

The  Current

HOLIDAY

Guide

2019

Great Ideas for Making it the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!



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Sunday, November 24
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HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Christmas parades:

Lawton – Holiday in the Park “Twelve Days of Christmas” Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony, 6 p.m. Nov. 23, Elmer Thomas Park.

Walters – 6 p.m. Dec. 7. Decorate floats for the theme “Happy Birthday Jesus.” Line up to begin at 5 p.m. Online registration can be completed at WaltersChamber.com.

Duncan – 3 p.m. Dec. 7. Floats lineup no earlier than noon at 12th Street and Willow Avenue. Theme is “Taco 'Bout Christmas.”

Cache – 5:30 p.m. Dec. 14. Caroling, pictures with Santa, hot chocolate and more following the parade in Cache City Park.

Waurika – Theme is “Candyland” 6:30 p.m. Dec. 14. Attendees can enter a post-parade drawing by filling out a form published in the Waurika News Journal.

Holiday Events:

Chickasha Festival of Light shines for the 27th year from 6 to 10 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and until 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays in Shannon Springs Park beginning Nov. 23.

This nationally recognized symbol of community spirit draws more than 250,000 visitors annually. It has won numerous awards as a top attraction since its beginning in 1992. More than just a light show, the experience includes horse-drawn carriage rides, photo opportunities with Santa and the newest addition of an ice-skating rink.

Medicine Park’s 4th Annual Cobblestone Row Christmas Tree Lighting will begin at 3 p.m. Nov. 3. In conjunction with the Medicine Park Shop and Stroll, there will be door prizes, raffles and free refreshments. Tree lighting will be at dusk on the cobblestone deck.

Kick off the holiday season at the annual Main Street Duncan Holiday Stroll from 5-8 p.m. Nov. 23. Enjoy live holiday music as the smell of hot cocoa wafts through the air. Santa will be on hand to go over wish lists, and merchants will offer free refreshments and gift wrapping.

Enjoy an evening of Christmas cheer and festivities at the 905 Christmas in the Park beginning 6:30 p.m. Dec. 5 in Fuqua Park in Duncan. Munch on cookies, sip hot chocolate and take in the decorations and nostalgia while listening to carolers. Drop by the caboose and the Stephens County Museum to visit with Santa. At 7 p.m. sharp, the 905’s bell will ring and the locomotive will light up.

Tree-lighting festivities are scheduled for 6-8 p.m. on Dec. 4 at Cameron University in Lawton. The come-and-go events will include horse-drawn carriage rides, cookie-decorating stations for kids of all ages and the lighting of a fully decorated tree. Refreshments will be served.

A performance of Handel’s “Messiah” begins at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 14 in McMahon Memorial Auditorium. This is a free concert sponsored by the Lawton Schubert Music Club, Fort Sill’s New Post Chapel and the CU Department of Music.

For information, call the Cameron University Department of Music at 580-581-2440.

Holiday LIGHTING Safety

Use only holiday lights that have been safety tested and have the **UL label**.



Before using, **check each strand** for broken sockets, frayed cords, or faulty plugs.



Don’t string together more than **three** standard-sized incandescent sets of lights or you could **overload the circuit**.



Don’t throw lights over tree branches that are **near power lines** and service connections.



Always unplug lights before leaving your home or going to bed; a timer can help with this.



Learn more at

**Safe
Electricity.org**



Decorate with care.
Christmas trees are involved in an average of

210
home fires each year.



Wishing you safe and happy holidays!



Start a tradition of safety

The holiday season is full of traditions. Whether it is eating certain foods, mailing cards, giving gifts or spreading cheer through decorations, these traditions bring comfort and warmth to the season. This year, Safe Electricity encourages you to incorporate another activity into your holiday traditions—safe holiday decorating.

Holiday decorations are one of the most festive yet most dangerous parts of the season. Make a point to take care of yourself and those you love by taking all the necessary time to decorate safely—without skipping any safety steps—for the holidays.

Shawn Miller knows firsthand how important every safety step is and how quickly holiday festivities can turn into tragedies. When helping his mother decorate the trees in her front yard for Christmas, he had not noticed that the trees had grown into the overhead power lines. When he threw a strand of lights up into the tree, he was seriously injured.

Miller lost his left hand and suffered numerous injuries in the tragic accident. You can learn more about his story at SafeElectricity.org.

Miller and Safe Electricity urge everyone to follow these precautions:

- When decorating outside, look up and look out. Never throw holiday lights

or other decorations into trees near power lines.

- Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep ladders, equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from power lines.

- Use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations rated for outdoor use. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use them. Use plastic or insulated hooks to hang lights.

- Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs). Use a portable GFCI if your outdoor outlets are not equipped with them. GFCI protection is very important outdoors, where weather conditions can create dangerous electrical situations.

- Do not staple or nail through light strings or electrical cords, and do not attach cords to utility poles.

- Outdoor holiday lights are for seasonal use, up to 90 days. Bring them inside after the holidays.

- Avoid decorating outside on windy or wet days. Choose to decorate in favorable weather conditions and during daylight hours.

Safe Electricity hopes your season will be full of happy and safe traditions. For more information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

The stockings were hung.. Safely

A jolly holiday season can be made even more merry with a roaring fire. Homeowners often build holiday tableaux around the fireplace to serve as festive backdrops. The mantle and the fireplace itself also may be a prime spot to dedicate to decorating this time of year.

Even though Christmas tree fires are rare, according to the U.S. Fire Administration, when they do occur, they're likely to be serious. That is why trees and other flammable decorations need to be kept clear of gas and wood-burning fireplaces and stoves. In addition, many other guidelines should be heeded to ensure fireplaces and holiday decor safely coexist this season.

Read labels on decorative items carefully before decorating. Be sure to only select items that are flame-resistant or retardant. Cherished collectibles and other items should always be kept far away from open flames and heat.



It pays to have a fireplace inspected and cleaned for use prior to operation. Rely on a trained chimney sweep, and have the fireplace and chimney inspected and cleaned at least once per year.

Even though it may be picturesque, do not place wrapped packages or gift boxes near the fireplace, as they tend to be highly combustible. Keep presents and other flammable items at least three feet away from the fireplace.

Do not be tempted to dispose of wrapping paper, boxes or even a Christmas tree in the fireplace. Wrap-

ping paper contains additives that make it burn at high temperatures. A Christmas tree hasn't been properly seasoned and could be a fire hazard and potentially contribute to excessive smoke and creosote.

Keep decorations that kids will be tempted to touch away from the fireplace so kids do not hang out near the heat and open flames.

Fireplaces are often a focal point of holiday decorating and entertaining. Homeowners who want to incorporate their fireplaces into their holiday decor must emphasize safety when doing so.



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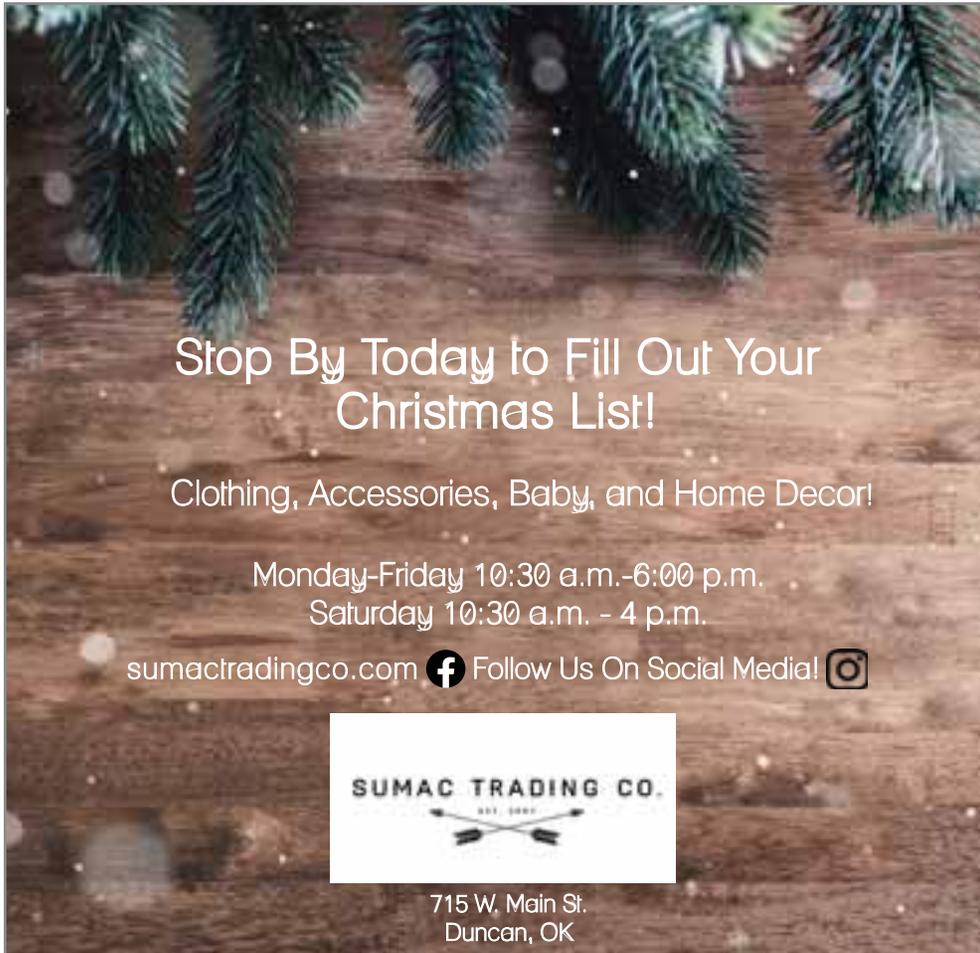
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Wreaths make holidays cheery and bright

There are many different ways to decorate homes and businesses for the holidays. Tall evergreen trees are among the most visible symbols of the holiday season. However, wreaths hung on doors, windows or fences also are ubiquitous this time of year.

Wreaths adorn homes primarily during the holidays of Easter and Christmas. Wreaths have also been worn around the head or neck in ceremonial events around the globe for centuries.

It is believed the first wreaths date back to ancient Greece and Rome. Members of the Greco-Roman society were known to hand-make ring-shaped items using fresh tree leaves, small fruits, flowers, and twigs.

Often times these headdresses symbolized a person's social status. Others suggest wreaths evolved to become a Christian symbol of immortality.

Regardless of how wreaths are viewed, many people like to display wreaths for the holidays. Wreaths can be purchased premade, but making a wreath on your own can make the holidays even more fun.

One of the easiest ways to make a wreath is to design it around a circular floral foam form. Gather supplies to make the wreath. For traditional wreaths, supplies will include sprigs of evergreen (real or artificial), ribbon, floral wire, bows, and artificial berries.

Working around the foam form, arrange the boughs of evergreen, using the floral wire to wrap or pin into the foam itself. Keep the layers coming until you get the desired coverage. Embellish with a ribbon or place a bow.

The blog *A Piece of Rainbow* says that creating a wreath jig is an easy way to make a wreath. Cut a dollar-

store laundry basket bottom from the top ring to make a template, on which you can place wreath-making materials so they keep their circular form. Use floral wire or natural jute string to tie the materials together. Experiment with fresh evergreen, twigs, holly branches, or whatever materials you choose. Thick card stock also can serve as the wreath template. Attach artificial flowers or leaves, spray snow, ornaments, or other items to the card stock ring with a firm adhesive.

Many craft stores sell wreath forms made of natural vines that have been strung in a ring. These can be decorated in their entirety or left a little sparse to let the natural twine show through.

Wreaths may seem like complicated creations. But a little imagination and the right materials is all it takes to create a homemade wreath.

It's beginning to smell a lot like Christmas

Holiday decor is as much about the sights and sounds as it is about the scents of the season. Few things evoke the holiday spirit as much as the aroma of fresh evergreen or spicy cinnamon and cloves. Incorporating inviting aromas into holiday decor can make homes feel even more special. Filling a home with fragrant decor takes a little ingenuity and planning. Here are some ideas to incorporate the scents of the holiday season into your decor.

- Use a real Christmas tree. An easy way to create a pine-like scent indoors is to select a real Christmas tree. Ask the tree farm which varieties are the most fragrant. If a fresh tree is not possible, fill a decorative basket with pine cones and evergreen boughs for that woody appeal.

- Create a seasonal scented simmer. Take to the stove to make a homemade air

infusion from ingredients in and around the house. Simmer pine branches, citrus peels, vanilla, nutmeg, cinnamon, and whatever else can be placed in a pot or slow cooker with water. The scents will permeate the house for hours if enough water is added to the mixture.

- Make holiday sachets. Some of the same ingredients for the holiday simmer can be dried and sewn into sachets. Add ribbon and hang on real or artificial trees. Or tuck the pouches into various areas around the house.

- Experiment with scented candles. Scented candles can be found at various stores during the holiday season. Select among popular holiday aromas like pine, cinnamon, apples, and Christmas cookie varieties.

- Utilize essential oils. Natural food stores and other retailers may sell essential oils, which can be diluted and



sprayed on surfaces or into the air. Exercise caution around upholstery, or test for staining before use.

- Spend more time in the kitchen. Add delicious scents to the home by way of

freshly baked goods or holiday meals. Nothing beats the smell of cookies right out of the oven, and the scents can linger for hours.

- Make beeswax ornaments. Add scented oils to melted beeswax and pour into molds. Hang these creations as ornaments on trees or in other areas of the home.

- Craft some "gingerbread" ornaments. A mixture of cinnamon, applesauce and glue can be used to make ornaments or gift tags that resemble gingerbread cookies, and these ornaments have more staying power than actual cookies.

- Design a pretty pomander. Stud an orange with cloves. Cut off the top of the orange and hollow out a place for a small tea light. The warmth of the flame will produce more scent. Rich and inviting aromas can fill a home with the holiday spirit.

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Helping your evergreen last through the holiday season

Christmas trees are an iconic symbol of the holiday season. Whether they are personal trees nestled in the corner of a living room for families to enjoy or towering evergreens serving as the focal point of a town square, Christmas trees are a wonder to behold. Many people have fond memories of time spent around the Christmas tree sharing gifts and family traditions.

Live trees and their pine-like aroma can be especially nostalgic trees to include in holiday plans. The National Christmas Tree Association says that approximately 25 to 30 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States every year. North American trees hail from all 50 states and areas of Canada.

While freshly cut trees can be particularly beautiful and aromatic additions to the season, they require a bit more work than artificial trees in order to remain beautiful and thrive throughout the holiday season. Maintenance can help keep Christmas trees as perfect as possible.

- Even though it is tempting to buy a real tree as early as possible, their shelf life is limited even with the best care. Dural Christmas Tree Farm advises that, under the best conditions, a real tree should last up to four weeks before drying out.

- Consider the needles when looking for a real tree. Pull your hand toward your body along the branches. If many needles fall off, the tree is past its peak.

- Think about the room in which the tree will be located. Leave at least 6 inches between the tip of the tree and the ceiling, accounting for the height of the tree stand as well.

- If needle retention is a goal, the Scotch pine variety has the best needle retention and a high survival rate, lending to its popularity, offers Precision Tree and Landscape. Douglas fir and balsam fir are other durable trees.

- If possible, buy a freshly cut tree from a reputable nursery or tree farm, advises The Old Farmer's Almanac. Many pre-cut trees sold elsewhere were likely cut weeks before and may not be fresh.

- Cut the bottom of the tree trunk before bringing it home to facilitate the uptake of fresh water daily. Trees can absorb as much as a gallon of water in a day, so make sure the tree gets fresh water every day.

- Keep trees away from as many heat sources as possible and away from direct sunlight to prolong longevity.

- According to Karabin Farms in Connecticut, to make a Christmas tree last longer, boil a gallon of water and then dissolve one cup of sugar in the water. Allow to cool. After freshly cutting the trunk, pour in the warm sugar water. Continue to add fresh, cool, plain water to the tree stand afterward.

Once needles begin to fall off with frequency, the tree is reaching its prime. Remove it so it does not become a fire hazard.

Celebrate the holidays conservatively

The saying “the more the merrier” certainly applies during the holiday season. But during a season of big gifts, extra food and travel, “more” can exact a heavy toll on the environment.

According to Stanford University, Americans generate 25 percent more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Eve than during the rest of the year. While no one wants to take anything away from the spirit of holiday season, everyone can take steps to make the holidays eco-friendlier. In fact, there are various eco-friendly gifts that can make great presents and benefit the environment at the same time.

Purchase experiential gifts

When making holiday shopping lists, think of gifts that offer experiences rather than material goods. Gifts that involve experiences, such as going to a sporting event or attending a play or musical, decrease reliance on wrapping paper.

Such gifts also reduce clutter in the recipient’s house and conserve the resources otherwise used to manufac-

ture alternative items that would have been purchased. Experiential gifts that also tap into environmental pursuits, such as touring with an animal rescue group, or accommodations at a carbon-neutral hotel can be an added bonus.

Opt for locally made gifts

Select gifts made by local artisans or companies that operate domestically. This cuts down on the carbon emissions from having to ship products from long distances or even overseas.

Avoid gag or useless gifts

Select gifts only with utility in mind. Skip purchases that are made only to beef-up the look of presents under the tree or to make it appear that gifting was more generous. Items that a person cannot or will not use will ultimately be relegated to the trash, which is wasteful.

Get crafty

Gifts from the kitchen or ones made by the giver can be crafted from sustainable materials. They also show



how you care by taking the time to customize a gift for the recipient.

Wrap in reusable materials

Fancy wrapping paper certainly looks nice, but choose other materials that can be reused. Look for decorative tins, boxes, fancy gift bags, and other items that can be reused for years to come. Sustainability is possible during a season of excess when gift givers shop and wrap gifts with the environment in mind.



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Choose gifts that keep giving all year long

This holiday season, why not give friends and family a gift that will save them money all year long? The Energy Education Council has gift suggestions that decrease energy use and increase savings:

- **Energy Star Products** – New electronics are popular holiday gifts. If you plan on buying a computer, television, or home theater components for a friend, do them a favor and buy an Energy Star product. Energy Star products use at least 20 percent less energy. They are tested for performance and features too, not just efficiency.

- **Programmable Thermostats** – The holiday season is also the home heating season. A programmable thermostat can help loved ones heat their home strategically and save money.

- **Smart Power Strips** – Your friends may need a new power strip for new electronics they received for the

holidays. A smart power strip provides additional receptacles and increases efficiency. A control unit, such as a television or computer, is plugged into one outlet. The smart strip detects when the control unit is off and shuts off power to peripherals, like DVD players and printers. Electronics that are turned off sometimes still draw power. Electronics that draw power when not in use can add 10 percent to your final energy bill.

- **Rechargeable Batteries** – Many families have to hunt down batteries for new gadgets and toys during the holidays. Help your friends and family prepare with a rechargeable battery set.

- **Efficient Light Bulbs** – New light bulbs make good stocking stuffers. LEDs are designed to last longer and use less energy than traditional incandescent light bulbs. You can buy bright, white light for working spaces and also warmer lights for the home. Be sure to

buy Energy Star light bulbs to guarantee efficiency and quality.

- **Gift Certificates** – A gift certificate can help get your friends and loved ones on the path to efficiency. One idea is a gift certificate for insulation and sealing updates. In most homes, heating and cooling is the largest part of the energy bill. An insulation upgrade is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve home efficiency.

- **Renewable Gadgets and Toys** – The popularity of renewable and alternative energy is growing. With new gadgets and toys you can experience new forms of energy in your home—including hand-crank flashlights and solar chargers. There are also a variety of toys powered by renewables, such as solar crickets and cars that use the power of the sun to move.

For more efficiency tips, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org.

Red Pepper Cranberry Sauce

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Total time: 30 minutes
Yield: 2 cups

- 1 **tablespoon olive oil**
- 2 **medium red bell peppers, finely diced**
- 1 **cup red wine**
- 1/4 **cup red wine vinegar**
- 1/3 **cup white sugar**
- 2 **teaspoons yellow mustard seeds**
- 6 **tablespoons dried cranberries**
- 6 **tablespoons dried currants**
- 1/4 **teaspoon salt**

Heat medium skillet on medium-high heat.

Add olive oil and diced red pepper; saute 3-5 minutes.

Add red wine, red wine vinegar, sugar, mustard seeds, cranberries, currants and salt. Bring mixture to boil then turn temperature to low and simmer 20 minutes, or until liquid is mostly evaporated and thickened.

Bring to room temperature before serving alongside holiday roast.

Note: Red Pepper Cranberry Sauce can be made up to 3 days in advance.



A *Holiday* Roast to Remember

FAMILY FEATURES

The holiday season is a perfect opportunity to gather with friends and family, and few things bring people together like an elegant, seasonal meal. Serving up a mouthwatering main dish worth celebrating can elicit rave reviews from your guests and keep them gathered around the table longer, creating lasting memories.

Creating a crowd-pleasing holiday centerpiece starts with choosing a flavorful, tender cut of meat. For example, elegant cuts like Chateaubriand (roast-size filet mignon) or Bone-In Frenched Rib Roast from Omaha Steaks, a leading provider of premium beef and gourmet foods, can serve as the focal point of a memorable meal. Flash-frozen to capture freshness and flavor at their peak, you can select a roast hand-cut and carved by an expert butcher and have it delivered directly to your door.

Simple to prepare and easy to carve, all you need to do is season (or marinate) and roast before serving alongside a wine-infused sauce like Red Pepper Cranberry Sauce or Apricot and White Wine Glaze.

Find more recipes and tips to create a holiday dinner to remember at OmahaSteaks.com.

Whiskey Marinated Holiday Roast

Prep time: 45 minutes-1 hour, plus 48-72 hours thawing time
Cook time: 2-3 1/2 hours
Total time: 4 days
Yield: 4-6 servings

Marinade:

- 4 **ounces water**
- 2 **ounces whiskey**
- 1/4 **teaspoon baking soda**

Roast:

- 2 **pound chateaubriand or 4 pound bone-in frenched prime rib roast, thawed completely (allow 48-72 hours)**
- 1 **package Omaha Steaks Private Reserve Rub**

To make marinade: In large, re-sealable bag, mix water, whiskey and baking soda.

To make chateaubriand:

Place roast in bag and marinate in refrigerator 30 minutes. Remove roast from marinade. Discard marinade. Season roast with rub 12-18 hours before cooking and leave uncovered in refrigerator overnight. When ready to cook,

heat oven to 225 F. Place roast on elevated rack in roasting pan.

Roast 2 hours, or until roast reaches internal temperature between 120-125 F.

Let roast rest 30-45 minutes.

Broil on high 2 inches from broiler, 4 minutes on one side then flip and broil 2 minutes on other side, or until brown crust uniformly covers roast.

To make bone-in frenched prime rib roast:

Place roast in bag and marinate in refrigerator 45 minutes. Remove roast from marinade. Discard marinade.

Season roast with rub 12-18 hours before cooking and leave uncovered in refrigerator overnight. When ready to cook, heat oven to 225 F. Place roast on elevated rack in roasting pan.

Roast 3 hours and 15 minutes, or until roast reaches internal temperature between 120-125 F.

Let roast rest 30-45 minutes.

Broil on high 2 inches from broiler, 4 minutes on one side then flip and broil 2 minutes on other side, or until brown crust uniformly covers roast.



Apricot and White Wine Glaze

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Total time: 30 minutes
Yield: 1 1/2 cups

1 1/2 cups white wine
2/3 cup white wine vinegar
3/4 cup apricot jam

2 tablespoons yellow mustard seeds
2 tablespoons brown mustard seeds
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
3/4-1 teaspoon chili flakes

In medium saucepan over medium heat, combine white wine, white wine vinegar, apricot jam, mustard seeds, salt and garlic.

Bring to boil then turn to low and simmer 25 minutes, or until reduced by one-third. Remove from heat and stir in chili flakes. Reheat or bring to room temperature to use as glaze or serve as sauce for holiday ham.

Note: Apricot and White Wine Glaze may be prepared up to 3 days in advance.

Simple Holiday Side Dishes

While the star of most holiday meals is the main course, side dishes like potatoes, green bean casserole and dressing make it complete. Instead of spending all day in the kitchen cutting, prepping and chopping sides, try one of Omaha Steaks' pre-made heat-and-serve side dishes.

Consider these ideas to round out your holiday table this season:

- **Scalloped Potatoes** – Layers of thinly sliced potatoes smothered in a velvety Parmesan and cheddar cheese sauce, accented with the slight savory crunch of green onions.
- **Green Bean Casserole** – French-fried onions, mushrooms, milk and butter makes for a must-have, homemade side dish.
- **Smashed Red Potatoes** – Red potatoes mashed to a hearty, chunky texture with their skins and mixed with sour cream, butter, half-and-half, garlic, salt and a touch of rosemary.
- **Steakhouse Creamed Corn** – Buttery, sweet corn in a seasoned, creamy Parmesan cheese sauce.
- **Steakhouse Cauliflower Gratin** – Fresh cauliflower baked in a rich and creamy Parmesan and white cheddar cheese sauce and topped with crispy breadcrumbs.
- **Sage Dressing** – French bread croutons, sage, celery and caramelized onions create a traditional and flavorful profile.
- **Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes** – Real russet potatoes, butter and sour cream enhanced with chopped roasted garlic and pepper.
- **Creamed Spinach** – Vibrant, all-natural green spinach with onion and garlic accents, amplified by sea salt and white pepper in a rich, creamy Parmesan cheese sauce.

Find more delicious side dishes at OmahaSteaks.com.

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Calculate cooking, baking for a crowd

Decorations and shopping draw much of the attention come the holiday season, and rightfully so. But many people's fondest holiday memories occurred around the dinner table during meals with friends and family.

Holiday foods tend to be rich, flavorful and time-consuming to prepare. However, all the effort is usually worth the satisfied smiles on the faces of loved ones. Planning holiday meals is challenging, and hosts often doubt if they have enough food for everyone. No one wants guests to leave feeling hungry, nor do they want to have tons of leftovers, much of which will inevitably end up in the trash.

Determining how much food to serve involves figuring out a few key items, including the mix of guests (ratio of children, men and women), the length of the occasion, the timing of the event, and the type of meal one plans to serve.

For example, if the holiday gathering is an after-dinner cocktail party, hosts can get away with offering very little food. However, hosts of holiday dinners have a lot more food to prepare.

To get started, consider these general guidelines, courtesy of Allrecipes.com and The Spruce, a home living resource.

- Think about which foods you plan to serve. Popular foods tend to go more quickly than other items, so serve more

than the general portion guidelines suggest. Shellfish appetizers, roasted or mashed potatoes, wings, and slices of rich meat are examples of popular fare.

- The more foods you offer, the smaller the portion sizes can be. But because guests will likely want to try all the offerings, expect the average person to consume more food per individual when several foods are offered.

- Most people will eat two to three portions each of appetizers or snacks. In fact, appetizers (for a hungry crowd) may be consumed in greater abundance than subsequent courses.

- Average portion sizes for each guest include: 3 ounces of dips; 3 ounces of

salad; 6 ounces of meat or main entree; 5 ounces of starch; and 1 1/2 pieces of dessert. These estimates can be used to calculate how much food will be needed.

- Think about adding "safety" items to the menu that can be pulled out in a pinch and don't require much prep work. These can include cheese and crackers, extra bread, nuts, olives, or pretzels.

Hosts who are overly concerned that guests may go overboard can tame portion sizes by hiring servers who can oversee buffet lines. Otherwise, serve guests plated meals directly from the kitchen, from which hosts can dole out the right amount of food to ensure everyone gets enough to eat.

Celebrate the Season with Enjoyable Desserts

FAMILY FEATURES

Whether you're huddled around the fireplace, gathered at the table or strolling through a winter wonderland, the holidays are all about enjoying pure and memorable moments with family and friends. With all of the seasonal gatherings, you can certainly expect that almost any host or guest will attempt to provide a classic holiday treat for everyone to enjoy.

This year, you can give your traditional holiday bake a refreshing twist sure to spread all kinds of holiday cheer with this Enjoymint Peppermint Pie topped with Homemade Whipped Cream, which can be easily whipped up with less than 10 ingredients total.

From pumpkin pies to gingerbread cookies and everything in-between, an option like DairyPure Heavy Whipping Cream can be a must-have kitchen staple this season, one you can feel good about knowing it's sourced from trusted dairies.

For more recipes for the holidays and every day, visit DairyPure.com, and find DairyPure on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.



Enjoymint Peppermint Pie

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 2 1/2 cups DairyPure Heavy Whipping Cream, divided
- 8 ounces soft peppermint candy
- 1 chocolate cookie crust
- crushed peppermint candies, for garnish

Soften gelatin in water, set aside.

In small saucepan over low heat, cook 1/2 cup whipping cream with candy until candy melts.

Add gelatin; mix well.

Whip remaining whipping cream. Let gelatin mixture cool and fold in whipped cream, reserving 1/2 cup for garnish.

Pour into crust. Chill.

Before serving, top with reserved whipped cream and crushed peppermint candies.



Homemade Whipped Cream

- 2 tablespoons granulated or confectioners' sugar
- 2 cups DairyPure Heavy Whipping Cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract or liqueur

In chilled glass bowl, add sugar to whipping cream. Using whisk or hand mixer, incorporate sugar into heavy whipping cream until it begins to thicken, leaving visible trails. Continue to whip until soft peaks start to form.

Fold in vanilla extract or liqueur. Serve immediately or refrigerate and remix 1-2 minutes before serving.

Santa-worthy Christmas cookies

Cookies are everywhere come the holiday season. It's not uncommon to give cookies as gifts or arrive at holiday gatherings with cakes and other decadent desserts.

Cookies are a classic holiday treat, and some families even build entire traditions around baking Christmas cookies. Novice bakers making cookies for the first time may be a little overwhelmed when perusing recipes.

Baking is a science, and sometimes it takes practice to get the results just right. However, there are some tips that can help yield better, buttery bounties.

Handle butter with care

Butter can make or break a cookie recipe, as butter is often the glue that holds the cookie together. Therefore, it is key to follow the directions carefully regarding how to handle butter. Smithsonian.com says to leave butter at room temperature for 30 to 60 minutes to properly soften it. This takes patience, but fiddling with butter too much can damage its delectable integrity. Margarine may be acceptable if it has a high fat content; otherwise, cookies may spread out and flatten.

When it comes time to cream the butter with sugar, be sure to incorporate air into the butter.

Measure flour properly

Measuring flour, the right way, can en-

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

Slow down the eggs

Add eggs one at a time to make sure each will emulsify properly with the fat in the butter. Adding eggs all at once may cause the emulsification to fail.

Chill out

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

Use a bottom rack

Too much heat may compromise cookie integrity. The food experts at Delish say to try moving cookies onto a lower rack in the oven if they aren't retaining their shape when baked. Put an empty cookie sheet on the top rack. That will block the cookies from the most intense heat that rises to the top of the oven. Mastering cookies takes a little patience and some trial and error. Once bakers get their feet wet, Christmas-cookie-baking becomes even more special.



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Tips for building gingerbread houses from scratch

Gingerbread cookies and houses are one of the many symbols of the holiday season, alongside Christmas trees and twinkling lights. In fact, few confections symbolize the holidays more so than gingerbread.

Many a child (or a child at heart) has spent hours carefully trying to create decorative gingerbread houses. Although gingerbread recipes span various cultures, gingerbread houses originated in 16th century Germany. The fairy tale “Hansel and Gretel” helped solidify the popularity of gingerbread, which became part of Christmas traditions.

Even though gingerbread houses can be fun to make, there’s no denying it can be exacting work, especially for those who strive for perfection. Prepackaged kits attempt to take some of the guesswork out of the equation, but those who are crafting from scratch can em-

ploy these tips as they build their gingerbread houses.

- Go for form and not flavor. Few gingerbread houses ever get eaten, so focus on finding a dough that will bake up rock hard as opposed to one that tastes good.

- Get the right icing texture. Pastry artist Catherine Beddall says royal icing is the preferred “glue” to adhere gingerbread pieces. Beddall says icing should be thick like peanut butter and not runny.

- Mind the dough. Do not roll out the gingerbread dough too thin or it may become brittle after being cooked. Always cut out shapes before the gingerbread is baked. Let the baked pieces sit overnight to cool completely before using them to build.

- Patience is key. Allow the icing to dry for at least a couple of hours after adhering each piece and before moving and handling the house, says Beddall. Work in

stages so that individual items can be decorated and allowed to dry. Then the walls can be put together, followed by the roof pieces.

- Kids likely will need help. Children may not have the patience or steadiness to handle complete gingerbread construction. They can decorate the separate pieces of the house while the components are lying flat, which is easier for kids. Adults can do the main assembly later on.

- Utilize a template. Free-handing may not be easy. Cut out templates using cardboard or poster board for various gingerbread pieces.

One of the most important tips is to have fun. Don’t take gingerbread house making too seriously as a novice. Rather, enjoy the experience and the centuries-old tradition.

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