

# Holiday TRADITIONS

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# Holiday TRADITIONS



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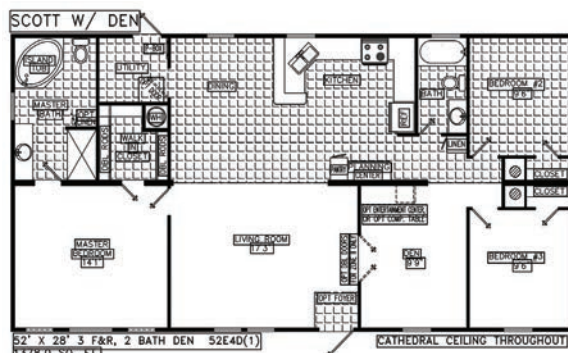
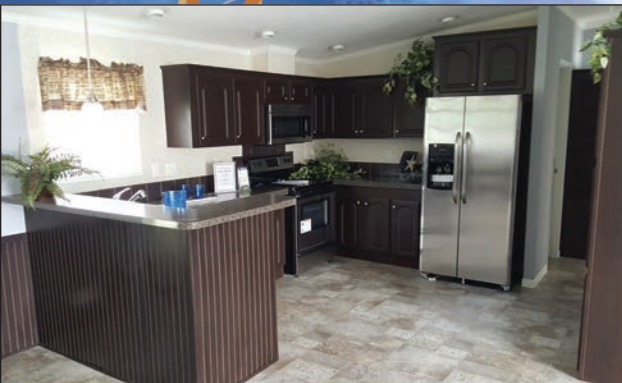


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# CDC announces holiday considerations

As the holidays approach, communities wonder what they should do to safely celebrate with their families. The CDC has come out with what they are calling “considerations” to help individuals determine what they will do this year. “These considerations are meant to supplement—not replace—any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which holiday gatherings must comply,” they state.

One of the main things you should consider when planning any type of gathering is the current COVID-19 level in your community. This will help you determine whether to limit, postpone or even cancel your event.

You should also consider the locations from which your guests are coming. What are the levels in their communities? If possible, limit your guest list to people from your local area.

Indoor gatherings pose a greater risk than outdoor gatherings, and indoor gatherings with poor ventilation pose a greater risk than indoor gatherings with good ventilation, such as those with open windows and doors. In general, an outdoor venue is the better choice, but if you must use an indoor venue, increase ventilation by opening doors and windows.

Next, you should consider the duration of the event. The longer the gathering, the greater the risk.

The number of people at the gathering is a factor. The more people at the event, the greater the risk. The more space between people, the less likely the spread of the virus. Limit the number of attendees as much as possible.

You should consider the behavior of the guests you are planning to invite. Do they practice social distancing, hand washing? Mask wearing? Consider asking all guests to strictly avoid contact with people outside their households for 14 days before the gathering.

During the gathering, wear a mask. Avoid singing, chanting or shouting.

Instead of potluck style gatherings, encourage guests to bring food and drinks for themselves and members of their own households.

Limit people going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as in the kitchen or around the grill, if possible.

Wear a mask while preparing or serving food to others who don't live in your household.

If serving any food, consider having one person serve all the food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.

Use single-use options or identify one person to serve sharable items, like salad dressings, food containers, plates and utensils, and condiments.

Avoid any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets or buffet-style potlucks, salad bars, and condiment or drink stations. Use grab-and-go meal options, if available.

If think that you may have been exposed during your celebration, take extra precautions for 14 days after the event to protect others:

- Stay home as much as possible.
- Avoid being around people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Consider getting tested for COVID-19.

If you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, or if you test positive for COVID-19, immediately contact the host and others that attended the event or celebration that you attended. They may need to inform other attendees about their possible exposure to the virus. Contact your health care provider and follow the CDC-recommended steps for what to do if you become sick, and follow the public health recommendations for community-related exposure.

If you are waiting for your COVID-19 test results, stay home until you have a result, and follow CDC's guidance to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, a public health worker may contact you to check on your health and ask you who you have been in contact with and where you've spent time in order to identify and provide support to people (contacts) who may have been infected. Your information will be confidential. Learn more about what to expect with contact tracing.

If you are notified that you were a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19:

- Stay home for 14 days from the last time you had contact with that person.
- Monitor for symptoms of coronavirus.
- Get information about COVID-19 testing if you feel sick.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html)



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# Holiday baking pointers

room temperature enable the emulsification process to work more readily. The difference in temperature can mean a completely different chemical reaction, so follow the recipe accordingly.

### Calibrate the oven

Purchase an oven thermometer, set your oven to 350 F, the standard baking temperature, and see what the thermometer reads. If it is different, adjust cooking times accordingly or have the oven repaired. Cooking at the wrong temperature might mean the recipe doesn't turn out right.

### Use unsalted butter

Most recipes will call for unsalted butter so you aren't adding unwanted sodium to the recipe, affecting dough consistency and flavor.

### Position pans centrally

Pans should be on the center rack of the oven. If the oven isn't wide enough to put multiple pans side by side, place them on different racks and slightly offset them to enable air circulation.



### Use parchment paper

This unsung hero of baking can keep cookies from spreading out on baking sheets, prevent cakes from sticking to pans and may even help batter and dough bake evenly.

### Flip cakes

Cool cakes upside down on a cooling rack. This will help flatten out the tops, which makes it easier to stack and level cakes for layered cakes.

A few tips can go a long way to helping holiday baking go more smoothly.

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Baking is one tradition that comes with the holiday territory.

Many people may only bake in November and December, so it's understandable if they're a little rusty come the holiday season. These baking tips can lead to successful yields of cookies, cakes and other holiday treats.

### Follow the recipe carefully

When cooking, it is easy to add an extra dash of this or a pinch of that. But baking is a science and the ingredients are used in a ratio to produce a desired chemical reaction while cooking. To ensure success, do not substitute ingredients unless the recipe tells you how to do so, and measure each addition carefully.

### Spoon out your measurements

It can be tempting to dig a measuring cup right into a bag of flour, but scooping packs the ingredients down — potentially causing you to use more than the recipe calls for. Instead, spoon the flour into your measuring cup gently and use a straight edge to level it out. Even better, use a scale and metric measurements to ensure exact amounts of wet and dry ingredients.

### Read up on temperature

Certain ingredients, like butter and eggs, are temperature-dependent. Cold butter in biscuits helps them to rise up flaky and delicious. Eggs brought to

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## Stock the pantry with holiday baking ingredients

**M**any holiday traditions begin with family and friends gathered in the kitchen or around the dinner table. Food is an integral part of celebrating Thanksgiving, Christmas and Chanukah, and key components of each holiday are tied exclusively to food.

Come the holiday season, many people gather to make delicious desserts for holiday dinners or even as gifts. The right ingredients are necessary to produce a bounty of baked goods. It's also essential to ensure those ingredients are fresh, as age can compromise the taste of some spices, and leavening ingredients like yeast, baking soda and baking powder may lose efficacy over time.

**Flours:** All-purpose flour is versatile and useful in many recipes. In addition, bread flour, cake flour and pastry flour have attributes that make them better suited for their respective jobs than all-purpose flour. Individuals who follow certain diets, including gluten-free diets, can find alternative flours that can be substituted in many different recipes.

**Baking soda:** This leavening agent is activated when it is combined with acid and heat. That is why it is often paired with citrus juice, buttermilk and sour cream.

**Baking powder:** This leavening agent is baking soda mixed with a powdered acid and cornstarch. If baking soda is the only leavening agent, it will not require the addition of another acidic ingredient. "Double-acting" means carbon dioxide bubbles will form during mixing and again during heating.

**Yeast:** Yeast takes more time to metabolize and cause doughs to rise than other leavening agents.

**Sugar:** Granulated sugar is the most common sugar found in recipes. Confectioner's sugar (powdered sugar) is used in frosting and icings. Brown sugar is refined sugar with molasses added, and is used in certain recipes, like gingerbread.

**Salt:** Granulated table salt is used in everyday baking.

**Unsalted butter:** Unsalted butter will be the default for baked goods unless the recipe specifically mentions salted butter.

**Eggs:** Eggs help to bind ingredients together. Large eggs are most often cited in many baking recipes.

**Milk:** Dairy adds moisture and texture to batters. Alternative milks, such as soy or almond milk, can sometimes be substituted, but the resulting texture may change.

**Vegetable oil:** Many recipes call for vegetable oil, which has a neutral flavor.

**Shortening:** Shortening is a solid vegetable fat used to make tender baked goods. Shortening also has a higher melting point, which helps cookies and other items retain their shape while cooking.

**Flavorings:** It is helpful to have various spices and extracts on hand. Cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg,

cloves, and allspice are some common baking spices. Almond and vanilla extracts are quite versatile and add extra punch to recipes.

**Additions:** Mix-ins, such as chocolate chips, cocoa powder, oats, nuts, and dried fruits, often turn up in holiday recipes.

Certain ingredients are essential for baking and holiday cooks can take steps to ensure their pantries are stocked in time for the holidays.



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# Try an Italian tradition this holiday

**H**ailing from Abruzzo in Central Italy, pizzelle are crisp, flat waffle-esque cookies made in a special hot iron. Like mostaccioli, these cookies predate Christmas -- in fact, it is said that this is the oldest known cookie recipe on earth, dating back to the 8th century BC. In olden times, presses were made from cast iron and would be heated over a fire, or directly on the stovetop. You can still find those irons if you're up to the challenge, but electric irons are much easier to use, and very easy to find both online and at major retailers.

## What are pizzelle cookies?

Pizzelle are a crisp, flat Italian cookie, traditionally flavored with anise, that looks similar to a thin waffle. Anise is a sweet spice with a flavor similar to black licorice.

Pizzelle are very similar to the Norwegian krumkake. Sometimes they're also called ferratelle or cancelle.

They have a pretty snowflake pattern pressed into them, and they can be eaten flat, pressed into a bowl-shape, or rolled into cylinders. Sometimes they are sandwiched around or piped with a filling, such as cannoli cream or Nutella spread.



They are especially popular around the Christmas and Easter holidays, and are often found at Italian weddings and other celebrations.

## I don't like anise, can I substitute with something else?

Anise is traditional for authentic Italian pizzelle, but if you don't like the taste you can leave it out. Then you would just have vanilla pizzelle.

You could also substitute other flavors for the anise extract. Some nice ideas would include:

- Lemon Extract and/or Zest
- Orange Blossom Water
- Cinnamon
- Almond Extract
- Orange Extract and/or Zest

These ingredients can be added to taste. Use as much or as little as you'd like!

## How to keep pizzelle cookies crisp

These cookies can be lightly covered and stored at room temperature. It is possible to stack them and slip them into a zip-top bag.

As long as they were completely cool when wrapped, they should stay crisp for weeks. The ratio of ingredients in this particular recipe has that little special something; the pizzelle become crisp within minutes of coming off of the iron, and they truly stay that way.

If you like to make a big batch to last a really long time, wrap the pizzelle tightly in plastic wrap and pop them into the freezer. They will keep for months and can be thawed at room temperature.

## Recipe

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

## Ingredients

- 3** eggs (large)
- ¾** cup granulated sugar
- 1½** teaspoons whole anise seed
- 1** teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½** teaspoon anise extract
- ½** cup unsalted butter (1 stick), melted and cooled slightly
- 1½** cups all-purpose flour
- 2** teaspoons baking powder
- ⅛** teaspoon kosher salt
- powdered sugar (optional garnish)

## Instructions

Preheat a pizzelle maker, and lightly mist the plates with non-stick spray. Wipe the plates of the pizzelle maker lightly, to remove any excess. You only need to do this once, before starting. There is no need to do it after every pizzelle.

Place the eggs, sugar, anise seed, vanilla, and anise extract in a medium bowl and whisk to combine.

Stir in the melted butter.

Add the flour, baking powder, and salt, and mix until smooth.

Place about a tablespoon of batter on each of the hot pizzelle maker plates, and close the lid.

Cook until only a few wisps of steam are escaping from the pizzelle maker, and the pizzelles look lightly golden.

Use a fork or small spatula to remove the cooked pizzelles to a wire rack to cool.

Dust with powdered sugar, if using.





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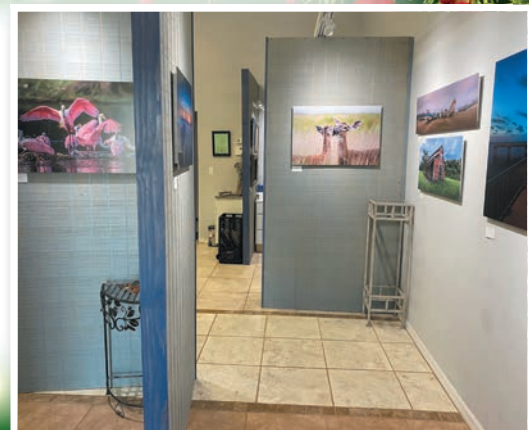
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# Christmas Carol

## Spotlight:

# Silent Night



In 2018, the popular Christmas carol “Silent Night” celebrated the 200th anniversary of its first performance. The lyrics to “Silent Night” were written by Austrian Roman Catholic priest Joseph Mohr in 1816. Over the years, the melody has been credited to the likes of legendary composers such as Mozart and Beethoven. However, a manuscript handwritten by Mohr and discovered in 1995 revealed that the Austrian composer Franz Xaver Gruber composed the music to this beloved song.



Silent night! Holy night!  
 All is calm, all is bright  
 Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,  
 Holy infant so tender and mild,  
 Sleep in Heavenly peace!  
 Sleep in Heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!  
 Shepherds quake at the sight;  
 Glories stream from Heaven afar,  
 Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,  
 Christ, the Saviour, is born!  
 Christ, the Saviour, is born!

Silent night! Holy night!  
 Son of God, Love's pure light  
 Radiant beams from Thy Holy face,  
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
 Jesus, Lord at Thy birth,  
 Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

Lyrics written by Joseph Mohr  
 Lyrics courtesy of Lyricsforchristmas.com



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*Amy, Patrick, Erica, Wayne, Lairen, Jimmy Natalie  
Jacalyn, Lori, Melody and Cindy*





# Christmastime WORD SEARCH

H	S	D	F	D	B	S	P	E	O	L	C	F	X	S	H	F	P	E	W
G	U	C	Y	B	S	S	D	T	V	V	F	A	P	U	C	W	F	G	J
N	O	G	U	T	M	E	K	N	Y	H	D	C	S	P	R	G	E	N	C
I	C	N	Y	C	N	G	C	H	E	T	H	U	N	A	U	F	S	A	H
M	O	I	U	I	F	N	E	O	J	I	H	K	O	R	H	D	T	H	T
M	O	T	L	L	M	I	L	X	I	H	R	Y	I	T	C	R	I	C	N
I	K	H	E	C	I	E	E	G	E	V	G	F	T	I	P	K	V	X	Y
R	I	G	T	A	E	W	B	S	S	G	N	L	A	E	C	S	E	E	F
T	E	I	I	K	N	E	R	U	L	L	I	V	R	S	Y	Y	H	E	L
M	S	L	D	X	T	T	A	P	N	S	P	H	O	J	A	D	S	B	N
H	I	F	E	R	E	M	T	H	W	T	P	S	C	M	D	T	B	U	B
T	B	N	V	C	R	Y	I	E	C	G	O	L	E	Y	I	U	X	R	Y
M	Y	F	X	L	T	X	O	A	L	M	H	D	D	V	L	T	I	Y	Y
R	T	Y	Y	W	A	E	N	S	Y	T	S	E	A	N	O	L	S	H	N
A	I	L	W	P	I	F	I	J	O	Y	I	L	E	U	H	A	O	J	L
W	V	I	X	G	N	P	I	O	R	E	B	M	E	C	E	D	C	J	S
J	I	M	L	F	T	P	O	W	A	W	T	W	D	H	Y	O	M	O	T
H	T	A	S	U	A	L	C	A	T	N	A	S	S	T	K	I	H	K	F
J	A	F	C	A	R	O	L	I	N	G	E	M	D	L	U	X	H	N	I
E	N	E	U	X	P	Y	N	I	L	O	R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R	G

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

## WORDS

- CAROLING
- CELEBRATION
- CHURCH
- COOKIES
- DECEMBER
- DECORATIONS
- ENTERTAIN
- EXCHANGE
- FAMILY
- FESTIVAL
- FESTIVE
- FRIENDS
- GIFTS
- HOLIDAY
- JOLLY
- LIGHTING
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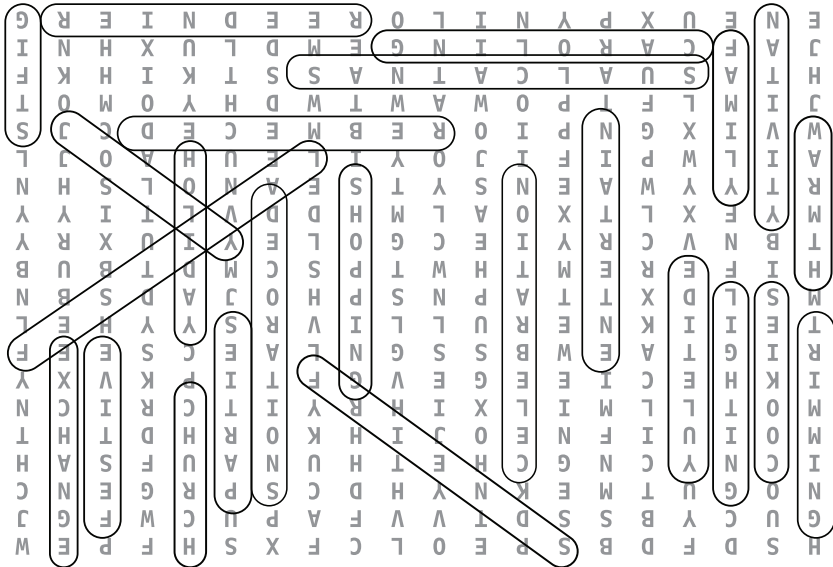
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# Holiday Coloring

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## Christmastime WORD SEARCH



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# Warm up with a rich chocolate beverage

Nothing beats sipping a hot, soothing beverage after a day of choosing the perfect Christmas tree or lobbing snowballs in the backyard. Teas, hot toddies, coffees, and mulled ciders certainly can fit the bill, but a mug of rich hot chocolate is a holiday season staple.

Hot chocolate can be whipped up quickly from premade packets, but many such packets are loaded with sugar. Chocolate lovers should have a reliable hot chocolate recipe to lean on when the moment is right. This recipe for "Real Hot Chocolate" from "Chocolate" (Parragon) by the editors of Love Food is sure to please.

### Real Hot Chocolate

*Serves 1 to 2*

**1½ ounces semisweet chocolate, broken into pieces**

**1¼ cups milk**

**Chocolate curls to decorate**

Place the chocolate in a large, heatproof pitcher. Place the milk in a heavy-bottom saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour about one-quarter of the milk onto the chocolate and leave until the chocolate has softened.

Whisk the milk and chocolate mixture until smooth. Return the remaining milk to the heat and return to a boil, then pour onto the chocolate, whisking constantly.

Pour into warmed mugs or cups and top with the chocolate curls. Serve immediately.



**I CAME FOR YOU**  
~ JESUS

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WALKING IN  
**DARKNESS**  
HAVE SEEN A  
**GREAT LIGHT.**

Isaiah 9:2 NIV

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# Eggnog is a classic for holiday celebrations



No beverage is more associated with holiday cocktail parties than eggnog, which is a beloved beverage come the holiday season.

While it's perfectly acceptable to purchase store-bought eggnog in the dairy case and dress it up with a favorite spirit, most eggnog recipes only feature a handful of ingredients and are quite easy to make at home.

Rum, whiskey and brandy are customary liquors to use in eggnog recipes. However, The Spruce: Eats has taste-tested them all and believes brandy tops the others for the perfect finished product.

Enjoy their version of "Quick Brandy Eggnog" below.

### Quick Brandy Eggnog *1 cocktail*

- 1 ounce brandy
- 1¼ ounces milk
- ½ ounce simple syrup
- 1 egg yolk
- Grated nutmeg or cinnamon for garnish

In a cocktail shaker, combine the brandy, milk, simple syrup, and egg yolk. Dry shake without ice.

Fill shaker with ice, then shake vigorously for about 30 seconds to ensure the egg is well mixed. Strain into an old-fashioned or cocktail glass. Add a dash of grated nutmeg or cinnamon as a garnish.

Note: Only use a fresh egg. Test the egg's freshness by placing it in a glass of water. If the egg floats, discard it, as this indicates the egg is too old. Only use eggs that rest on the bottom of the glass. This will ensure the most flavorful drink and helps to reduce the risk of salmonella.



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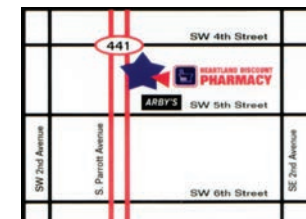
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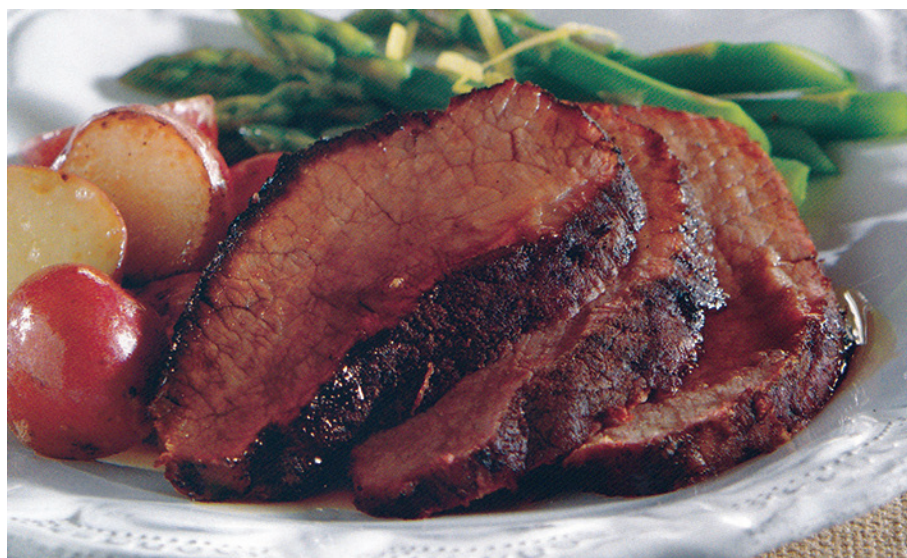
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## Slow cooker meal makes holiday entertaining a breeze

The holidays wouldn't be complete without a delicious meal to share with family and friends. A holiday roast is often the centerpiece of festive occasions. Having a go-to recipe for this classic main course makes holiday preparations that much easier.

Utilizing a slow cooker to make a beef roast reduces time spent in the kitchen, affording hosts more opportunities to mingle with their guests. That's just the idea behind this recipe for "Beef Roast With Dark Rum Sauce" from "Crock•Pot® 356 Year-Round Recipes" (Publications International, Ltd) by Crock•Pot Kitchens.

### Beef Roast With Dark Rum Sauce

Makes 6 servings

- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 beef rump roast (about 3 pounds)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup dark rum, divided
- ½ cup beef broth
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 whole bay leaves, broken in half
- ½ cup packed dark brown sugar
- ¼ cup lime juice

1. In a small bowl, combine allspice, salt, pepper, and cloves. Rub spices onto all sides of roast.
2. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat until hot. Sear beef on all sides, turning as it browns. Transfer to a slow cooker. Add ½ cup rum, broth, garlic, and bay leaves. Cover; cook on low 1 hour.
3. In a small bowl, combine remaining ½ cup rum, brown sugar and lime juice, stirring well. Pour over roast. Continue cooking on low 4 to 6 hours, or until beef is fork-tender. Baste beef occasionally with sauce.
4. Remove and slice roast. Spoon sauce over beef to serve.



### NOTICE TO WASTE MANAGEMENT CUSTOMERS

In observance of Thanksgiving, the following schedule will apply.

Trash pickup regularly scheduled on Thursday, Nov. 26th will be picked up on Friday, Nov. 27th.

Trash pickup regularly scheduled for Friday, Nov. 27th will be picked up on Saturday, Nov. 28th.

**The Okeechobee Landfill drop off location on Berman Road will be closed on Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>. The Okeechobee Landfill offices will be closed Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>.**

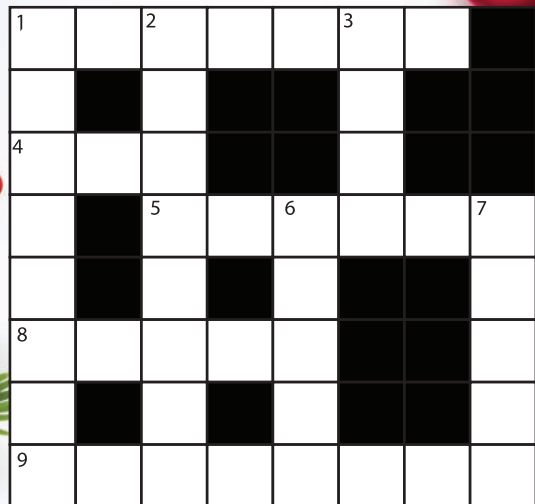
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Waste Management /  
Okeechobee Landfill Inc.

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**"Think Green"**

Happy Thanksgiving

### Crossword Puzzle



#### ACROSS

1. Moms and dads
4. Consume
5. Fasten or join
8. Lightweight fabric
9. Unexpected event

#### DOWN

1. Gifts
2. Person or store that sells something
3. Large, brass instrument
6. Highest male voice
7. Place to live

Answers:

Across  
1. Parents 4. Eat 5. Attach 8. Nylon  
9. Surprise  
Down  
1. Presents 2. Retailer 3. Tuba 6. Tenor  
7. House



# A skillet supper makes for easy entertaining

**R**oasts and hams certainly may get a lot of fanfare for holiday dining, but chicken is a versatile food that is mild enough to be molded into whatever flavor profile cooks desire. Chicken also can be dressed up so it easily competes with other protein sources for top billing on holiday tables.

Easily cooked on the stovetop in a flash, this recipe for “Almond Chicken With Peaches and Roquefort” from “125 Best Chicken Recipes” (Robert Rose) by Rose Murray can be customized and multiplied depending on the size of the crowd.

While peaches may not be in season where you live during the holidays, simply substitute two small pears, which work well for fall and winter meals. Serve with crisp green beans and lemon couscous, which is easily made by adding ½ teaspoon grated lemon zest and 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice to warm couscous.

## “Almond Chicken With Peaches and Roquefort” Serves 2

- 2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- Salt and pepper
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- ¾ cup sliced almonds
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 unpeeled peaches, sliced; or 2 small pears, cored and sliced
- ¼ cup dry white wine or chicken stock
- ¼ cup whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons Roquefort or Gorgonzola cheese

1. Place chicken breasts between two pieces of plastic wrap and pound to an even thickness of about ¼ inch. Dredge in flour mixed with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Dip each breast in egg and coat with almonds.
2. In a large skillet, heat half the oil over medium heat. Add chicken and cook about 5 minutes per side, turning once, until golden and no longer pink inside. Remove to a warm platter and keep warm.
3. Add remaining oil to pan and heat over medium heat. Add peaches (or pears) and cook 1 minute. Stir in wine and bring to a boil; cook 3 minutes to reduce. Stir in cream, cheese and salt and pepper to taste. Cook stirring, until thickened.

Spoon sauce around the chicken and serve.



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## Hearty lasagna can feed holiday crowds

Millions of people take to the roads, rails and skies to make it home for the holidays. Plenty of hosts and hostesses open their homes to well-traveled relatives and close friends during the holiday season, sometimes providing accommodations for several days. During this season of entertaining, it is helpful to have several go-to recipes that can feed a houseful of guests on hand.

The recipe for “Lasagna With Broccoli and Three Cheeses” from “Real Simple: Dinner Tonight, Done!” (Time Home Entertainment) from the editors of Real Simple is sure to stick to guests’ ribs on wintry nights. With only 15 minutes of preparation time, this dish gets popped in the oven and can be enjoyed an hour later.

### Lasagna With Broccoli and Three Cheeses

Serves 4

- 1 15-ounce container ricotta
- 1 pound frozen broccoli florets — thawed, patted dry, and chopped
- 2¼ cups grated mozzarella
- ½ cup grated Parmesan K kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 16-ounce jar marinara sauce
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 8 no-boil lasagna noodles
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for the foil
- 4 cups mixed greens
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Heat oven to 400 F. In a large bowl, combine the ricotta, broccoli, 2 cups of the mozzarella, ¼ cup of the Parmesan, ½ teaspoon salt,

and ¼ teaspoon pepper. In a small bowl, combine the marinara sauce and cream.

Spoon a thin layer of the sauce into the bottom of an 8-inch square baking dish. Top with 2 noodles, a quarter of the remaining sauce, and a third of the broccoli mixture; repeat twice. Top with the remaining 2 noodles and sauce.

Sprinkle with the remaining ¼ cup of mozzarella and ¼ cup of Parmesan. Cover the lasagna tightly with an oiled piece of foil and bake until the noodles are tender, 35 to 40 minutes. Uncover and bake until golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes more.

Toss the greens with the oil, lemon juice, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Serve with the lasagna.

## 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 “Lanterns on the Lawn” between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 3rd at Hospice of Okeechobee**

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.

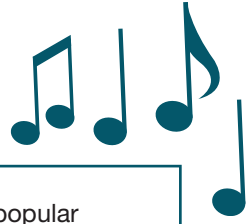
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# Christmas Carol Spotlight: O Christmas Tree



**ff** "O Christmas Tree" is a wildly popular holiday song. In fact, the song is so popular that there are many different versions, each of which is based on a traditional German folk song. That song, "O Tannenbaum," is centuries old and has nothing to do with Christmas.

## "O Christmas Tree"

O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Thy leaves are so unchanging  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Thy leaves are so unchanging  
Not only green when summer's here  
But also when it's cold and drear  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Thy leaves are so unchanging

O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Such pleasure do you bring me  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Such pleasure do you bring me  
For every year this Christmas tree  
Brings to us such joy and glee  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Such pleasure do you bring me

O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
You'll ever be unchanging  
A symbol of goodwill and love  
You'll ever be unchanging  
Each shining light, each silver bell  
No one alive spreads cheer so well  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
You'll ever be unchanging

Lyrics courtesy of Genius.com

# Happy Holidays



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## Help isolated loved ones this holiday season

holiday season, may be hesitant or unable to do so to help prevent the spread of the virus. In these instances, friends and loved ones can mitigate feelings of isolation in various ways.

**Schedule video chats.** Video conferencing apps have become the communication vehicles of choice during the era of social distancing. Different applications and services continue to evolve and help people stay in touch. Plan regular chats, either once or twice per week with isolated or vulnerable people. Try to organize a large group chat on the holiday itself so no one has to spend Christmas or Chanukah alone.

**Drop off supplies.** Even though supermarket shop-from-home and other delivery services have normalized somewhat since the start of the pandemic, treat individuals who may be isolated to some personalized attention. Put together care packages of supplies or holiday treats and deliver them in person so you can see the smiles that result from being able to visit with someone familiar.

**Send uplifting messages.** Children or even adults can make personalized cards and mail them to

loved ones at home or those who may be in long-term care facilities. Send new mailings every week or two so that residents always have something to look forward to in the mail.

**Start a virtual club.** A book club or another shared interest can be the catalyst for more frequent communication. A club puts everyone on the same page and enables them to come together, via phone or video chat, for a discussion.

**Ask for help learning a new skill.** Along the same vein as a virtual club, lessons on everything from woodworking to crochet to making favorite holiday recipes can be conducted online. Give an isolated individual daily purpose and distraction by engaging him or her with online lessons.

Isolation and feelings of loneliness can affect anyone who normally suffers from cabin fever. However, this year it may be more pronounced, as it could be coupled with social distancing precautions that have already been in effect for some time.

A phenomenon called “cabin fever” tends to set in around late autumn or in midwinter. Long hours of darkness coupled with cold, inclement weather often is a recipe for increased time spent indoors. For people who live alone, the effects of cabin fever might be more pronounced. In addition to seasonal cabin fever, this year another factor comes into play: social distancing and voluntary quarantine as a result of the novel coronavirus COVID-19. Even those who may venture outside to socialize, particularly around the



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**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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# Christmas coloring page



*It's beginning  
to look  
a lot  
like  
Christmas!*



# How to host virtual holiday celebrations

The 2020 holiday season figures to be vastly different than seasons past. The novel coronavirus COVID-19 has transformed daily life in many ways. The public has become accustomed to wearing masks while shopping, limiting the number of people in public venues and keeping their distance from friends and loved ones. Many events have been reimagined as virtual celebrations because of social distancing protocols. For those with large families or people with inherent risk factors that make them more susceptible to illness, sharing the holidays over video conferencing apps may be the safest way to go in 2020. The following tips can help holiday hosts make the most of a virtual holiday experience.

### Pick a bright, festive spot

Set up your tablet, smartphone or computer in a bright area with a festive backdrop. You'll want others who join the virtual hangout to be able to see you clearly. A Christmas tree or a decorated fireplace in the background can set the scene.

### Choose the right conferencing app

Certain programs may work better than others depending on your needs. For example, if everyone has the same operating system platform (iOS or Android), you may be able to use an app inherent to that system, which won't require a separate download or login.

Apps also may be chosen depending on how many people can be invited in, as some set limits. Do your homework and conduct a test run prior to the holidays.

### Keep props nearby

If the goal is to open gifts virtually, be sure to have everyone gathered and gifts nearby so no one is scrambling in and out of view.

### Position the camera at eye level

Try to set up the camera so you're not looking up or down. Practice looking straight into the camera instead of at yourself in the minimized window or even others on the screen. This way you'll appear engaged.



### Use mute when not speaking

Muting yourself (and encouraging others to do the same) when you are not speaking will limit the amount of background noise. As the host, serve as the moderator and encourage everyone to speak one at a time. Choose a visual cue to signal when someone has the floor to speak, such as raising a hand or even showing a festive picture.

### Tune into virtual worship

While some places of worship have reopened to some capacity, others may still be offering hybrid services. If your place of worship offers services via YouTube or another video platform, gather around and watch together and

participate just as if you were there in person. Better yet, share the link with other family and friends so they can tune in as well.

### Share dinner 'together'

Set up your camera source so it captures the holiday table. All parties gathering virtually can then sit down to the holiday meal as one and enjoy one of the season's more endearing traditions.

Virtual celebrations may continue through the holiday season. Adapting with some video conferencing tips can ensure everyone enjoys the festivities.

Lake O  
Real Estate

Season's Greetings



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**F**ood is a big part of the holiday season. Big meals are typically the focal point of holiday gatherings with family and friends. Seasonal beverages also have a special place at holiday dinner tables and parties. This holiday season, hosts can incorporate a beloved beverage into their holiday brunches by whipping up the following recipe for “Baked Eggnog French Toast with Cranberries and Apples,” courtesy of Betty Rosbottom’s “Sunday Brunch” (Chronicle Books).

**Baked Eggnog French Toast with Cranberries and Apples**  
Serves 6

**Glazed Cranberries and Apples**

- 2 cups apple cider
- 6 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, diced
- 3 Golden Delicious apples (about 1¼ lb.), peeled, cored and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries (see note 1)
- ½ cup granulated sugar, plus more if needed

**Eggnog French Toast**

- 12 thick (¾-inch) bread slices, cut on a sharp diagonal from a day old baguette (see note 2)
- 2½ cups purchased eggnog (see cooking tip)
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons melted unsalted butter
- Confectioners’ sugar

**1. For the Glazed Cranberries and Apples:**

Whisk together the apple cider, corn syrup and brown sugar in a large, heavy saucepan over high heat. Boil until reduced to 1 cup, about 15 minutes. Whisk in 4 tablespoons of the butter until melted. Remove from the heat and set aside.

2. Melt the remaining 4 tablespoons of butter in a large, heavy frying pan over medium heat until hot. Add the apples and sauté, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the cranberries and granulated sugar, and stir until cranberries begin to pop, about 2 minutes. Stir in the reduce cider mixture and cook until the mixture has reduced to a syrup-like consistency, about 6 minutes. Taste and stir in more sugar, if desired. (The cranberries and apples can be prepared 1 day ahead; cool, cover and refrigerate. Reheat, stirring, over medium heat.)

**3. For the Eggnog French Toast:**

Arrange the bread slices in a 9-by-13-inch shallow baking dish. Whisk together the eggnog, nutmeg and cinnamon in a medium bowl. Pour the mixture over the bread. Cover

the pan with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 6 hours, or overnight.

4. Arrange a rack at center position and preheat the oven to 450 F. Butter a large, rimmed baking sheet with some of the melted butter. Using a metal spatula, transfer the bread slices to the baking sheet. Brush the bread with the remaining melted butter.

5. Bake for 10 minutes, and then turn and bake until golden brown on the outside and still soft inside, 5 to 6 minutes more. Watch carefully so they do not burn.

6. Arrange 2 slices on each of six dinner plates and mound the warm fruits on top. Dust generously with confectioners’ sugar and serve.

**Note 1:** If using frozen cranberries, defrost and pat dry.

**Note 2:** You also can use a good, crusty sourdough bread; cut ¾-inch slices from it, and if they are large, cut them in half.

**Cooking tip:** If eggnog is not available at the supermarket, whisk together 4 egg yolks, ½ cup sugar and 2 cups light cream to blend. Then proceed with the recipe.

*Incorporate  
eggnog into  
your holiday  
brunch*

Have  
a

*Merry Christmas*  
and Blessed New Year

*Behold 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**

*from our family to yours,*

*May the Blessings of Christ be on you and  
your family this Holiday Season*



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# What's the difference?

Three of these nine pictures have differences. Can you find them all?



Answers:  
Top row: Picture 2, missing shadows  
Middle row: Picture 1, belt buckle is missing on girl elf  
Bottom row: Picture 3, boy elf's shoes are blue



# Tips for safe holiday entertaining in pet-friendly households



on anyone, including rambunctious pets. Also, stagnant tree stand water can grow bacteria. If a pet should drink the water, it may end up with nausea or diarrhea. Replenish the tree basin with fresh water daily.

**Skip the candles.**

When creating mood lighting, opt for electronic or battery-powered lights instead of open flames. Pets may knock over candles, and that can be an instant fire hazard.

**Keep food out of reach.**

Situate food buffets beyond the reach of hungry and curious animals. Warn guests to promptly throw out their leftovers so that dogs and cats do not sneak away with scraps that may cause stomach upset or worse. **Real Simple** magazine warns that fatty foods can promote pancreatitis — a potentially dangerous inflammation of the pancreas that produces toxic enzymes and causes illness and dehydration. Small bones can get lodged in a pet’s throat or intestines as well.

**Avoid artificial sweeteners.**

Exercise caution when baking sugar-free desserts.

keeping hazards in mind, pet owners can ensure their four-legged friends enjoy the season as much as everyone else.

**Secure the tree.**

Securely anchor the Christmas tree so that it won’t tip over

The artificial sweetener xylitol can cause dogs’ blood pressure to drop to dangerously low levels. Xylitol is found in some toothpastes and gum, so tell overnight guests to keep their toiletries secure to avoid accidental exposure.

**Be cautious with cocktails.**

If the celebration will include alcoholic beverages, the ASPCA says to place unattended adult beverages where pets cannot reach them. Ingested alcohol can make pets ill, weak and even induce comas.

**Be picky about plants.**

Mistletoe, holly and poinsettias can be dangerous in pet-friendly households. These plants can cause gastrointestinal upset and may lead to other problems if ingested. Opt for artificial replicas instead. If guests bring flowers, confirm they are nontoxic to pets before putting them on display.

**Watch the door.**

Guests going in and out may inadvertently leave doors open. In such instances, pets who get scared or are door dashers may be able to escape the house. Put a note by the door to watch for escaping pets.

**Designate a safe space for pets.**

If the holiday hustle proves too much for cats, dogs, birds, and more, give the pet a safe, quiet spot away from the crowds.

Holiday hosts should factor in pet safety when they open their homes to guests.

The holidays are a time to spend with friends and family. Celebrating and entertaining are large components of what makes Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, and New Years festivities so enjoyable. Holiday hosts with pets must consider companion animals when planning the festivities. The holiday season brings added dangers for pets. The American Veterinary Association notes that, by



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