

# A NORTH COUNTRY CHRISTMAS



Your Guide To The Perfect Holiday Season  
❧ 2018 ❧



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# Want to help your community?

## *Then shop locally-owned this holiday season...*

**W**ith the holiday shopping season upon us, many of us in the North Country will no doubt be doing much of our spending at large chain retailers in the region. At first glance, this can seem the sensible thing to do. Large retailers offer a wide selection and advertised specials that can fit most budgets.

But with a little further reflection, you may quickly realize that those benefits pale in comparison to the downsides for the broader community. Hardly a day goes by that we aren't reminded again about the loss of our sense of community and local character, even in our small towns. As we bemoan such changes, we need to recognize how our own purchasing decisions contribute to this troubling trend, and take advantage of special events, like Small Business Saturday, to do our part to maintain the health of our communities. Many local businesses support Small Business Saturday and have sales and special treats available for their customers who take part in the annual event, set this year for Saturday, Nov. 24.

We all should put this event on our holiday calendar and think about the importance of how we spend our money throughout the holidays, and the rest of year as well. Main Streets struggle as retail dollars that used to be spent in locally-owned shops, restaurants, and other businesses are increasingly ending

up in the pockets of huge chain retailers. While a tiny portion of that comes back in local jobs, the vast majority is lost to the community. What's more, numerous studies have shown that these big chain retailers often displace as many jobs as they create. They also bring with them new demands on community infrastructure and a variety of other public services, that local property owners must pay for. The drain only increases when communities, as many do, offer a wide range of incentives to lure such retailers into the community.

Big chain retailers don't spend much in the local economy. When they build a new store, they don't employ local architects or planners, since each store is essentially a clone of all the others. They use national suppliers for the building materials they use in construction and for the products they eventually sell. You won't find locally-produced goods in big chain retailers. They don't use the local ad agency, or the insurance broker on Main Street. They don't use a local accountant and they rarely advertise in local newspapers.

Locally-owned businesses do all of these things, and because they do, the money you spend with a local merchant works its way throughout the area economy. Studies show that every dollar spent at a local business recirculates anywhere from two to three-and-a-half times. This "multiplier effect" means

that spend businesses not only support that business, but also many others throughout the community. Money spent at a big box retailer represents dollars lost to the local economy.

And our local businesses give back in many others ways as well. Our locally-owned businesses are invariably the first stop when a local organization, sports club, or toy drive is looking for donations. Most are incredibly generous and many of the owners give of their time as well, serving on the boards of local community organizations. We shouldn't "thank" them by spending our holiday dollars at the chain retailer down the road.

When we shop at the chains, we also contribute to the loss of local identity. The big box stores and big chain restaurants all look and feel the same wherever you travel. It's local businesses that provide our communities with their unique flavor. When our spending at the big chains forces other local businesses to close, we all lose our sense of identity.

Our locally-owned small businesses contribute to the character and the economic vitality and diversity of our communities and our local economy. They deserve our support.





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## Holiday Happenings

**COOK- Thursday, Nov. 22** - 34th Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner, 11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church Social Hall.

**ORR- Thursday, Nov. 22** - Community Thanksgiving Dinner, 1-3 p.m. at the Orr American Legion Hall.

**TOWER- Thursday, Nov. 22** - Community Thanksgiving Meal, 1 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian. Take-outs available at 1:30 p.m. Please call for reservations, 753-6005.

**ELY- Thursday, Nov. 22** - Festival of Trees sponsored by Northwoods Partners. Lighting Ceremony, 5 p.m. at Grand Ely Lodge. Refreshments and entertainment. Tree displays and silent auction run through Sunday, Dec. 2.

**ELY- Thursday, Nov. 22** - Join your



neighbors for Thanksgiving Evening Shopping in Downtown Ely, 6-9 p.m. Christmas cheer, goodies, special deals.

**ELY- Friday & Saturday, Nov. 23 & 24** - Holiday Fantasy/Arts and Crafts Fair, Friday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Ely Arts and Heritage Center in Miners Dry House. Sleigh rides, toy trains, visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus, and much more!

**ELY- Saturday, Nov. 24** - Small Town Christmas - shop local all day. Lighted Holiday Parade, 5 p.m. Caroling, Santa, refreshments and City of Ely Tree Lighting to follow at Whiteside Park.

**COOK- Friday, Nov. 30** - Cook Country Christmas at Cook Community Center. Santa, Farmers Market and more.

**COOK- Friday, Nov. 30** - Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners Lights of Love Tree Lighting, 5 p.m. at Cook Library and Gazebo. Refreshments and caroling to follow.

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# Holiday Happenings



**ORR- Saturday, Dec. 1** - Orr Snow City Christmas Festival and Craft Show all day downtown. Parade at 1 p.m.

**ORR- Saturday, Dec. 1** - Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners Lights of Love Tree Lighting, 5:30 p.m. at Orr Center. Refreshments and caroling to follow.

**BIWABIK- Saturday, Dec. 1** - Annual Weihnachtsfest Winter Lighting Festival. Kinderfest, Candy Haus, crafts, lunch, horse-drawn carriage rides, live music. Gather at the gazebo to sing carols and watch as the entire park is set aglow with sparkling white lights, followed by fireworks, 6 p.m.

**EMBARRASS- Saturday, Dec. 1** - Holiday Boutique and Pancake Breakfast at Timber Hall, 8-11 a.m.

**TOWER- Sunday, Dec. 2** - Virgie Hegg Hospice Partners Lights of Love Tree Lighting, 4 p.m. at Lake Vermilion Cultural Center. Refreshments, caroling, and children's activities to follow at Tower Civic Center.

**TOWER- Monday, Dec. 3** - Senior Holiday Bingo, 11:45-2:30 p.m. at Tower Civic Center. \$10 includes lunch.

**EMBARRASS- Friday & Saturday, Dec. 7-8**, Christmas at the Nelimark Homestead, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. both days. Handcrafted and ethnic gifts, bakery, coffee and homemade goodies.

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# Holiday Happenings

**COOK- Friday, Dec. 7** - Holiday Bazaar at Cook Hospital, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. sponsored by Cook Area Health Care Auxiliary, Cook Nursing Home, and Adult Day Services. Crafts, bake sale, lunch, shopping, raffles. Thrift Shop open.

**ELY- Saturday, Dec. 8** - Mrs. Claus Holiday Party for kids at Amici's Event Center, 1-3 p.m. Santa will visit, too! No charge.

**TOWER- Saturday, Dec. 8** - Holiday Craft Show at the Tower Civic Center from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

**VIRGINIA- Sunday, Dec. 9** - Virginia Senior High Winter Choir Concert, 2 p.m. in Goodman Auditorium.

**TOWER- Sunday, Dec. 9-** Tower-Soudan Area Singers Holiday Concert at T-S



Elementary School Gymnasium, 2 p.m. Coffee an' to follow. Free will donation.

**COOK- Wednesday, Dec. 12** - North Woods Senior High Band and Choir Winter Concert, 6 p.m.

**ELY- Thursday, Dec. 13-** Ely Middle School/High School Winter Concert in Washington Auditorium, 7 p.m.





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**VIRGINIA- Friday, Dec. 14 -** Laurentian Chamber Curling Funspiel, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at Range Recreation Center. Call 218-741-2717 to register a curling team.

**VIRGINIA- Friday, Dec. 14 -** Laurentian Chamber Curling Funspiel, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Call 218-741-2717 to register a curling team.

**EMBARRASS- Saturday, Dec. 15 -** Ice Candle Lighting at the Embarrass Cemetery. Holiday Gathering follows at Embarrass Town Hall, 4-6 p.m.

**VIRGINIA- Monday, Dec. 17 -** Virginia Grades 6-12 Winter Band Concert, 7 p.m. in Goodman Auditorium.

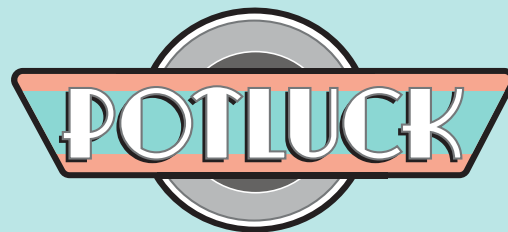
**BABBITT- Tuesday, Dec. 18 -** Northeast Range Elementary School Holiday Concert, 1:30 p.m.

**ELY- Wednesday, Dec. 19 -** Ely Elementary School Winter Concert in Washington Auditorium, 1:15 p.m.

**COOK- Wednesday, Dec. 19 -** North Woods School Junior High Band/Choir Winter Concert, 6 p.m.

**TOWER- Thursday, Dec. 20 -** Tower-Soudan Elementary School Holiday Concert, 1 p.m.

**COOK- Friday, Dec. 21 -** North Woods School Elementary Winter Concert, 1:30 p.m.



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# Baking up the holidays...



## *For the Jonas family, holiday baking is a family tradition*

**M**any people don't take bread seriously enough to design a whole new kitchen around it, but most people aren't Sally Jonas.

Members of the Jonas family, including Sally's son Karl, who lives with his wife Kristine and their kids on Lake Vermilion, are mainstays at local farmers markets across the region. Their home-made wonders— from sourdough to sweet breads— can be had throughout the summer months, and by special request at the holidays.

This time of year, at a quaint little farm south of Mt. Iron, you can often find Sally, Karl, and the rest of the family rolling out dough, watching it rise, and decorating it with huge pecans and redder-than-red cherries.

"I've always loved to bake," Sally said. "It (the markets) got started when Karl said he was tired of eating a sandwich that stuck to his mouth."

That was seven years ago and Sally's husband, Vince, began bringing some of the family's sourdough bread to the market in Hibbing. It's been called "Karl's Bread" ever since, because it was his complaining that prompted Sally to bake her own bread.

It wasn't long before the word spread about the Jonases' sourdough and the family had a big hit with locals on their hands.

And then the requests came.

"People started asking for different additives," Sally said. "Some combinations work, others don't."

Those additives can be anything from different spices to varying nuts and fruits.

Soon, the Jonases' would have a workshop built at the family farm, and an assembly line consisting of grandparents and grandchildren alike. They were spending all of their free time making upwards of 50 loaves of bread each week

from June to October.

### **A family history of baking**

As a child, Sally grew up in a home that baked.

"I was adventurous," Sally said of her baking. "I became interested in ethnic breads."

Whether it was Russian Babka or German Stollen, Sally learned how to make it all.

But for years, her baking was just a hobby.

"I've always enjoyed bread, it is a forever thing," she said. "Everyone has some kind of flat bread that is easy to make."

Sally would go on to be an elementary teacher at the Mt. Iron school district before its merger with Buhl.

She jokes that running a small cottage baking business wasn't on her radar when she retired.

"This isn't what I had in mind," she





says while laughing. "It just worked out."

But the baking never left, and soon her children were baking as well and a new family tradition was born, with friendly competitions around the family's love for baking delicious treats.

The family favorite is apple strudel, which Karl has won, though no one knows how, since his secrets have never left the kitchen.

### The baking process

Over the past seven years, the Jonases have refined their process. Whether it has been installing pizza ovens on their property to handle all of the loaves or enlisting the entire family as bakers, what went from a small kitchen designed for pies and rolls, is now a full-scale operation in their backyard.

Their sourdough begins with an

18-year-old starter. The Jonases call it "The Beast." The Beast is fed weekly with helpings of flour and water to keep it alive and ready to be used in each of their loaves.

While the grown-ups handle some of the more intricate tasks such as making the doughs and then baking them, grandkids take over weighing and decorating the various creations, each one identified by unique designs such as a flower or dinosaur footprint.

Over the years, Sally has acquired many tips and tricks to get the dough she likes, and she often refers to the dough as a living thing bakers need to work with.

"If your dough is fighting you," she said as she poked and prodded at some raw dough, "you need to let it relax."

Other things are more practical, such

as rolling the dough side-to-side at an angle for the perfect rectangle.

"Over time, it becomes a part of you," she says while sitting at her dining room table ready for Christmas. "It's all about the feel you have for each recipe. It can turn out different each time. Flour and air moisture can make all of the difference."

### The future

While Sally and her family have been delivering bread to market for seven years, by any indications the family is just getting started.

Sally talks of the family possibly, and she emphasizes possibly, opening a commercial bakery. But she admits it is just one of many dreams the family has for their baked goods.

For now, they are focusing on making

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the things you can't always find readily available, like fresh baked bread using "old-world" recipes.

If you're lucky enough to have signed up for their contact list at summer markets, or you know a member of the Jonas family, then you can place special orders for the holidays.

Sally said the family also takes requests from local organizations to cater their various bread creations to special events around the Iron Range.

Through all of the hustle and bustle of the cottage bread industry her family created for itself, Sally said she likes to keep it simple. While the family's creations may get more and more elaborate, she said she still likes to relax at the end of it all with her favorite, a sim-



ple oatmeal loaf.

You can find the Jonases all summer long at area markets. And you can try some of their recipes, included here:

### Pulla Yeast Coffee Bread

1 package active dry yeast  
1/2 cup warm water  
2 cups milk, scalded

and cooled to lukewarm  
1 cup or less of sugar  
1 tsp salt  
7-8 whole cardamom pods, seeded and crushed  
4 eggs, beaten  
8-9 cups sifted white flour  
1/2 cup melted butter

Glaze: 1 egg, beaten; 1/2 cup chopped or sliced almonds (optional); 1/2 cup crushed

lump sugar (optional)

Dissolve yeast into water  
Stir in milk, sugar, salt, cardamom, eggs and 2 cups flour  
Beat until dough is smooth and elastic  
Add 3 more cups flour  
Beat dough until glossy  
Add butter and stir  
Stir in remaining flour until a stiff dough forms

Turn onto a floured board, cover with a bowl, and let dough rest for 15 minutes; knead on a floured surface until smooth and let rise in a warm place (covered) until doubled in size (about one hour). Punch down and let rise again (about 30 minutes).

Split the dough into three balls. Split each ball into three, and braid together into a loaf shape. Let rise until puffy, about 20 minutes. Place on floured baking sheet. Brush with egg wash and bake for 25-30 minutes at 400 degrees. Do not overbake, remove from oven when light golden brown.

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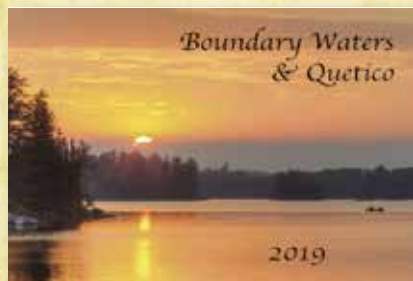
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# Have a *Vera* Merry Christmas

*Thoughts and recipes  
from Lake Vermilion's  
most colorful columnist*



*"Christmas time is here, by golly,  
Disapproval would be folly,  
Deck the halls with hunks of holly,  
Fill the cup and don't say "when."  
Kill the turkeys, ducks and chickens,  
Mix the punch, drag out the Dickens,  
Brother, here we go again."*

Dear Hearts,  
**S**ome people, as Christmas approaches, like to quote Ebenezer Scrooge's immortal line: "Christmas, bah humbug, a poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" I have found over the years that these Christmas curmudgeons change their tune when they are

given a well-iced Christmas cookie and cup of punch—perhaps with a wee little 'kick.'

So, this is Auntie Vera's yearly guide for "Christmas Joy and Cheer with Punch and Cookies!"

I added a little PUNCH to this year's collection. Hilda and I found that a pilsner of punch makes baking time, a more joyous time.

So let's start with PUNCH!

The recipe is scrawled on a bit of stationery from 'The Saint Paul Grill.' If you are unfamiliar with The Saint Paul Grill it is home for the hoi-polloi who haunt Highland Park, Edina and

the other quaint suburbs of the Twin Cities. A recipe from any place whose menu boasts 'ESCARGOTS-Stuffed with Boursin Cheese and wrapped in a Crispy Wonton with Lemon Garlic Butter Sauce' or, further down we find 'THE ULTIMATE CHOCOLATE MARTINI: Absolut Vanilla, Baileys Irish Cream, Tempus Fugit Crème de Cacao', will knock the culinary socks of any Yuletide visitor—even Santa!

Here it is --hope it puts that added 'punch' to your party.

#### **The SP Grill's Cheery Cherry Spirit**

1 large can of Hawaiian Punch  
2 large cans Real Lemon+1 small can Real Lemon

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10 packages of Cherry Kool Aid  
 2 packages of Wild Cherry Jello-dis-  
 solved in 2 cups of hot water  
 5 pounds of sugar  
 (remember this is for 125 servings)

15 quarts of water  
 5 quarts of ginger ale

Remember this serves 125

*Did I mention this serves 125 people?*

*(Editor's Note: This punch recipe could probably be spiked fairly heavily to counteract the effect of all this sugar.)*

At Christmas we are ALL friends....Right? Right! So fling wide the door to greet your neighbors or you could buy one of those orange containers with a spigot and haul it from one holiday party to the next. If there is any leftover from the Yuletide Fetes, freeze and you are ready for the Fourth!

Vera hates, hates HATES to leave out the 'wee' folk in your home! This works best if your children still fear the consequences of bad behavior between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"You call your sister Susie that vile name one more time, we are calling Santa and NO TOYS FOR YOU!"

This take on Rice Krispie Bars might be JUST the thing to keep the wee dears in line! This REQUIRES lying to the child but we feel whatever must be done during this joyous season to maintain one's sanity (and why should this time of year be



different?) can be fully rationalized.

First of all, you must convince the wee little rug rats that the following are ACTUAL pieces of coal—keep them locked away to be brought out with a dramatic

flourish when it all gets to be too much.

"This lump represents one of your presents! How many times have you been told NOT to tie bells to the cat's tail!" Dramatically chomp one of the fake lumps or two depending how many Rice Krispie Bars you can chow down.

### Lump of Coal Rice Krispie Treats

Ingredients:

3 cups miniature marshmallows or 30 large marshmallows  
 1-1/2 tablespoons butter

4 cups Rice Krispies cereal (reduce to 3 cups if you want softer coal)

1-1/2 cups crushed Oreo cookies, loosely packed (best to leave the filling in the cookies)

4 – 10 drops black gel food coloring (Enough to turn the melted marshmallows black. The amount required will depend

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on the brand you use.) We have found this super black gel food color is able to darken the marshmallow with the fewest drops.

#### Directions:

1. In a large microwave-safe mixing bowl, heat your marshmallows and butter for 60-90 seconds or until the butter and marshmallow are melted.
2. Stir your marshmallows and mix in your food coloring until you achieve the desired color.
3. Now mix in your cereal and the crushed Oreo cookies. Use a heavy metal spoon as it is quite hard to stir all of the Rice Krispies.
4. Let sit for about 5 minutes until your marshmallows cool down
6. Use a tablespoon to scoop out your treats onto a piece of parchment paper.
7. Let cool for 20 – 30 minutes.
8. Pack your treats a little more tightly by using your hands.

The final product will be harder, denser, and drier than your traditional Rice Krispie treats, but the Oreos will make it more flavorful.



Remember to use this ploy carefully—after all, the kid you make feel guilty today picks out your nursing home tomorrow.

My next recipe comes from a dear sweet local lady of a certain age who promised me the recipe if I did not mention her name. She made this for me one summer's day—totally refreshing and the lawn did not get mowed!

Why rhubarb? The red color, I feel, will make any table particularly festive this time of year!

The recipe assumes that like any true Minnesotan you can or freeze summer's bounty of rhubarb for future use.

#### Rhubarb Slush

- 2 quarts (8 cups) of diced rhubarb
- 2 quarts of water
- 3 cups of sugar
- 1/2 cup lemon juice

Boil all the ingredients and strain.

How long should I boil the mixture... until it is sort of a mushy liquid?

Add 1 package of red Kool Aid or one package of red Jello, mix and add 2 cups of vodka.

Freeze.

When it's properly slushy spoon into a glass and add a splash of Seven-Up!

The recipe card had at the bottom a note in pencil..."add a tot of rum or vodka."

I know there are a lot of teetotalers among our readers and I did not want to offend anyone, so I checked with a re-

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tired doctor I know from a local public house. He told me, just before he slid off the bar stool, that a 'tot' of this mixture is an excellent source of Vitamin D or C and much easier to swallow!

I received some threats of bodily harm after last year's recipes and was denied the warmth and solace of several Suomi saunas from my Finnish friends. After much searching I found this recipe:

I was told by a friend that this recipe was found stuck in the pages of her Finnish grandmother's Bible.

Let's call it...

### Knock Your Socks Off Punch

It takes 24 hours to make and you store it tightly bottled in the fridge.

It might lose its kick after two weeks!

Total Prep Time-30 minutes to cook and 15 minutes.

Ingredients:

2/3 cup vodka

2/3 cup port wine

15 whole cloves



3 cinnamon sticks (3 inches)  
2 orange zest strips-1 to 3 inches  
1 orange slice  
1 lemon zest strip -1 to 3 inches  
1 lemon slice  
1 piece fresh gingerroot (about 2 inches), peeled and thinly sliced  
1 teaspoon cardamom pods  
3 cups dry red wine  
1 cup packed brown sugar  
Blanched almonds and raisins, optional

Directions: In a large bowl, combine the first ten ingredients. Refrigerate, covered, overnight.

Transfer to a large saucepan; stir in red wine and brown sugar. Bring just to a simmer (do not boil).

Reduce heat; simmer gently, uncovered, until flavors are blended, about 30 minutes, stirring to dissolve sugar.

Strain. Serve warm over blanched almond and raisins, if desired.

So Hyvää joulua ja onnellista uutta vuotta Korhonen, to all the Virtanen, Nieminen, Mäkinen, Hämäläinen, Koskinen, Heikkinen and Järvinen ...can I come back and Sauna?

I am including this recipe for all the grandparents out there who want a memory of their grandkids when they were wee little tots! This used to be a project in most elementary schools but no longer—salt allergies, hyper sensitivities to warm water, etc. etc.

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### Clay for Christmas

4 cups all-purpose flour

1 cup salt

1/2 cup of warm water

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F

Mix flour and salt well. Gradually add water, stirring with a large spoon. Finish mixing with your hands or the children's hands if you can distract them from their phones. Knead until soft and pliable. Roll out the dough on floured surface to about 1/8 inch thick. You can use all those Christmas cookie cutters

that have sat in the drawer for years and let the kids cut shapes with cookie cutters. Place the 'cookies' carefully on a cookie sheet and make a little hole so you can use ribbon, yarn or some other device to hang on the tree. Next step bake at 325 degrees Fahrenheit until hard--about 1 hour.

Let your kids loose with paint, glue on sequins, beads--whatever.

You can't overdo glitz at Christmas.

Varnish to preserve their art work.

Have them sign the back, include the date and their age. What the heck, adults can do this too...why should the kids have all the fun?

### Five-Million Dollar Fudge

Hilda once taught 'English as a Second Language,' at Hibbing High School. George Peterson was the

department chair and this was his yearly contribution to the department's Christmas party.

Given to hyperbole (look it up) it was dubbed, 'Five-Million Dollar Fudge,'

In LARGE bowl (trust me large) put:

2 8. ounces plain Hershey bars, broken into pieces

1 12-ounce package of Nestle's chocolate chips

1 German Sweet Chocolate bar, broken into pieces

1 pint marshmallow crème

In a three-quart kettle combine 4-1/2 cups of sugar with 1 large can of Carnation Evaporated Milk. Over medium heat bring these ingredients to a boil, as you stir constantly for 5-6 minutes.

Pour over the chocolate and marshmallow, stir well.

Then add 2 tablespoons of butter and 2 teaspoons of vanilla. If it seems a bit thick, add a little milk or cream.

Pour into a buttered 9 x 13 pan and let SET.

Well as Elmer Fudd used to say, "That's all folks."

Ta, ta. PS...If you have extra fudge drop it off at the *Timberjay* office and I'll pick it up. Tell them it's socks or some cheap perfume from K-Mart. I do not trust the staff when it comes to fudge!

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# Thirty ways to make your holidays merrier



The holiday season begins in late November and runs through New Year's Day. It is marked by various gatherings of friends and family, decadent foods, cocktails, traveling, and gift exchanges. The National Retail Federation says consumers will spend an average of \$967 during the holiday season. However, the joy of the holidays also is about all of the memorable experiences that tend to make the season so beloved.

With that in mind, here are 30 ways to make the holiday season that much more merry.

1. Visit with an elderly or housebound neighbor and share conversation.
2. Donate gently used toys to a children's hospital.
3. Research the history of the holiday and share it with people you care about.
4. Make handmade Christmas tree ornaments.
5. Donate money to a charity or other good cause.
6. Encourage "pay it forward" movements in your community. Start by doing something simple like buying a coffee for a complete stranger.
7. Feed birds facing the cold, winter weather.
8. Take a ride or walk around the neighborhood to look at decorated houses.
9. Make a fire in a fire pit in the yard

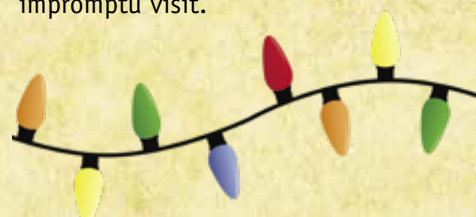
and toast marshmallows while sipping hot chocolate.

10. Binge watch holiday movies.
11. Attend the concert of a children's choir.
12. Help a friend decorate his or her home.
13. Host a tree-trimming party.
14. Schedule a day for baking cookies.
15. Sing Christmas carols at a nursing home.
16. Put together care packages of items and send them to troops overseas.
17. Share the holidays with a military family whose spouse is in service and can't make it home.
18. Offer to shop for someone who is homebound due to age, chronic illness or injury.
19. Visit a large city to look at Christmas window displays.
20. Buy and hang real mistletoe ... and use it.
21. Make a new friend and invite him or her to a holiday party for the first time.
22. Babysit a newborn so his or her parents can get errands done or just catch up on rest.
23. Volunteer at a soup kitchen.
24. Share the religious traditions of your holiday with someone of a different faith.
25. If weather permits, go sledding, build a snowman or have a snowball



fight.

26. Share favorite memories at family holiday dinners.
27. Remember a deceased loved one with a special tribute.
28. Construct a gingerbread house.
29. Teach someone how to make a cherished family recipe.
30. Surprise a distant relative with an impromptu visit.





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# Healthier options for the holidays

**F**or most of us, food is an important part of celebrating the holidays. But between the Christmas cookies, eggnog, and sugar plums, you might be looking for some healthier options that reflect the season but won't necessarily be reflected in the mirror come January. Our friends at Natural Harvest Food Co-op in Virginia are, once again, offering up some delicious and healthful holiday recipes.



## Wild Rice Stuffing with Apple and Sausage

Total Time: More than 2 hours; 1 to 1 1/2 hours active | Servings: 14

This amazing wild rice stuffing recipe is bursting with rustic fall flavors, including rye bread, sausage, apples, dried cherries, pecans and fresh herbs. (Can be prepared Gluten Free)

### Ingredients:

1 1/4 cups wild rice (8 ounces)

4 cups cubed Jewish rye bread (1/2-inch cubes), preferably day-old (Use GF Bread to make GF)

1 pound sweet turkey sausage, casings removed

2 cups chopped leeks, white and light green parts only

2 tart apples, cut into 1/4-inch dice

1 cup diced celery

3 cups reduced-sodium chicken or turkey broth

1 cup dried cherries

1 cup coarsely chopped pecans

1 1/2 tablespoons minced fresh marjoram

2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

### Preparation:

Preheat oven to 300°F.

Place rice in a medium saucepan and add enough water to cover by about 1 1/2 inches. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to maintain a simmer, cover and cook until tender, about 1 hour. (Or prepare according to package directions.) Drain well.

Meanwhile, spread bread on a baking sheet; bake, stirring once halfway through, until dry and crisp, about 25 minutes.

Increase oven temperature to 425°. Coat a 3- to 4-quart baking dish with cooking spray.

About 15 minutes before the rice is

done, cook sausage and leeks in a large skillet over medium heat, stirring and breaking up with a spoon, until the sausage is browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Add apples and celery; cook for 3 minutes more.

Transfer the sausage mixture to a large bowl. Add the rice and bread, then stir in broth, cherries, pecans, marjoram, thyme, salt and pepper. Transfer to the prepared baking dish and cover tightly with foil.

Bake the stuffing for 35 minutes. Uncover and bake until the top is browned, 15 to 20 minutes more.

### Nutritional Information:

290 calories; 9 g fat; 24 mg cholesterol; 40 g carbohydrates; 13 g protein; 5 g fiber; 523 mg sodium



## Cranberry Relish

Total Time: 10 minutes | Servings: 15  
Cranberry relish is a holiday staple

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for many. Tangy and sweet, this is the perfect "make ahead dish," as its flavor improves when allowed to sit (in the refrigerator) overnight. (Dairy Free, Gluten Free and Vegan)

**Ingredients:**

- 1 pound whole cranberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 pound Granny Smith apples, cored and finely chopped
- 15 ounces canned mandarin oranges, drained and finely chopped
- 10 ounces canned crushed pineapple, drained
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon allspice

**Preparation:**

Pulse cranberries in a food processor until coarsely chopped.

Transfer into a bowl and add pineapple, apple, and orange pieces.

Add honey and spices and mix well.

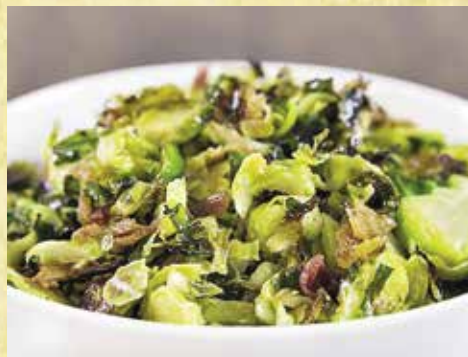
Taste and adjust as needed.

Refrigerate overnight to allow flavors

to develop. Bring to room temperature and mix well before serving.

**Nutritional Information:**

92 calories, 0 g. fat, 0 mg. cholesterol, 2 mg. sodium, 24 g. carbohydrate, 3 g. fiber, 1 g. protein



**Slivered Brussels Sprouts with Bacon and Maple Syrup**

Total Time: 20 minutes | Servings: 4

A little bacon and maple syrup make this easy Brussels sprouts dish a flavorful crowd-pleaser. This dish comes together quickly with the help of a food proces-

sor, or you can slice the sprouts with a knife. (Dairy Free and Gluten Free)

**Ingredients:**

- 1 pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed
- 2 slices smoked bacon, chopped
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

**Preparation:**

Slice the Brussels sprouts thinly with a chef's knife, or use the slicing blade of a food processor. Reserve.

Scatter the chopped bacon in a large sauté pan and place over medium heat. Stir the bacon every couple of minutes as the pan starts to sizzle, until the bacon is crisp, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a medium bowl lined with 2 paper towels to drain.

Pour out all but 1 tablespoon of bacon fat (or less, if desired) from the pan. Add the sliced Brussels sprouts to the hot bacon fat and raise the heat to medium-high. Stir and cook until the Brussels sprouts are browned and tender, about 5 minutes. Drizzle in the maple



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syrup and sprinkle with salt, and stir to coat. Transfer to a serving bowl and top with the cooked bacon. Serve immediately.

#### Serving Suggestion:

Serve these alongside roasted turkey or salmon and mashed potatoes. If you happen to have any leftovers, add them to scrambled eggs for a delightful breakfast.

#### Nutritional Information:

110 calories, 45 g. fat, 5 mg. cholesterol, 420 mg. sodium, 14 g. carbohydrate, 4 g. fiber, 5 g. protein



#### Cinnamon Apple Stuffed Squash

Total Time: 60 minutes | Servings: 4-6

Tender acorn squash is filled with apple and dried cranberry stuffing for a delectable side or main dish. (Vegetarian and Gluten Free)

#### Ingredients:

2 acorn squash, cut in half, seeds removed  
3 tablespoons unsalted butter  
3 cups diced yellow onion  
2 celery stalks, diced  
3 cups diced apple, cored and seeds removed (about 2 large apples)

1/2 cup dried cranberries  
2 tablespoons maple syrup  
1/3 cup water  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
Pinch each of salt and black pepper  
Preparation:

Preheat oven to 375°F. Place acorn squash halves face down on a rimmed sheet pan or baking dish and add 1/2 inch of water to the pan. Bake squash for 40 minutes.

While the squash is baking, heat the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and sauté for 5 to 10 minutes until soft. Add the apples, cranberries, maple syrup, water and cinnamon; stir well and cook another 5 to 10 minutes until the apples begin to soften. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat.

After the squash has baked for 40 minutes, remove from the oven, turn them cut side up, and fill each with the apple stuffing. Place back into the oven and bake another 15 to 20 minutes until the squash is tender. Serve warm.

#### Serving Suggestion:

Slice the stuffed squash halves into wedges to serve as a side with ham, turkey or chicken, or serve each half as a vegetarian entrée.

#### Nutritional Information:

143 calories, 3 g. fat, 8 mg. cholesterol, 47 mg. sodium, 30 g. carbohydrate, 4 g. fiber, 2 g. protein

#### Frozen Pumpkin Mousse Pie

Total Time: 2 hours 20 minutes (including freezing time) | Servings: 10

It's fun to shake up (Thanksgiving) tradition with something new. This easy



pie just might become a new holiday favorite. (Vegetarian)

#### Ingredients:

##### Crust:

30 small gingersnap cookies, (about 7 1/2 ounces)

2 tablespoons raisins

1 tablespoon canola oil

##### Filling:

1 cup canned pumpkin puree

1/3 cup packed brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

2 pints (4 cups) frozen low-fat vanilla ice cream, softened

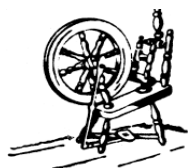
#### Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9-inch deep-dish pie pan with cooking spray.

To prepare crust: Combine gingersnaps and raisins in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Add oil and pulse until blended. Press evenly into the bottom and up the sides of the prepared pan.

Bake the crust until set, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

To prepare filling: Combine pumpkin,



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sugar, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg in a large bowl and mix well. Add ice cream and stir until blended. Spoon the mixture into the cooled pie crust. Freeze until firm, at least 2 hours. Let the pie soften slightly in the refrigerator for 20 to 30 minutes before serving.

#### Nutritional Information:

Calories: 231, Carbohydrates: 42 g., Fat: 5 mg., Saturated Fat: 1 mg., Mono-unsaturated Fat: 2 mg., Protein: 4 mg., Cholesterol: 4 g., Fiber: 2 g., Potassium: mg., Sodium: 179 mg., Added Sugars: mg.

#### Healthy Chocolate Tart

(Paleo, Vegan, Gluten-free)

Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 12 minutes | Serves: 12

#### Ingredients:

##### Crust:

1/2 cup unsweetened, raw coconut flakes

1 1/2 cups almond flour

2 tablespoons grade A maple syrup

2 tablespoons coconut oil, melted,



plus more for brushing the spring pan  
pinch of salt

##### Filling:

2 medium size avocados, just barely ripe, on the firmer side

1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

3/4 cup grade A maple syrup

2 tablespoons coconut oil, melted

1 teaspoon vanilla

#### Garnish:

1 pint of raspberries

1/2 can of coconut cream, room temperature

#### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F, with the oven rack in the center position. Brush a nonstick 9" spring form pan with melted coconut oil. Set aside.

In a food processor, combine the coconut flakes, almond flour and salt. Pulse until the mixture resembles medium size crumbs, about 30 seconds. Then add the maple syrup and coconut oil. Pulse until the mixture resembles coarse sand, about 30 seconds.

Dump the coconut almond crust into the spring form pan. Gently spread the crumbs to make an even layer, and to come up the side of the pan about a half inch. Once the crumbs are even, press the crumbs in with firm pressure using a cup measure. You may need to brush the bottom of the cup measure with coconut oil to make sure the crumb mixture doesn't stick.

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Bake the crust for 14 minutes, or until lightly golden brown. Remove the crust, and allow to cool on the counter for a few minutes, then transfer to the freezer for 15 minutes to cool completely.

While the crust is cooling in the freezer, make the chocolate filling. Combine all ingredients in a food processor, and blend until the mixture is smooth without any lumps, about 2 minutes. You will need to scrape down the bowl half way thru.

Pour the chocolate filling onto the cooled crust, and spread into an even

layer. Cool the tart in the fridge for at least 1 hour.

Whip the coconut cream in a bowl with a fork until fluffy, about 30 seconds. If getting coconut cream from the bottom of the can, avoid scooping out any of the water. Garnish the cooled tart with raspberries, and serve with a dollop of whipped coconut cream.

This tart is best served the same day, since the crust will be crispiest. If I'm serving it for dessert, I'll make it late in the afternoon that day. But I have made this 1 day before, or had leftovers up to

3 days after. It still tastes great, and the crust is still firm, but it loses the "crispiness".

Notes:

If using barely ripe avocados, this tart has no avocado taste whatsoever. Riper avocados have more avocado taste, so don't use ripe or very ripe avocados in this. If they are hard as a rock, they won't blend smooth enough, so don't use extremely under ripe avocados either. The perfect avocado will have just \*barely\* any give when you squeeze it.

## Great last minute gift ideas

**T**radition is a hallmark of the holiday season. Religious services, family gatherings and trips to see Santa Claus are just a few of the many traditions people adhere to during the holiday season.

Many holiday shoppers also adhere to the time-honored tradition of last-minute shopping. The perfect gift can sometimes prove elusive, especially as the sand in the holiday hour glass keeps dwindling. These last-minute gift ideas may be just what shoppers need to put smiles on the faces of their loved ones this holiday season.

➤ **Books:** Books are often overlooked, especially now that so many readers use e-readers. But books can be an ideal gift and especially convenient for last-minute shoppers, who can even gift

e-books. For example, Amazon, which has thousands of e-books in its online library, makes it easy for shoppers to gift e-books to Kindle users, who will simply receive an email on Christmas morning informing them that their books are ready to be downloaded to their devices.

➤ **Experiences:** A 2017 survey found that roughly 40 percent of holiday shoppers planned to give experiences as gifts last year. Experience gifts open up a host of possibilities for last-minute shoppers stuck on what to give those loved ones who seemingly have it all.

➤ **Food/beverage:** Television channels such as The Food Network have changed the way many people look at food. When gifting the family foodie, last-minute shoppers may not need to

look further than the latest hotspot restaurant or specialty grocery store for the perfect gift. Take them out for a night on the town or give a gift card they can use at their convenience. The craft beer boom has created a host of devoted and knowledgeable beer drinkers, so a gift card or growler from a local craft brewery is sure to please people who love hoisting frosty pints.

➤ **Streaming service subscriptions:** Many people are cutting the cord with their cable companies in favor of streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu. Subscriptions to such services can make ideal and affordable holiday gifts. A six-month or yearlong subscription likely won't break shoppers' budgets and will provide months of entertainment to loved ones.



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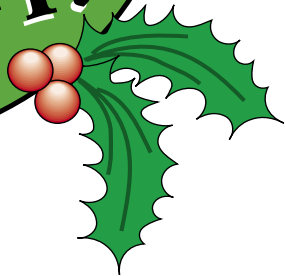
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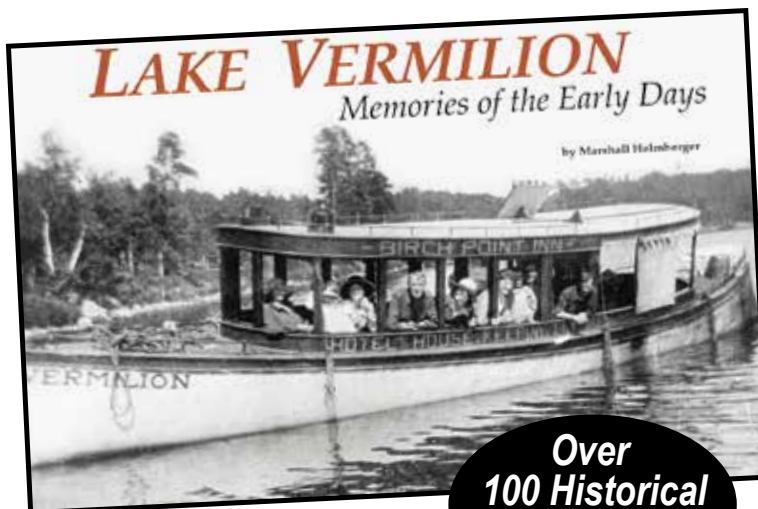
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# Rosemaling for the Holidays



Kim Garrett is an award-winning artist in Ely who specializes in an ancient Norwegian folk-art painting process called rosemaling.

Rosemaling literally means “rose or flower painting” in Norwegian, and dates back to the mid-1700s. It is described as a style of decorative painting on wood that uses stylized flower ornamentation, scrollwork, lining and geometric elements, often in flowing patterns.

“Rosemaling in a Christmas theme makes for wonderful gifts and home decoration this time of the year,” she said.

Garrett’s connection to art dates back to college when she went to school to study for a degree in art. “I figured I couldn’t make a living at that so I became a nurse,” she said.

Like almost everybody else who eventually moves to Ely, her connection to the end of the road was initiated by trips to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness when she was in her teens. A couple of decades later, when she and her husband bought property outside of Ely with an old trailer on it, they would spend summers there. One year, she signed up for classes at the folk school in

Grand Marais.

“One of the classes I wanted to take was cancelled and they offered me another class on rosemaling,” she said. “After three days of painting I was hooked. That was about 10 years ago and I have been enjoying it ever since.

Kim said her roots are Swedish. “My grandmother was more of a seamstress. They didn’t have a lot when they came here, and I didn’t know anything about this Scandinavian traditional art of rosemaling. I was hooked immediately. I knew this was what I wanted to do.”

She said she lost count of how many classes she took to learn the process. She has learned from some of the most popular and well-known artists.

The Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, known for its large collection of both Norwegian and American rosemaled objects, is “like the mecca for Norwegian-ness in the United States,” she said.

The museum offers rosemaling classes throughout the year, and holds a nation-wide annual rosemaling competition where one can gain points and become a gold medalist.



She has taken many classes from numerous gold medalists. "I've also been to Norway three times and participated in classes



over there," she added

Kim has created several award-winning pieces, and recently was awarded two blue ribbons and Best of Show at the 2018 Minnesota State Fair.

"The process of rosemaling occupies your mind in a different way," Garrett said. "It relaxes you. All your worries go away while you are doing it. I love the colors. I love the history."

She also marveled at the fellowship shared

with those who are involved in all kinds of folk art. "Working at the North House Folk School, first as a student and now as a teacher, brings the fellowship of art and the fellowship of hand craft and tradition. We all want to preserve some of where we've come from."

Garrett teaches rosemaling at the Ely Folk School, and participates in some of the holiday craft sales in the area.



## Homemade ornament ideas

**H**andmade gifts, trinkets and treats help make the holiday season special. Although cookies and other baked goods are some of the most popular homemade creations this time of year, gift-givers young and old can put their talents to use with various craft projects. Ornaments and decorations are one such idea. Here are some clever and not-too-time-consuming craft projects to try this holiday season.

- **Mini sleighs:** Create miniature replicas of Santa's famous sleigh. Paint several popsicle sticks to form the main body of the sleigh and glue them together. Put one at the top perpendicular to the others to serve as the steering rudder. Two silver-painted popsicle sticks placed on their thin sides act as the blades of a sled.

- **Popcorn garland:** Garland made of popcorn is a classic handmade holiday project. For a new twist, toss the popcorn with food coloring and allow it to dry before stringing for some bright color on the tree.

- **Photo ornaments:** Print out several different photos that you love. Purchase round or square thin wood pieces from a craft store and attach the photos with Mod Podge®. When dry, drill a hole through the top and thread with twine.

- **Advent calendar:** Make an Advent

calendar to count down to Christmas by covering a foam board with fabric. Use paper tags or small ornaments and write a number on each for each day of the month. Hang these all from the board. As each day passes, move the tag or ornament to the tree.

- **Wooden snowflakes:** Have children collect small twigs from outdoors, as well as holly leaves and some sprigs of evergreen. Arrange similarly sized twigs in the shape of snowflakes and glue together, or tie with twine. Embellish with stickers, glitter, dried berries, and more.

- **Dough ornaments:** Anyone can have fun molding their own ornaments, letting them dry and then painting them. Use cookie cutters to get perfect holiday shapes. Craft stores sell various types of modeling clays and lightweight modeling materials. Or, make your own salt dough.

- **Reindeer bottle topper:** Put to use any wine corks you have lying around. Attach googly eyes and a small fuzzy nose to the front of a cork. Insert twisted, brown pipe cleaners to make the antlers up top. Add ribbons, small snippets of faux

fur or any other extras you desire.

- **Sweet sentiments:** Use old Scrabble® letter tiles to form a favorite holiday phrase, like "Joy to the World." Glue the tiles together and hang from the tree on a piece of ribbon.





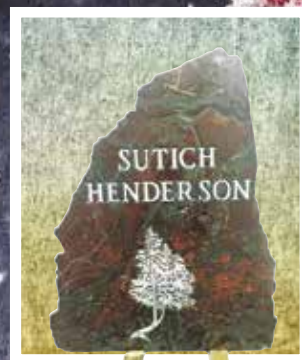
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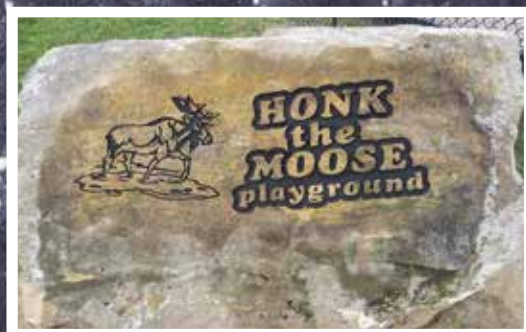


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# Take the perfect Christmas cards with your smartphone



**Y**our mother expects them. Your grandmother expects them. Most everyone you know sends them. And it is nice to see more cards than bills around the holidays!

So, with this much anticipated pre-Christmas tradition upon us, how do you take the perfect Christmas cards at home with your smartphone?

## Step one

Determine how you want to send them.

Are you mailing them, or just tagging everyone you know on Instagram or Facebook? If you are mailing them, figure out whether you will print at home or at a local photo printer.

If you are printing at a local shop, check out what stores are in your area. Target, Walmart and Walgreens generally all have inexpensive photo printing and often include various preset cards you can print. Additionally most of these stores allow you to send the photos to the store right from your phone!

If you are printing at home, make sure to check what type of printer you have and find compatible photo-grade paper. Note, often this is a more expensive method since personal printers use a lot of ink and photo paper is not always cheap.

## Step two

Plan what you want to wear.



Digging out those old ugly sweaters? Make sure they're washed and they're actually something you will want enshrined in your mother-in-law's scrapbook collection! Or, are you buying matching outfits for everyone in the photo? This step should be easy!

## Step three

Where are you taking the photos?

Are you going to the park, your living room or your favorite walking trail? If you're staying at home, then this step is

easy. If you are heading out to the wilderness, then you'll want to make sure you pay attention to this next step...

## Step four

### PLAN AHEAD!!!!

This one is **BOLDED** for a reason. Make sure everyone in your photo is feeling well and ready to smile. If you're heading outdoors, make sure to check the weather so you're not stuck out in the rain. If you are going to a popular location, make sure there are no reservation



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requirements or events happening. Don't let your lack of planning jeopardize whether your mom knows what you all look like this year. Would you really want to do that to your mother? No, the answer is no, remember that!

#### Step five

Take the photos.

You've made it! Now it's time to round up the troops and march them to their photographic glory. So take those photos and let all of the planning (you remembered to plan, right?) go to good use. Before you hit that shutter button, though, make sure you position everyone in the frame. For cards, you want to make sure you take them in landscape orientation, so turn your phone 90 degrees - this isn't a selfie!

If you are taking a big fam-

ily photo, make sure to center everyone in the frame with the tallest in the back and middle of the photo.

If it is just you and your significant other (and maybe the cat or the dog) consider positioning yourself in front of an object, like a Christmas tree, and then stand or sit slightly off center. Some people will refer to this as the "rule of thirds" where you slightly offset the subjects in the photo to give it a little more depth and visual appeal.

Have someone else take the photo as well. Selfies, no matter how taken, will not work for this, especially since front-facing cameras (the one on the same side as the screen) generally have lower resolutions and may distort when printed.

#### Step six

Edit and print.

Once you have your photos in hand, decide whether you are going to edit the photos on your own. Most phones have apps that allow you to quickly edit your photos with different presets and styles and borders. If you like sharing your photos online, most editing apps will allow you to share directly to Facebook and Instagram. Most apps from major stores will also allow you to directly upload from your phone's photo library.

Some apps that are handy for editing include Instagram and SnapSeed. Both are available on Android and iPhone. Additionally if you have an iPhone, the built in app has much of the same functional-

ity of both of the aforementioned apps.

#### Step seven

Mail the cards.

That's it, you're done! Sit back, relax and prepare for the onslaught of questions about your year. And while you're at it, prepare your own questions; you know you're getting cards, too.

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# Make it a greener holiday season

**W**ith so much to do, it can be easy for people celebrating the holiday season to forget about the environment. But no matter how hectic the holiday season can be, there are always some simple opportunities to make it more eco-friendly.

- Create an eco-friendly party theme. Many holiday parties have themes. For example, "ugly sweater parties" have become so popular that many clothing manufacturers now intentionally produce colorful sweaters that might otherwise draw the ire of fashionistas. Hosts planning to throw an ugly sweater party can easily transform such festivities into something more eco-friendly by encouraging guests to purchase their sweaters from thrift stores. A Christmas tree planting party is another eco-friendly party theme that can benefit the planet and revitalize local forests at a time of year when they might be depleted due to the demand for natural Christmas trees.

- Serve locally-sourced foods. Food is often front and center during the holiday season. Whether hosting family and friends at home, dining out or catering an office party, patronize businesses that sell only locally-sourced foods. Lo-

**Right: Serving only locally-sourced foods at your holiday party is one way to keep the festivities eco-friendly.**

cally-sourced foods are much more eco-friendly than foods that must be shipped from afar before they land on your dinner table, and such foods tend to taste fresh as well. If serving at home, use reusable dishware and cutlery instead of paper plates and plastic utensils.

- Reuse decorations year after year. Decorations need not be discarded once the holiday season ends. Come the new year, inspect holiday decorations and store those that made it through the season unscathed. Doing so benefits the planet and will save you the trouble of shopping for new decorations next holiday season.

- Get rid of your old holiday lights. Still using the same Christmas lights you used in 1995? Such lights are likely incandescent bulbs that are considerably less efficient than today's LED Christmas lights. The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy notes that LED lights consume 75 percent less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent lighting. In addition, the OEERE



says that LED holiday lights are easier to install and that as many as 25 strings of lights can be connected end-to-end without overloading a wall socket.

An eco-friendly holiday season is easier to realize than many holiday celebrants may know.

## Cut back on holiday waste

**T**he holiday season is a joyful time of year. But the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day also tend to be very wasteful. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that household waste increases by more than 25 percent during the holiday season.

Reducing waste come the holiday season does not mean cel-

ebrants have to forgo big family meals or beautifully wrapped gifts. In fact, there are several ways to reduce waste without spoiling the spirit of the season.

- Give eco-conscious gifts. The environment may not be the first thing that comes to mind when holiday shoppers are looking for gifts for their loved ones. But giving reusable gifts can have a positive, long-term impact on





the planet. Reusable coffee mugs or water bottles can dramatically reduce waste over time, and such items make great stocking stuffers. Shoppers also can look for items made from recycled materials, which run the gamut from home furnishings to calendars to clothing, as eco-friendly alternatives to gifts produced without the environment in mind.

- Reuse holiday-specific items. Many people only use gift wrap, gift boxes and gift bags during the holiday season. Such items are oftentimes discarded after Christmas morning. But these items can be reused to cut back on holiday waste. Reusing wrapping paper from year to year can be especially beneficial to the environment. That's because wrapping paper tends to be dyed or laminated, and many wrapping papers contain non-paper additives that cannot be recycled. Reusing wrapping paper, purchasing only recyclable paper or wrapping gifts in old newspapers or magazines can help holiday celebrants reduce their carbon footprints.

- Prepare less food and donate any leftovers. The Worldwatch Institute notes that,

during the holiday season, celebrants generate three times as much food waste as they do during other times of the year. Large family meals are a tradition of the holiday season, but hosts who routinely find themselves discarding leftovers can plan on preparing less food this year. Consider how much guests are likely to eat and plan meals accordingly instead of buying enough food to feed a small army. Donate leftovers to nearby shelters so nothing goes to waste.

- Recycle live Christmas trees. According to the National Christmas Tree Association, 25.9 million real trees were sold in the United States in 2015. Trees put out on the curb for collection after the holiday season has ended typically end up in landfills, but some communities recycle Christmas trees each year. Real tree enthusiasts can contact community officials to determine if they can recycle rather than discard their trees.

The holiday season is a wasteful time of year, but there are ways for celebrants to dramatically reduce their carbon footprints between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.



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