0 mins

## Sugar Cookie Fries

### Ingredients

2 Sticks unsalted butter, softened  
 1 c. granulated sugar, plus more for sprinkling  
 2 large eggs 2 tsp. vanilla extract  
 3 c. all-purpose flour  
 3/4 tsp. baking powder  
 1/2 tsp. salt  
 Funfetti frosting, for serving Strawberry jam, for serving Nutella, for serving

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In the bowl of stand mixer, beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time,



until evenly incorporated. Beat in vanilla. Add flour, baking powder and salt and mix on low until just combined.

3. Divide dough into 2 balls and flatten into discs. Refrigerate for 1 hour.
4. Roll out dough into a large, thin rectangle. Using a pizza cutter (or sharp knife) cut dough crosswise into 3/4"-1" thick strips. Cut the strips in half lengthwise and trim the edges to create straight sides. Sprinkle with sugar and transfer cookie cutouts to baking sheets. Let chill in the refrigerator for about an hour.
5. Bake for 12-15 minutes, until the cookies are starting to turn golden around the edges. Let cool completely.
6. Serve with desired dipping sauces.



## 4 Tips for Festive Holiday Desserts

A chill is in the air, string lights sparkle around every corner and holiday cheer spreads from ear-to-ear of adults and children alike. Thoughts of bonbons, gingerbread houses, decadent cakes and fresh-baked cookies weave in and out of dreams.

Extravagant desserts can be a reality without being a hassle. Follow these four tips to create holiday happiness in the form of sweets for all and make moments you and your guests won't soon forget.

### Keep Cookies On Hand

The easiest way to spread dessert joy with visitors is to have cookies at the ready. Bake a batch of shortbread cookies and store in airtight containers. Add a slice of white bread to allow the cookies to absorb moisture without adding an odd taste.

You can also freeze cookies so they stay fresh for a few months. Pull the treats out a couple of hours prior to desired eating time and once loved ones arrive, they'll taste freshly baked.



### Rethink the Dessert Spread

Instead of offering different types of desserts, consider impressing guests with a fondue bar. As an alternate to time-consuming double boiler recipes, use a high-performance blender, such as a Vitamix Professional Series 750, to create a delicious sauce in about 15 minutes.

To add a seasonal twist, make a chocolate orange fondue. Serve it in a pot with skewers of marshmallows, pound cake and fresh fruit.

### Sprinkle Homemade Sugar

One ingredient that isn't a pantry staple but appears in a lot of holiday baking and decorating is powdered sugar. If you find a recipe calls for it and you don't have any handy, you don't need to run to the busy store. Simply blend granulated sugar and a bit of cornstarch to make powdered sugar in 30 seconds. Then, sprinkle it on top of that gorgeous chocolate cake or mix frosting for decorating gingerbread houses.

### Festive Drinks

Not all desserts come in cake and cookie form. Mix after-dinner cocktails with a festive twist to surprise your guests. The best part is drinks are quick and easy to make.

Create a dessert cocktail, such as the Brandy Alexander. Blend brandy, chocolate ice cream, chocolate milk and ice cubes until the drink meets your desired consistency.

For the younger crowd, peppermint hot chocolate will do the trick. Ditch the powder packets and make a quick, homemade recipe. Use a high-performance blender, such as a Vitamix, to crush peppermint sticks, then add chocolate chips, cocoa powder and milk. Blend until steaming. Top both off with a dollop of whipped cream.

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## Italian Christmas Cookies

Prep time  
1 hour 15 mins  
Cook time  
10 mins  
Total time  
1 hour 25 mins

Serves: 24

### Ingredients

Cookies  
4 eggs  
1 cup sugar  
½ cup butter  
2 tsp. vanilla  
3½ cup flour  
4 tsp. baking powder

### Icing

2 cup sifted confectioner's sugar  
2 tsp. vanilla  
6 tsp. water



### Instructions

#### Cookies

In a bowl sift together the flour and baking powder, set aside. In a large mixing bowl, cream together the butter and sugar. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing well. Mix in the vanilla. Add in the flour mixture.

Knead until dough is firm and not sticky, adding more flour if necessary.

Refrigerate 1 hour.

Cut off small amount of dough and roll on floured surface into 6 inch strips.

Twirl into shape and place on greased cookie sheets.

Bake at 375 degrees for 8-10 minutes (the bottom should be lightly browned but the tops should remain light).

Remove cookies to wire rack and cool completely before glazing.

### Icing

Combine the Icing ingredients in a bowl until just smooth. You want it more thick than thin, but still runny.

Dip the tops of the cooled cookies into the glaze, then return to the wire rack, allowing the glaze to drip down the sides of the cookie.

Top with sprinkles, while glaze is still wet.



*Happy Holidays from our family to yours*



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# Holiday Happenings

## HAPPENINGS

Continued From Page 18

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### 'Ring-a-Ding Fling'

FORT PIERCE — Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society will host the annual Ring-a-Ding Ding Holiday Fling with FDO Swing, on Sunday, **Dec. 8**, beginning at 1 p.m. Al Hager will give the sign, and the 17-piece big band will fill the vineyard at Summer Crush Winery on Angle Road in Fort Pierce with favorite tunes for dancing. They'll throw in a few classics to help get you into the holiday spirit, and the celebration of the season can officially begin. For information, jazzsociety.org, or call 772-460-JAZZ today.

### Christmas parade set

OKEECHOBEE — Okeechobee Main Street's lighted Christmas Parade will be in downtown Okeechobee on **Dec. 14**. The parade will start at 6 p.m.

### Santa Claus coming to town

OKEECHOBEE — Below is a list of

locations and dates for opportunities to visit and take pictures with Santa in Okeechobee. Dates and times are subject to change.

- Santa will visit City Hall Park, 55 S.E. Third Ave., **Dec. 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12**, and **16** from 6 to 8 p.m.

- Okeechobee Kiwanis Club will host Santa in the bandstand in Flagler Park, **Dec. 14, 17, 18, 19, 21**, and **23**, from 6 to 8 p.m.

### Holiday toy drive under way

OKEECHOBEE — Guardian ad Litem and Voices for Children of Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast will hold a Holiday Toy Drive through Friday, **Dec. 13**. You can donate new unwrapped toys, gifts and gift cards for children ages 0-18 at the Chamber of Commerce of Okeechobee County, 55 S. Parrott Ave. More businesses and churches are needed to be locations for donation boxes. If you want to help, call 772-785-5804. You can make a donation through VoicesforChildrenOTC.org, make sure to designate funds for gift drive. For information, call 772-785-5804.

### Santa to ride fire truck

OKEECHOBEE — The City of Okeechobee will once again host visits from Santa Claus, who will ride around in the city limits on a fire truck. Santa is expected to ride through the northwest and northeast sections of town on **Dec. 19**, through the southeast section on **Dec. 20**, and through the southwest section on **Dec. 21**.

### Boat parade date set

OKEECHOBEE — Okeechobee Yachtette Club's 36th Annual Christmas Boat Parade will be held Saturday, **Dec. 21**. Boaters who wish to participated should

decorate their boats with lights and meet

on Taylor Creek by Burger King and the State Road 70 bridge between 5 and 5:30 p.m. The parade starts at 6 p.m. The boaters will go south on Taylor Creek to the locks and then turn left and to go VFW Post 10539. The post will give a prize for the best decorated boats. For more information, call Arnie at 863-824-0681 or Harry at 863-467-4782.

*Add your holiday event to this list!  
Email information to okeeneews@newszap.com.*



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## Healthy holiday dessert option

A certain measure of overindulgence is anticipated during the holiday season. Rich foods and desserts are served, and parties are plentiful. However, those who plan to stick to their healthy eating plans can still enjoy tastes of the season without compromising their fitness or dietary goals.

Many recipes can be made healthier with some simple substitutions, and that even includes decadent desserts. Take, for example, 'Wickedly Decadent Deep Chocolate Truffles' from 'Low Fat for Life,' (DK) by Sue Krietzman. This low-fat version of a high-fat classic will taste delicious without being too sinful.

### Wickedly Decadent Deep Chocolate Truffles

Makes 24

- 6 ounces semisweet chocolate
- 6 ounces very low-fat fromage frais
- 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 ounces semisweet chocolate, grated

1. Break the chocolate into a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Let it melt, stirring occasionally.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together the fromage frais and sugar. Whisk in the vanilla.
3. When the chocolate is melted and smooth, remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly. Slowly whisk the chocolate into the fromage frais mixture, using a rubber spatula to incorporate



every bit of chocolate. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for an hour.

4. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper. Scatter the grated chocolate on a plate. Scoop out the chilled chocolate mixture in teaspoonfuls, roll into balls, then roll the balls in the grated chocolate and put on the prepared baking sheet. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm.

5. Put the truffles in small paper cases. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Per truffle: Total fat: 2 g; saturated fat: 1 g; unsaturated fat: 1 g; cholesterol: 1 mg; sodium: 3 mg; calories: 52.

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### NOTICE TO WASTE MANAGEMENT CUSTOMERS

In observance of Thanksgiving, the following schedule will apply.

Trash pickup regularly scheduled on Thursday, Nov. 28th will be picked up on Friday, Nov. 29th.

Trash pickup regularly scheduled for Friday, Nov. 29th will be picked up on Saturday, Nov. 30th.

**The Okeechobee Landfill drop off location on Berman Road will be closed on Nov. 28th. The Okeechobee Landfill offices will be closed Nov. 28th & 29th.**

From the staff & management of Waste Management / Okeechobee Landfill Inc.

**863.357.0824**

**"Think Green"**

*Happy Thanksgiving*

## 7 Ways to Include Everyone in the Holiday Cheer

(Family Features) Holidays bring get-togethers filled with music, food and conversation. However, for those who experience hearing loss, the season often takes on a whole different sound. Those with hearing loss often end up feeling isolated from the festivities, but there are ways you can make sure they feel comfortable joining the fun.

A survey by Rayovac, which was conducted online by Harris Poll, found that 56 percent of Americans say talking and catching up with family members is their favorite part of family gatherings, but nearly one out of every five (19 percent) say they have experienced difficulty communicating with someone who is hard of hearing.

If you'll be escorting a family member with hearing loss to a holiday event, be sure their hearing devices are in good operating condition with batteries that are able to power all of the device's features, like Rayovac. The hearing aid battery company has also introduced the Gift of Hearing this holiday season, a campaign in which a portion of proceeds from its battery sales benefit the Starkey Hearing Foundation.

This holiday season, make the most of the opportunity to share quality conversations with loved ones who have trouble hearing by following these simple tips from Shari Eberts of livingwithhearingloss.com:

- Get their attention before speaking by saying their name or tapping them on the shoulder.
- Give some context as to the topic of the conversation to help them infer.
- Make sure they can see your lips. Stand in a well-lit area and be sure you are facing them directly, with your hand away from your face while talking.
- Know that background noise can provide difficult distractions. If you're hoping for more than a passing greeting, find a quiet place where you can visit comfortably.
- Enunciate as you talk, but avoid the temptation to speak overly slowly. Instead, speak at a moderate but steady rate.
- Be patient and be prepared to repeat or rephrase your comments.
- Remember that if you are feeling frustrated, your partner in conversation may be, too. Keep your sense of humor so you can enjoy the holiday together.



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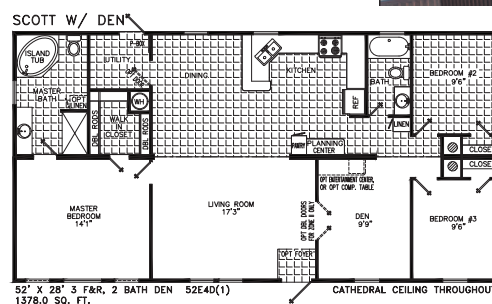
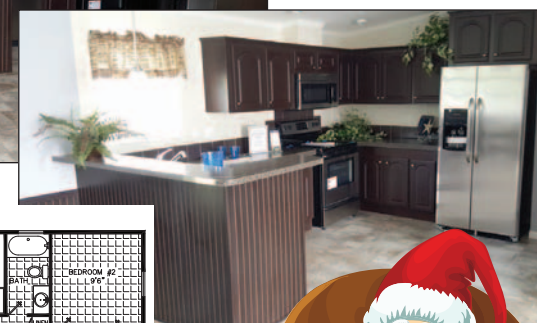
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# Take Precautions to be Safe this Holiday Season

(Family Features) Although good tidings and joy abound during the holiday season, this time of year can also pose a serious threat to your family, friends and home. The holidays bring an elevated risk for fires and burns, and many Americans may have a false sense of security.

A new survey conducted by Shriners Hospitals for Children® shows that most Americans know basic fire and burn safety tips but do not practice them in the home. Failure to implement safety precautions only adds to the danger.

A myriad of seasonal activities puts the action indoors, where families gather for cooking, decorating and other pursuits that may involve an open flame. Unfortunately, enjoying some of those treasured pastimes means the risk of house fires and burns increases drastically.

Many burn injuries and fire risks can be avoided by practicing a few simple safety measures. Shriners Hospitals has provided some practical steps to keep your home and family safe.

## **Seasonal Decor**

Live Christmas trees need water daily. However, according to the survey, less than half of Americans perform the task. A dry tree can ignite in seconds, making tree fires one of the most dangerous types. Well-watered trees significantly reduce this risk. Set a reminder to add water daily to keep your tree safe and supple throughout the season.

Choosing the right place for your tree involves many variables. As you select the perfect vantage point, remember to keep trees away from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, space heaters, candles or heat vents.

Consider using wickless or

flameless candles. There are numerous inexpensive options that cast a warm, flickering glow so you can enjoy the ambiance of a lit candle without the risk.

## **Lights and Electricity**

Before installing decorative lights on a house or a tree, closely inspect each strand for frayed wires, bare spots and excessive kinking or wear. Discard and replace any lights that show signs of damage, which can pose a fire hazard.

Nearly half of survey respondents admitted they overload electrical outlets. During the holiday season, when you are likely to have more decorations, lights and other electrical items in use, take extra care to prevent overburdening an outlet and use certified surge protectors and power strips.

Exposed electrical cords and uncovered outlets can attract the attention of inquisitive children. Take care to secure cords out of reach and cover any outlets not in use.

Despite the obvious risk of leaving lit candles unattended, 27 percent of Americans admit to this practice and 25 percent of respondents report leaving them in reach of a child. If you must use a flame-burning candle, do so only while you are in the room and extinguish any lit candles if the room will be vacant.

## **Cooking Safety**

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, holiday cooking is the leading cause of residential building fires in the month of December. With more cooking during this time, the risk of house fires and pediatric burns increases drastically. Outturned handles can be easily grasped by curious hands or snag on clothing or aprons and

potentially scald a youngster underfoot. Be sure to turn pot handles toward the back of the stove, out of children's reach.

Follow the lead of nearly 50 percent of Americans who know to keep a lid or cookie sheet nearby when cooking to help extinguish a fire.

Use electric appliances on a countertop, safely away from the sink or other water sources, but remember to avoid using an extension cord to supply power to kitchen appliances.

For more information, activity books for kids, tip cards and additional tools for families, visit [beburnaware.org](http://beburnaware.org).

## **Turn Up the Heat Safely**

During cooler weather, many households increase reliance on natural gas for heat. Entertaining during the holiday months

can also raise natural gas usage. However, natural gas can be dangerous and even deadly.

Help minimize the risk of a natural gas leak with these tips:

- Leave the house immediately if you think you smell natural gas; call your gas company or 911 for assistance once you are safely away.

- Teach every member of the house how to recognize the slightly sweet, sickly smell of natural gas. Some compare it to the smell of rotting eggs or food.

- Schedule annual service by a qualified professional for all appliances, gas lines and other gas-consuming elements of your home.

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