

Celebrating Christmas Made Easy for Everyone!

Celebrating CHRISTMAS

Christmas 2008

A Lilac Christmas

Travel Feature

**A Tropical
Christmas
in Singapore**

Decorating with Toile + Christmas Sewing Projects
Handmade Cards + Gifts from the Kitchen
Hostess Gift Ideas + Outdoor Christmas Decorating



Beauty Has a New Destination



Lakx.com

Letter from the Editor

Dear Friend,

It looks like everyone around me is wondering how the recession is going to hit their Christmas celebrations. Well, I think the question should be, if the recession is going to hit your Christmas celebrations at all. Certainly not. And why should it? If the spirit of Christmas really comes from the heart, and if we are creative enough, this recession has no business pulling our spirits down. We have, in this issue, featured many creative ideas that will spread cheer all across your home and not break your bank at all.

The crafts and decorating ideas in this issue have been put together with a view to helping everyone, whether or not an expert DIY'er, in putting together a homespun Christmas, starting from gifts from the kitchen to beautiful decorations. Unfortunately most such ideas that float around, either take forever or involve purchasing a lot of stuff. Why not try something simpler this season, like simple fabric projects, no-fuss recipes and easy paper decorations.

Speaking of decorations, I know I share the passion for a favorite color with many others reading this. The calming and soothing effect of this beautiful color led us to create an unconventional palette for our Christmas decorations. Lilac, purple, lavender – call it by any name. I hope you will like the ideas we bring to you for using this color in your décor this year.

Another simple idea which will find favor with a lot of families who wish to impart to their children the real spirit of Christmas, is to revive the good old tradition of story-telling at Christmas time. Revive that lost art with tips from our feature dedicated to making story-telling more fun and involving, and give your children this time-honored tradition that they will love, cherish and pass on to future generations.

Happy Holidays!

Lata Tokhi



Editor's Personal Blog: <http://www.latatokhi.com>
Contact the Editor: lata@celebrating-christmas.com
Submit articles: admin@celebrating-christmas.com
For subscriptions, send email to rohit@celebrating-christmas.com or
subscribe online at <http://www.celebrating-christmas.com/magazine.shtml>

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS: celebrating-christmas.com

Celebrating Christmas®

CHIEF EDITOR: Lata Tokhi

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Rohit Tokhi

PHOTOGRAPHER: Rohit Tokhi

LAYOUT AND DESIGN: Lata Tokhi

CONTENT DEVELOPER: Lata Tokhi

AD MANAGER: Rohit Tokhi

CONTRIBUTORS: Hayley Hunkin,
Gail Kavanagh

ADVERTISEMENT CONTACT: Rohit Tokhi. For Ad rates, email Rohit at: rohit@celebrating-christmas.com

For private circulation only.

Published by Lata & Rohit Tokhi for
Celebrating-Christmas.com © 2008

Celebrating Christmas © 2008. All rights reserved. All content and images copyrighted. No part of this PDF magazine may be edited, copied and/or reproduced anywhere in print or in electronic media or the internet. Subscribers are free to print the entire PDF magazine for private use. The publishers do not take any responsibility for any of the claims made by the advertisers in this magazine. The publishers are not responsible for the veracity of the content in the articles. Subscribers are advised to try out the recipes, crafts and other DIY projects in the magazine at their own risk. Article submissions are welcome. The publishers do not guarantee nor take any responsibility for publishing submitted articles.

All logos and slogans are copyright of respective owners. The 'Celebrating Christmas', 'Celebrate Christmas in Style!', 'Dot Com Women' and 'EVEolution On The Web!' logos are copyright property of Lata Tokhi and any imitation of logos is strictly prohibited.



CONTENTS

December 2008

CELEBRATING

- 11 Christmas Storytelling
- 12 Favorite Christmas Stories to read to your kids

DECORATING

- 16 **A Lilac Christmas**
- 28 Roses for Christmas
(Christmas Flower Arrangements)
- 33 Timeless Toile for Classy Christmas Decor
- 39 Diffusers – *The New No Flame Candles*
- 41 Outdoor Decorating Ideas for Christmas

FICTION

- 25 On our Christmas Bookshelf

ENTERTAINING

- 26 The Perfectly Planned Evening
(Indispensable Tips for the Hostess)

ON OUR COVER

A sparkling tree decked in shades of lilac forms the show-stopper for a 'Lilac Christmas' color palette. Story on pg. 16.



CONTENTS

December 2008

CRAFTS

- 13 Easy Christmas Decorations with Paper
- 14 All Buttoned Up (*Card Display Project*)
- 19 Handmade Christmas Cards
- 31 Easy Sewing Ideas for Christmas
- 36 Let the Kids in on the Christmas Card Fun
- 37 Kids Crafts (*Snowflake Coasters*)

GIFT- GIVING

- 8 Coolest Gifts for the Season
- 9 Hostess Gifts
- 59 Christmas Gifts for Kids without breaking the Bank

TRAVEL

- 47 A White Christmas in Tropical Singapore

COOKING

- 6 **Cranberry Caramel Bars**
- 56 Home-made Candies – *Made Much easier than you think*
 - Peanut Brittles – Page 56
 - Chocolate Dipped Pretzels – Page 57
- 58 Gingerbread Train – *A Great Christmas Table Decoration and Dessert*
- 60 Cheesy Dill Potatoes
- 61 Christmas Gifts with a Topsy Twist
 - *Edible Gifts from your Kitchen for Grownups*
- 63 Baked Apple with Pomegranate Stuffing
- 64 Cranberry Stuffed Onions
- 65 Chocolate Cranberry Muffins
- 67 Paneer Tikka Tree
- 68 Festive Chocolate Balls



Cranberry Caramel Bars

Layered delights melt in your mouth!

The richest and gooiest bars for your Christmas party, these are sure to please guests of all ages. Beautiful, eye-pleasing layers and the melt in your mouth caramel and condensed milk give these bars the delicious taste ever.

You will need:

*1 cup flour
½ cup butter
½ cup brown sugar
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup mixed chopped nuts (walnuts, pecans, cashews etc.)
20 Kraft vanilla caramels
2 tablespoons milk or water
1 cup dried cranberries (Craisins)*

Understanding the recipe:

These bars are made in three different layers – the first, a crumb like crust which is partially baked at first. Over the half-baked crust is added a layer of nuts and condensed milk which is again baked. Once the second layer cools down partially, the final layer of caramel is drizzled over and the bars are allowed to set completely before cutting into pieces.

The time taken to prepare the perfect caramel is reduced considerably by using ready caramel candies and melting them with milk or water.

Directions:

1. Mix flour, brown sugar and butter till the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
2. Press this mixture into a 13 x 9 x 2 inch baking tin and bake at 350 degrees F for 15 minutes.
3. While the crust bakes, stir in the vanilla directly into the condensed milk can.
4. Chop the nuts coarsely.
5. Remove tin from the oven and sprinkle nuts over the half-baked crust. Pour the condensed milk over the nuts.
6. Bake again for 30 minutes and set aside to cool for about 10 minutes on a wire rack.
7. While it cools, combine caramels and milk or water in a saucepan and cook on low heat till all the caramels melt. Keep stirring and turn off the heat just as all the caramels melt.
8. Drizzle caramel over the condensed milk and while still warm, sprinkle raisins generously on the top.
9. Allow to cool completely and chill for at least 30 minutes before cutting into bars or squares or any other shapes.

Southern Pecan Pie with Whipped Cream



Just one of the many
delicious, festive recipes at
<http://www.AllHolidayRecipes.com>



Cooler Gifts for the Season



Left: Plum Pudding Fairy from the My Little Kitchen Fairies Collection for anyone who loves to cook and loves their kitchen; **left above:** A trio of Santa scissors for the crafter or almost anyone on your list;

Below left: silver-plated ornaments by designer Emilia Castillo; **below:** For any Elvis fan, Elvis Priestley stockings from Kurt Adler.

See resources for details



Hostess Gifts

Be thoughtful of the pains taken by your host or hostess to give an evening full of enjoyment and gift them one of these beautiful hostess gifts.

Right – For the Table:

Gold-plate and oxidized bronze Pomegranate Salt & Pepper Shakers by Michael Aram



Below – Luxurious Pampering:

Clockwise from top left: Lavender scented drawer liners from Crabtree and Evelyn; Lavender hand and body lotion from Crabtree and Evelyn; Honey Bee Guest Soaps Gift Box from Pre de Provence, Christmas guest soaps set from Pre de Provence





Above Right: Noritake "Holly & Berry Gold"
Serving Dish

Hostess Gifts



Left – Towel Treats:

White chocolate cupcake by Le Pâtissier. Choose from an assortment of tempting towel desserts from Prairie Dog Co. Ltd.

Below – Catch it All:

Park Designs has an assortment of fabric gifts for Christmas. This 8" x 8" basket in snowman check is only one of the many designs they have. It can hold a baking dish, a centerpiece or almost anything at all. You can also get other accessories and china in the same pattern to form a larger gift set.





Christmas Storytelling

Add Magic To Your Child's Christmas

It may be easy to forget it in the flurry of shopping, cooking and revelling, but the essence of Christmas is a timeless story about the triumph of good. For children presents may loom large in the season's charms, but the feel of this special day is created by the telling of Christmas stories, in carols, classic movies and songs and through the symbols of Christmas, from decorated trees to traditional food. With creative storytelling, parents can give children the gift of the spirit of Christmas.

How to tell a story

The essence of storytelling is atmosphere. There can be no better setting for a story than a cosy room, a sparkling Christmas tree, and candles or flickering firelight creating a special ambience. This is the first step to unleashing the imagination.

You don't have to be a pro actor to tell a story well. The basics are simple. Make sure your story is neither too long nor too short for your

listeners. Know what you're saying and pace it accordingly. Know where the suspense comes in and work it for all you're worth with dramatic pauses. Use your voice – pitch and volume – to add emphasis at key moments. Eye contact with your listeners helps to draw them into the story. If you're reading the story, this is especially important. If you're not, that's great – but stories need fluency, so sometimes having a book at hand is worth sacrificing some spontaneity for.

Props and sound effects can underline the action of your story and engage children. You can dress yourself or the kids in appropriate accessories before you start. If you're telling the story of Mary and Joseph and their donkey travelling wearily from inn to inn, get the kids to make the sounds of the donkey's hooves. If you're re-telling Dickens' Christmas Carol, inject spooky noises when the three ghosts of Christmas make their appearance. If the story characters are sitting down for

their Christmas dinner, hand out a chocolate each to accompany the action in the story – just make sure that it doesn't break the flow and the audience's concentration.

Effective storytelling is not just about the imagination that the original author endowed the story with. It's about how you imagine it as you tell it – that comes across in the narration. If you enter into the world of the story, you can take your audience with you.

Christmas Stories

There are thousands of Christmas stories out there and

they don't have to be solemn religious parables. Kids may respond with awe to the story of the First World War's Christmas Truce, when soldiers on opposing sides emerged from their respective trenches to exchange greetings and goodwill. It doesn't even have to be about Christmas as long as it captures the spirit of giving and peace on earth.

For story inspiration, get a kid's book out of the library. Or, instead of plonking the kids in front of the DVD player, get the plot of a funny Christmas movie off the internet, adapt it and tell it yourself. Alternatively you can tell stories about aspects of Christmas – about how people

around the world celebrate it, or the history and meaning of Christmas symbols and songs. If you want to create a true family heirloom, tell a tale from your own family history or better still, make up your own story. There's a storyteller in everyone. That includes the kids. You could get them to make up their own Christmas tales and tell them to the family.

The magic of Christmas is in the message and in the togetherness of the celebrations. The Christmas spirit, rather than a new playstation game, is what they will remember fondly and pass on to their own children.

Favorite Christmas Stories to Read to Your Kids

Looking for ideas for stories to read to your children this Christmas eve? You can never go wrong with these classics and new favorites. You will find something for all ages in this selection.

1. Nutcracker
2. A Christmas Carol
3. The Night Before Christmas
4. Polar Express
5. Snowy, Blowy Christmas (The Little Engine That Could)
6. A Christmas tree
7. The Bird's Christmas Carol
8. The Corgiville Christmas
9. The Christmas stocking
10. How the Trees kept Christmas
11. The Fir Tree
12. Old Father Christmas
13. Jimmy Scarecrow's Christmas
14. The Doll's Christmas Party
15. A Christmas Fairy
16. Santa Claus Does Not Forget
17. The Christmas Masquerade



18. How Christmas Came to the Santa Maria Flats
19. Christmas Under the Snow
- 20.



Easy Christmas Decorations with Paper

Money-pinching or DIY enthusiast, these easy and adorable decorations are a must-do for you this Christmas.

Quilled Paper Tree

You will need:

Quilling Strips in different shades of green and in red
Styrofoam Tree shape
Glue, Quilling Tool
Golden Paper or Wooden Star

Make quilled leaf shapes from the green quilling strips, their number depending upon how big your Styrofoam tree shape is. Make a few circles using red paper strips. Glue the quilled shapes to the tree filling the shape with green leaves and red ornaments here and there. Complete the tree with a paper or wooden star from your Christmas decorations.

Paper Doily Angels

You will need:

1 round paper doily (for every 2 angels)
1 heart shaped doily
1 inch Styrofoam ball
Golden colored knitting yarn
Pearl headed pins

Fold the doily in half and crease well. Fold the halved doily again in half (to form a triangle) and crease. Fold the triangle again in half and crease. Open the doily and cut in two equal halves (semi-circles). Each part will have a number of crease lines. Fold each semi-circle into a cone overlapping the two triangular parts at the ends. Glue knitting yarn on the Styrofoam balls to make the hair. Push a pearl headed pin from the inside of the doily cone upwards. Apply glue on a tip of the Styrofoam ball and push it inside the open end of the pin. Allow to dry. Glue a heart shaped doily to the back of the cone to form wings.



All Buttoned-up

Create a beautiful Christmas card display

Christmas cards are arriving and they are all so beautiful that you wish you could display them all without it all seeming a mess.

Here is a creative idea for creating an easy card display using buttons in different shapes and sizes. The idea is to create raised areas with buttons and use them to hang cards.

You will need:

- Christmas print wrapping paper – 1 sheet
- A sheet of cardboard or Styrofoam or anything else that can hold still
- Buttons in different shapes and sizes that co-ordinate with the chosen background paper
- Ribbons, Flowers etc. to adorn the display board
- Foam Dots
- Ribbon to hang cards

To create your display, cover a sheet of Styrofoam left from the packaging of some appliance or anything else that you might have handy with wrapping paper. Decorate your display board with ribbons and flowers

Use foam dots to glue buttons on the board. If necessary, stack two foam dots to raise the button further to allow for the ribbon to slip in. Tape ribbon on the back of the cards and hang them on the buttons.



Tips & Ideas for Planning
Your Dream Wedding

www.KnotForLife.com





A Lilac Christmas

The most soothing of shades is here to adorn your Christmas decorations. Call it lilac, purple, violet, lavender – they all create the same soothing effect and look equally elegant. Mix in whites or silver to create a beautiful palette for your Christmas décor this year.

Adorning the Tree (opposite)

Decorate a simple, yet splendid looking tree with just baubles in different shades of purple.

Large lilac balls – GKI Bethlehem
Shiny Purple and White balls – Trim-a-Home from Kmart,
Glittery purple balls – Martha Stewart Everyday
Large White ball – Roman Garden Ball
Small baubles – Roman Colorworks dusty rose baubles

Setting the Table (above and next page)

Use lilac and white with romantic candle light to create a beautiful Christmas table.

Dinnerware - Lilac Lace from JCPenney
Mini Lanterns – Wedding favor stores
Large lilac balls – GKI Bethlehem Glass Ornaments

Decorative Accents

From wrapping gifts in purple and white to wall and table decorations, you can decorate your home in this beloved shade. Use lavender and lavender-scented and colored products to give your celebrations a different twist.

Instructions for wool felt pillows (below) on page 31.



Shades of Lilac

A simple and elegant tree, the show-stopper of your decorations, dressed simply in Christmas ball ornaments in different shades of purple and mixed with whites.





DIY Lilac Crafting

Place cards, below, are created using a small tree shaped craft punch on a white card and backing the punched out space with purple paper.



Wrap gifts in white, then accent them with purple paper and adorn using a crystal brooch for a gift topper.

Handmade Christmas Cards





Being an avid crafter, I know this community can find the joy of crafting at any time of the year but still, there is something else about making handmade greeting cards for Christmas that pleases the soul within. And the process itself is so addicting that you simply don't want to stop. You can actually run out of cardstock and before your ideas once you begin. Here are some fresh ideas for making and gifting your own cards this season.

Sweet Smells of Christmas (opposite page)

You will need:

- Reddish Brown Cardstock
- Cream Handmade paper
- 'Sweet Smells' Sticker from BoBunny Cardstock stickers – Christmas Fun CFCS914
- 'of' and 'Christmas' stickers from daisy's Christmas phrases cardstock
- Bow shaped diecut or paper cutout

Fold reddish brown cardstock to form your card. Cut cream colored paper slightly shorter in width and cut through one edge using a scalloped edge scissor.

Stick the 'Sweet Smells', 'of' and 'Christmas' stickers using the image as a guide. Embellish with a bow diecut.

Jingle All The Way (left)

You will need:

- Red Cardstock
- White paper
- Santa from 'Tis the Season' sheet from W R Memory Keepers
- 'Jingle All The Way' rub-on sticker from American Traditional Designs (Holiday Sayings)
- 'Joy' and gifts stickers from BoBunny Christmas Bright Alphabet Sticker Sheet CBACS524
- Star shaped brad

Cut white paper shorter than the folded red cardstock and glue Santa on it. Rub on the top sticker and glue the bottom stickers and the brad.





Gingerbread Men (previous page)

You will need:

- Cream Cardstock
- Brown Chalk
- Brown ribbon bow
- 2 Gingerbread Men from 'Tis the Season' sheet from W R Memory Keepers

Rub chalk on all the four edges of the cardstock and wipe lightly with your finger or a sponge to create the frame.

Use the same chalk to draw small dashes and dots to resemble stitches. Glue the Gingerbread men and brown bow in place.

'Tis the Season (previous page)

You will need:

- White Cardstock
- Red paper
- Tree, Lights and gifts from 'Tis the Season' sheet from W R Memory Keepers

- 'Tis the Season' stickers from daisyd's cardstock stickers – 14563 Mistletoe Memories Phrases
- Red Sequins

Cut the red paper into an 'L' shape as seen and glue it to the cardstock. Glue the stickers in place starting with the lights. Arrange lights to fit the red paper and glue them in place. Add the gifts and the tree so that the tree overlaps the red paper at the top. Glue the words as shown. Add sequins to complete the card.



Snowman Card (Previous page)

- White Cardstock - square - Red paper
- Snowman from 'Tis the Season' sheet from W R Memory Keepers Embossible Designs
- Pink and Blue Snowflake design papers from Brenda Walton, K&Company Designer Mat Pad
- Mini cherry brads

Cut mat papers as shown – pink in a square and blue in a smaller rectangle. Glue to mat the snowman sticker in the center. Attach cherry brads to all four corners of the blue matting paper.

Winter (above)

You will need:

- Baby blue Cardstock – we used the one from the 'Chill Out' kit from Top Line Creations hot Fudge line
- 'Winter' die cut from
- Tree, Lights and gifts from the 'Chill Out' kit from Top Line Creations hot Fudge line
- Large Foam Snowflake Stamp
- Green mulberry paper
- Christmas tree cutouts
- Aleene's Glitter Snow
- Small snowflake punch or ready-to-use punchies to cutouts

- Blue Pigment Stamp Pad
- Medium sized paint brush
- White paper

Glue the 'winter' die cut and mulberry trees on the baby blue cardstock using the image above as a guide.

Stamp the snowflake overlapping the winter die cut as seen in the image.

Use a paint brush to apply Aleene's glitter snow on the edges of the branches of the mulberry trees and around the edge of the winter die cut.

Punch our small snowflakes from white paper and glue them all over.

Christmas Tree Decorating

Tree Decorating Ideas

Picture Gallery

Ornament Crafts

Tree Crafts

Selecting Trees

Poems & Downloads

...and much more!

Visit Us At:

Christmas-Tree-Decorating.com





Christmas with Anne And other Holiday Stories

For those who cannot get enough of Anne of Green Gables and L.M. Montgomery, this book is a literary treat!

The book has two 'Anne' stories and several other holiday stories in the L.M. Montgomery's own sweet style which have been compiled from a scrapbook discovered at her birthplace and not published in any of her other books.

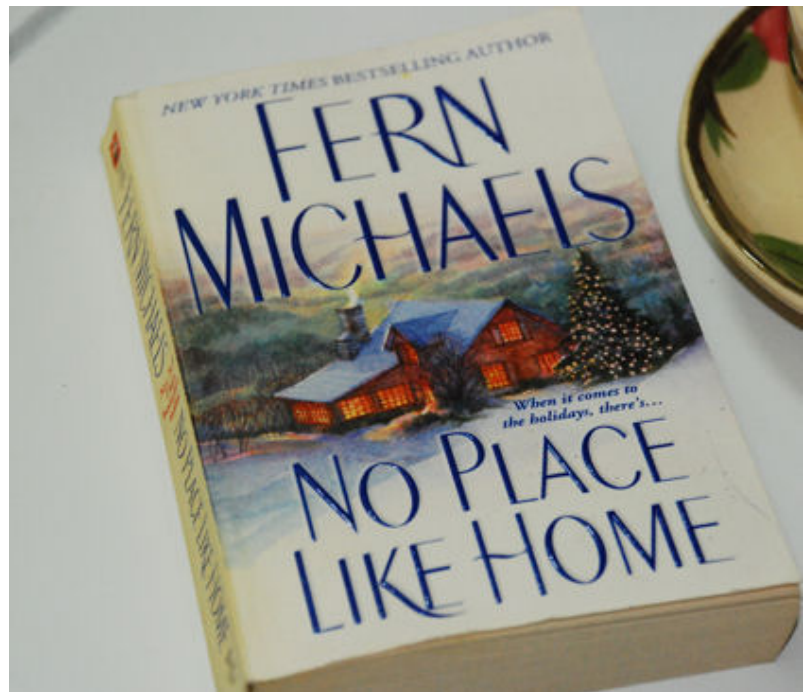
It is difficult to choose favorites but yet, 'Katherine Brooke comes to Green Gables' and 'Aunt Cyrilla's Christmas Basket' are wonderful works. All stories have the charm and simplicity where miracles happen, boundaries are broken and old family feuds end during the magical Christmas time.

On our Christmas Bookshelf

No Place Like Home

Fern Michaels fans may perhaps be a little disappointed with this novel because it is less intelligent and gripping when compared to her other works. But at this time of the year, it does what we expect from it. It brings to us the joys and smells of the season.

The first few pages describing Grandma Cisco's country home are perhaps the most beautiful words in the book. The story itself has a lot of cliché but it is fun to read about the three young triplets who bring together their family – the owners of a famous candy company – together for Christmas and make their father realize that there is no place like home for the holidays!



I will admit I bought it just because of the title but once the cynicism is put aside, I enjoyed the Christmas scenes the author paints with her words.



The Perfectly Planned Evening

Indispensable tips for the Hostess

Make your dinner or party stress-free and easy by planning out the day well in advance so you don't have to undergo last-minute frustrations. Read on these tips to ensure everyone has a great time at your next do.

1. A sufficient supply of China, silverware, napkins, serving dishes and platters, serving spoons, bakeware and cookware is essential. Create a mock dinner or party setting several days in advance to see if you fall short of anything. Create the dinner or party scene and that day since morning, in your mind, a

nd note down any essentials that come across as lacking or missing.

2. If you are serving buffet style and have a large crowd, consider setting up two different complete tables starting with plates and cutlery and napkins so guests don't line up at one spot and are divided between two serving tables. Dessert may be served on one separate single table or within these two food tables.

3. Prepare your menu several days in advance to allow time for improvisations. Make sure 2/3rd of the dishes planned are make-ahead. Practice each recipe at least twice before preparing it on the day

of the party or dinner.

4. Stock up your pantry in advance.

5. Start working on your menu 3-4 days before the party. Prepare make and bake ahead dishes. Marinate appropriate dishes one day in advance. Freeze dough several days ahead and bake treats a day before.

6. Hire help for serving out dishes so you are not reduced to a slave to your stove or microwave on the day of the party.

7. One vegetarian main dish and one diabetic-friendly dessert will cover the basic

food concerns in your guests. If you are, however, aware of any other allergies or special dietary needs of your guests, it is your duty to take care of them.

8. Keep mulled apple juice simmering as guests enter. The spiced Christmas smells will provide a warm welcome to your guests. But if you choose to do this, make sure that you use either unscented or cinnamon scented candles or the fragrance of the candles will compete with the aroma of the mulled drink.

9. If side dishes and breads require baking, bake them a day before so that you can start with the main dish on the day of your dinner party.

10. No matter how you plan your day, there should only be one way of spending the last one and half hour before the party/dinner begins. Devote the first hour to yourself taking time to get dressed up. The last half hour should be devoted to last minute tasks like calmly taking a tour of your house to see if everything is in its place, turning on holiday music (peppy for cocktails and parties and soft for dinners), lighting the candles, dimming the bulbs etc.

Right: *Spode Baking Days Collection of beautiful Oven-to-Table Bakeware reduces usage of serving dishes.*

Above Right: *Broilking® Multi-level Warmer. With the comfort of two 4.3-quart and three 2.6-quart pans with clear dome lids, you can save a lot of time warming different dishes.*

Your Tools of the Trade



Roses for Christmas





Christmas Flower Arrangements

Christmas decoration or any other decoration for that matter does not seem complete without flowers which is why every issue of our magazine covers flower arrangements for Christmas. In this issue, we will focus on creating formal and casual arrangements in tall containers. Although they might look daunting to create, we make them easy with our saucer trick and you can create beautiful looking flower arrangements in no time.

The Saucer Trick

How many times have you tried to replicate this look and failed to get the flowers positioned in the correct spot as the picture shows. If you think the flowers are placed right into the containers, think again. Not even one stem enters the containers! A plastic saucer containing soaked floral foam is taped to the neck of the containers and the flowers and foliage are tucked into that block of foam on the top. You can buy florist saucers in shops selling flower arranging supplies or fashion your own.

Roses for Christmas

Roses are available abundantly and even during winters making them a beautiful choice for holiday floral decorations. We have used roses to create two elegant arrangements using only green foliage with a single Christmas color making two truly breathtaking, classy and festive Christmas color palettes.

Above: Red roses and berries stand tall amidst seasonal greenery in a white Pfaltzgraff dessert cup forming a cheerful arrangement for almost any spare table or corner.

Right: White roses stand out beautifully against the foresty dark green of maidenhair fern in this sophisticated arrangement made in a polished silver breakfast tea tin.





*Rhapsody
in White*

Easy Sewing Ideas for Christmas



This is the time of year when sewing shops display piles of gorgeous Christmas themed fabric, featuring everything Christmas from holly leaves to Santa. There are many simple but effective ways to incorporate these beautiful designs into your Christmas decorating and gift giving. Here are a few thoughts:

Special Christmas clothes:

Take your favorite dress pattern and make it up using some Christmas fabric. It can look fun and festive with snowmen and reindeer, or it can look elegant and unique with lovely gold trimmed and decorated fabric. Men will look great in a shirt cut and made up from Christmas fabric, while the youngsters can also have their own dresses, pinafores, shirts and shorts. These outfits are great to wear for the annual Christmas portrait.

Wrapping: Christmas fabric makes a brilliant wrapping for presents, and if you add a simple pattern to use up the

fabric along with a couple of sewing notions, you have a great surprise extra gift for the sewer in your life.

Festive Stuffed Toys: Make up your favorite stuffed toy patterns with Christmas fabric, like calico cats, cotton puppies and huggable teddy bears. Use them for decoration around the house or the Christmas tree, or as extra presents for unexpected young visitors.

Shopping Bags: Get in the festive spirit with your Christmas shopping and make up some simple shopping bags. Fold a length of fabric to the size bag you

want, sew up the sides and hem the opening at the top. Attach strong handles and hit the stores!

Cushions and Chair Covers:

Take your decorating to the next level and sew up a special set of Christmas soft furnishings. Simple covers sewn on four sides, with the fourth side hemmed and ribbon attached to close the cover, can change the look of your lounge room in minutes. Or create appliqués and easy patchwork quilt designs like our wool felt pillows on page 16 made using white and lilac wool felt. You can also dress up your dining table with simple slipcovers for your dining chairs.



Pillowcases: Make sure that Santa doesn't miss your house and make Christmas extra special for the kids by sewing up Christmas fabric pillowcases they can use year after year. Hang one at the foot of the bed, and put another one over an existing pillow for sweet dreams full of visions of sugar plums!

Table Runners: Use Christmas cloth by yardage to cut out half lengthwise to make a table runner with piped edges and beaded tassels and cut the remaining half lengthwise in two long pieces to make matching chair tie-backs. Buy more cloth to make 2 more chair ties or make them in matching solid cloth and co-ordinate them with the printed ones.

See Resources for Fabrics used





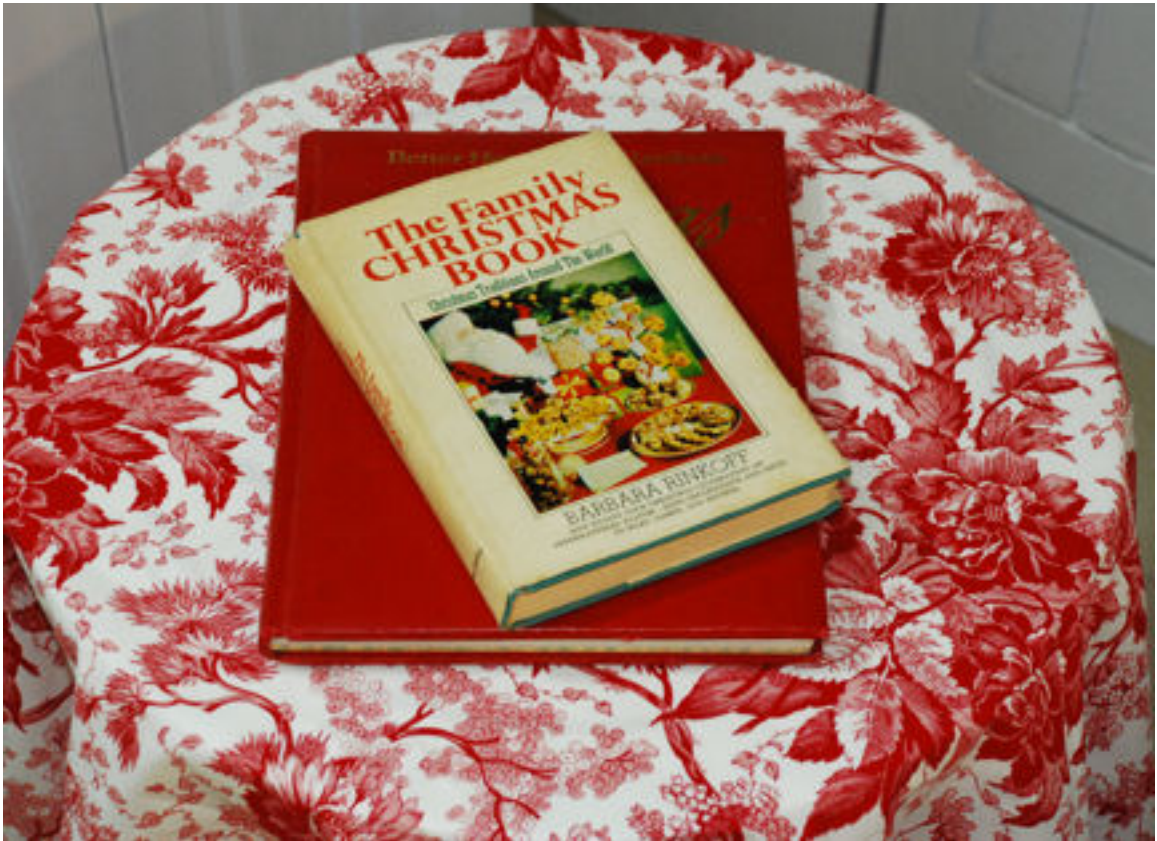
Toile remains a favorite of every decorator although it faces the never-ending controversy of whether or not one would like to cover one or more of their walls with toile prints. But there is more to Toile than just covering walls. Discover how beautiful decorative accents can be created using toile prints for Christmas.

Short for 'Toile du Juoy' this pattern took early decorators by storm and although it never went out of vogue, it has found new found favor with modern day decorators. The beautiful pastoral scenes in black, red and green are sure to spruce up your home this festive season. Some beautiful ideas to incorporate toile print into your Christmas decorations are:

Left: Cover a Styrofoam tree form with green toile print fabric and adorn with a wooden star decoration. Cut fabric like you would for a party hat and wrap around the Styrofoam form gluing or pinning the edges closed.

Opposite and Next page: Cover containers with toile print wrapping paper to create one-of-a-kind vases. Here we have covered a cake pan and an empty chips can using toile print wrapping paper from Waverly.

Opposite: Use a larger piece of toile to make table covers for accent tables by sewing or hemming edges closed.







Let The Kids In On The Christmas Card Fun!

One of the most tedious tasks of the holiday season is the endless holiday greetings cards. Filling out a unique greeting for every cousin, third cousin, close cousin-in-law-that-just-happened-to-be-at-a-family-barbecue, and then there's all your friends, --and friends of your husband, then the people at work. However, the stress of filling out card after card can all be dispersed by simply adding a much more relaxing element of fun. All you need, is a few big boxes of crayons, a couple kids, some family photos, stamps, and a huge packet of red and green construction paper.

Kids are especially restless during the holidays, and excited. Instead of keeping them elsewhere and out of the way, put them to work with a fun activity that'll help you out as well.

First off, set them down, and let them know that they're in charge of Christmas cards this year; a sense of responsibility gives them know they're being trusted, and make them more satisfied with the results. Give your children all the crayons, a list of names, --if they're old enough, if not, just sign the cards yourself later, --and all the construction paper needed. Then just have them draw, stencil, trace whatever Christmassy things they'd like to, on both the front and back of the paper, for friends and relatives.

For extra fun, provide glue, sequins, and glitter. Be sure to supervise though, and help with the glue. Outline designs with stick or Elmer's glue, sprinkle on glitter, and shake off the cards over newspaper. Be sure to let them completely dry before folding them, or putting them in envelopes. Also, using very small, thin amounts of glue helps to ensure fast drying as well. Stick glue sometimes does not dry completely and glitter or sequins may fall off later. After all your cards are completely dry, all you have to do is fold them, sign your family's name, and the artist's name as well.

Continued on Next Page



Kids Craft

Snowflake Coasters

Let kids enjoy a day filled with fun and creativity making a whole bunch of coasters using popsicle sticks and paint.

What will be needed:

Popsicle sticks – 7 for each coaster
Blue poster paint and brush
Snowflake Punch outs
Decoupage glue or ordinary craft glue

Directions:

1. Paint all popsicle sticks and let dry completely. You can also purchase blue sticks but all moms know how much kids love to paint – so be it!
 2. Place two popsicle sticks vertically, spaced so that other sticks can fit horizontally over them.
 3. Glue five sticks in place horizontally as shown.
 4. When dried, glue on small snowflakes.
 5. Apply a coat of decoupage or regular glue thinned to make the coasters resistant.
- Tie sets of 4 or 6 with matching ribbon to give as gifts to moms or dinner hosts or hang as decorations!

Let The Kids In On The Christmas Card Fun!

Continued from Previous Page

When your cards are all folded and ready to go into the envelopes, insert a recent family photo into each of them, and indicate which child, on the back of the photograph, was the artist. This is a much more fun way to go about filling out and selecting Christmas cards this year, and also provides a sense of accomplishment for your children as well. Most children will be grateful for being able to 'help out' for Christmas. And when your relatives receive their custom drawn and coloured Christmas cards, they'll also know who to thank.

I Love to Craft

Do You?



Visit www.iLovetoCraft.com for

**Free Craft Patterns | Craft Recipes | Craft Projects
Holiday Crafts | Seasonal Crafts | Wedding Crafts
Kids Crafts | Tips and Ideas | Crafts Shopping Directory**

Diffusers

The New No Flame Candle



Christmas candles are highly popular every year; and more often than not, in your house or mine, someone knocks one over, and gets bright green, or red wax all over the floor or carpet. Or someone accidentally moves a candle to close to a frame, or a curtain, and it scorches; if you're lucky. Every year, hundreds of candle related accidents take place on Christmas, whether people are sober or not, we're usually just having a good time, and not paying attention. Not to mention the danger of having a bunch of excited children running around in a house with lit candles on several low surfaces. Scented candles are a thing of the past; if you want a safer alternative, with the same warm, fragrant scent, look into trying diffusers this year instead.

There are several different kinds of diffusers that are popular right now, but one of the most simple,

was at one point, simply putting a few drops of an oil essence on a tissue. When you walk by, you can smell the difference as the scent moves into the air. This was a popular method because you could move it anywhere, and it could be used anywhere. However, this method of diffusing scents isn't all that popular because it doesn't really spread fragrance in a room evenly, and having a bunch of tissues laying around at a party will look really tacky.

Candle diffusers are really popular in stores right now as well. You've seen them, the little candles that melt into liquid and scent an entire room. However, the pools of liquid are tiny, and evaporate too quickly. Not to mention, it's still a candle, only smaller, and much more likely to singe the hem of blouse sleeve, or a little hand, reaching up on a table. The coloured liquid that

the candle melts down to will also stain carpet, or hardwood, or whatever surface it might spill on.

The best diffusers out there right now are what are called "Reed Diffusers." These come in two varieties. You can get large decorative reed diffusers, or smaller, six inch tall bottles. Basically, it's a bottle filled with essential oils, or specialty diffuser fragrances, and it comes with a little packet of thin reed sticks. You slip the reed sticks down into the neck of the bottle, and spread them out nicely. What the reeds do is soak up the oil, like straws, and evaporate the scent so that it spreads out into the room it's in. And there are quite a few reeds, so that means multiple fragrance outlets. Anytime you walk through the area, you'll be able to smell the delicious, stimulating, or sensual fragrance of your choice; diffusers come in many brands and scents.



Celebrate Kwanzaa with

Recipes

Crafts

Dinner Menu Ideas

Party Themes

Gift Ideas

Decorating Ideas

www.Celebrating-Kwanzaa.com



Outdoor Decorating Ideas for Christmas



Wow your guests and provide eye candy for Christmas light enthusiasts with beautiful themed decorations in your front yard. From super-easy to super-dramatic, create your favorite looks outdoor this Christmas.

Christmas Trees

Starting in the 16th-century Germans decorated fir trees both indoors and out. Most trees were decorated with apples, colored paper, roses, and candies.

Decorating a Christmas tree is still one of the most festive ways to decorate outdoors. You can put up lights and put on ornaments. You can even put presents under the tree. Get some larger moving boxes. Put a few heavy rocks inside them so they don't blow away. Wrap the boxes with wrapping paper (it is probably best to use cellophane or some otherwater resistant wrapping so that it doesn't fall apart in the snow) and put a bow on top. Make a few of varying sizes and arrange them under your tree.

make less traditional wreaths; try **Nativity Scene**

A beautiful nativity scene is an elegant way to decorate for the season. Be sure to get a spotlight so that it can be seen at night too.

Wreaths

Wreaths can be displayed on more than your door. For a great symmetrical look, try hanging a wreath in the middle of each of your windows. If you have a fence



Lively decoration in a store with Santa hanging from a beautifully decked balcony.

in the front or where people will see it you can hang garland and wreaths. Add giant red bows and you have a festive look. You can also making them out of ornaments, flowers and even small toys.

Pick a Theme

Choose a theme and keep with it. Some ideas are:

Santa's Workshop: Hang small toys from trees, have a sign in the front that says "welcome to the North Pole," get outdoor displays of elves and Santa

Winter Wonderland: Hang snowflake ornaments and icicle lights, keep with a blue and white color scheme, put out one of the inflatable snowmen

Candy Land: Get large candy canes to line the driveway or sidewalk, hang ornaments that look like candy from the trees, decorate with red and white lights on the house.



The writing is on the wall

**MyKindaLiving.com is your one-stop
Home & Lifestyle portal**





- Ribbon and Bows: decorate the front door to look like a wrapped present, use window paint to make the windows look like gifts, tie big ribbons around tree trunks and on the porch and fence.

Luminaries

The gentle light from luminaries is a great way to decorate outdoors. Luminaries can be bought at stores, made from tin cans, paper sacks or even ice.



A White Christmas in Tropical Singapore



For a country so less endowed with natural resources, Singapore has carved for itself a great reputation for shopping and tourism and this small country is certainly at its best at Christmas time.

The cosmopolitan city-state is famous not only for its trendy shops and boutiques but also its world class hospitality and every visitor can sense it during their stay. To start with, Singapore has one of the best tourist friendly websites. Visit them at www.visitsingapore.com for planning your visit and getting detailed information, maps and events.

What to See and Do:

There is too much to be seen and done but here are the must-do's from our experience:

Free Singapore: Hippo Bus gives a free tour of the orchard road light-

up. All museums and gardens remain free for visitors on Christmas day. So you know what you are doing on the 25th of December if you plan to be in Singapore.

Large Scale Decorations: There isn't a better place to ogle at the breathtaking decorations put up by shopping malls and theme parks all competing with one another for attention.

City Tour: If you can pull yourself away from all the Christmas specials Singapore has to offer, drag yourself to see the fabulous city buildings and national parks. From the business district to the stately Supreme court buildings, the iconic Merlion to Chinatown, Little India, Holland Village and Geylang Serai, Singapore is all geared to keep you busy.

Favorite Hangouts: Clarke Quay, Chijmes, the Raffles bar (the place to get the famous Singapore Sling) and other quays like the Robertson quay are popular spots for locals as well as tourists. **A river cruise on Clarke Quay is a must to see the lovely city from the bay.** Try to time your cruise so that you go when there is still daylight and return when the night lights are on.

Parks, Zoos and Museums: Among the must-visit are the Singapore zoo, Jurong bird park, National orchid garden, botanical gardens, National museum, philatelic museum and philatelic museum. If you have time, there are some water parks as well.

Shopping: Starting from Takashimaya in Ngee Ann City mall to Vivocity at harbourfront, Singapore has shopping destinations built within every

nook and cranny. Among the more famous malls are the Plaza Singapura, Suntec City, Tanglin Centre and Tanglin mall and Clarke Quay. Little India and Chinatown are famous for their own specialty shopping. Mustafa center along Serangoon road is the best bet to shop in Little India and the antique shops in Chinatown are known to have treasures hiding within. A walk through Orchard road will give you more options to shop than you can possibly accomplish. On the day of your leaving, arrive at the airport early and save space in your bags for more shopping. The Changi airport is the best place to shop duty free and the Christmas decorations at the airport can easily compete with any of the best malls.

Sentosa: Sentosa is Singapore's own Disneyland. Kids will love going to Sentosa from the Harbourfront in a cable car. Once in Sentosa, you can see 4D shows, climb up the Imbiah lookout tower and see the city skyline, visit the aquarium, butterfly park and enjoy a variety of rides.

Right: Ngee Ann City's gigantic Christmas tree decorated in the mall's basic color – maroon.

Below: Ngee Ann city which houses the famous Takashimaya along with other top brands.





Christmas Trees in Malls

Clockwise from top left: Raffles City Mall, AMK (Ang Mo Kio) mall, Vivocity Mall and the Christmas tree in the Singapore Museum decorated with memorabilia from the museum and old photographs.

Make Your Valentine Feel Special!

Romantic Recipes

Great Gift Ideas

**Handmade Gifts
of Love**

**Decorating for
Your Special One**

**Theme Parties for
All Those in Love**

**Romantic Poems
& Letters**

www.Celebrating-ValentinesDay.com



Top: Chijmes (pronounced chimes), at Victoria Street, was actually a catholic convent (Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus – CHIJ) and is now one of the hottest spots for the night crowd.

Above, above left and left: Orchard street is lit up every year during Christmas and it makes a fairytale drive along the road. Free hippo bus tours are available to see the Christmas light-up at Orchard road and in other parts of the city.

Tanglin Mall's Christmas Cottage





Just like anywhere else in the world, the best secrets have to be searched for. The most publicized and advertised events and places are not always the best and here in Singapore we discovered the Tanglin mall which outshone the rest of the decorations in the city.

The beautiful Christmas cottage created in Tanglin's front yard was straight out of the most charming country scene. Realistic horses, dogs and squirrels stood guard in front of the cottage. Not just the exterior, the designer had taken care to do up the interior resembling a kitchen complete with partially and fully baked baked goodies. A peek inside was possible through the beautiful window.





Above and Right: Snow in the Tropics

It was a white Christmas in the tropical Singapore when the visitors at Tanglin mall were treated to a machine created snowfall. Kids and grown-ups had a fun time playing in the snow.



Left: Sentosa, Singapore's Disneyland created on an island accessible by cable car.



Above left: 'Jewel Box' on Mount Faber, a hilltop destination with options for cable car dining as well as 'Songs of the Sea' a co-ordinated fountain-water show.

City Tour: Clockwise from top left: Singapore Civil Defence Gallery, Singapore Zoo night Safari, Supreme Court, Merlion at Marina Bay, DUCK tours in an amphibious vessel – a fun way to tour the city, free Hippo bus tours for all tourists, Marina Bay skyline with Esplanade theatre and Singapore flyer (like London Eye) being seen.



Home-Made Candies

Made Much Easier Than You Think



Making Christmas candy, no matter how great the results are, can take time, and energy that most people are short of during the holidays. With the stress of gift wrapping, last minute gift buying, decorating, and all that cooking, it seems easier just to buy something at the store. However, some candies are delicious, as well as fun to make, while consuming very little time.

Here you will learn how to make a delicious peanut brittle in under thirty minutes, and chocolate covered pretzels with nothing more than a microwave, in which your kids can help join in the

fun as well. Both candy recipes are fast, easy, and require low maintenance cooking that anyone can master.

Peanut Brittle

Peanut brittle is possible one of the easiest candy recipes out there; the only very sensitive part of the process is making sure the mixture doesn't burn.

What you need to make peanut brittle, is butter, 1 1/2 full sticks, and it has to be butter, not margarine, 1 1/2 cups of sugar, a cookie sheet with upturned sides,

preferably, and two cups of shelled peanuts.

Coat the cookie sheet with a thin layer of butter, to prevent the mixture from sticking. Add the sugar and the butter to a skillet at the same time, and turn the heat to medium high.

Don't melt the butter first, or the mixture will brown too quickly. Stir frequently, until the sugar is melted, and is beginning to bubble frothily around the edges of the pan.

Stir the peanuts fairly quickly into the pan, but be sure not to touch the mixture! Caramelised sugar is

extremely hot, and will cause serious burns.

After you've stirred the peanuts in, you'll notice that the mixture is already turning caramel-coloured.

Quickly, pour it evenly into the cookie sheet, smoothing it with a wooden spoon, so that the layer is around 1/2 an inch thick.

Let sit, undisturbed for at least two hours; brittle will dry quickly. Afterwards, break into pieces, and serve or give peanut brittle in decorative tins as gifts.

Chocolate-dipped Pretzels

This second recipe is just as easy, and you can involve your whole family in making chocolate dipped pretzels.

What you'll need are a bag of small, pretzel sticks, a package of milk chocolate or white chocolate cubes, red and green sugar sprinkles or bright colored sprinkles, edible cupcake 'eyes' and tin foil.

First, spread your tin foil, dull side up, out on your kitchen counter. Take about six cubes of the chocolate of your choice, and break them up into a large microwaveable bowl.

Put it into the microwave, and melt, carefully, in thirty second intervals, stirring in between each.

When the chocolate is completely melted, open up your bag of pretzels, and

separate the whole pretzels from the broken ones.

Pour a good amount in, give everyone a fork, and start dipping. Make sure, and encourage children to be sure the entire pretzel is coated, with an even layer of chocolate.

Next, roll the chocolate dipped pretzels in sprinkles. You can make Christmassy sprinkles using red and green sprinkles and 'character' pretzels using bright colors and adorning them with edible eyes.

Then, lay the pretzels carefully, and flat on the foil. Let them dry completely before taking them off of the foil.

Place them in regular plastic containers for storage, or serve them immediately on a decorative platter to friends and family. Or, like peanut brittle; cover them well in plastic wrap, and give as gifts in tins.

You can make a whole batch of these for a kids Christmas party!





Gingerbread Train

A Great Christmas Table Decoration and Dessert

- Hayley Hunkin

Children of all ages will love helping to make this beautiful Christmas table decoration and yummy dessert, all in one. Everyone loves gingerbread and this recipe is so easy to make that any child will be able to help. It is also cheaper to make your own gingerbread from scratch, than to buy an expensive ready-made package.

To make the gingerbread, you will need

- 125 g (4oz) butter
- ½ cup of firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 ½ cups of plain flour
- 1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda

- 3 teaspoons of ground ginger and
- 2 ½ tablespoons of golden syrup.

Step 1

Cream the butter and sugar together until the mixture is light and fluffy. Then add the egg yolk and beat the mixture well. Gradually add the dry ingredients and finally add the syrup. Mix the dough well and knead it lightly.

Step 2

Divide the dough into portions. Spread each portion between two sheets of greaseproof paper and roll flat. Now cut the shapes you will need out from the gingerbread dough. You can make whatever Christmas decorative shapes you want, if

you do not want to create a train.

If you want to make the train, you will need to cut the following shapes:

- Two large rectangle bases
- 5 medium rectangle walls
- 3 small rectangle walls
- 1 trapezoid small bumper
- 3 large circles
- 2 medium circles
- 1 small circle

Use different size glasses to cut the circles in the dough. It is easiest to draw the templates onto greaseproof paper, place the template on top of the gingerbread dough and then cut around the template shape.

Step 3

Place the cut out gingerbread shapes on lightly greased oven trays, without any greaseproof paper. Bake in a moderate oven for approximately 10 minutes, until golden. Cool on trays.

Step 4

Prepare icing mixture. Mix 1 ½ cups of icing sugar, an egg white and a few drops of lemon juice. Separate the icing into different colours and add food colouring, leaving at least one portion of icing white.

Spread some white icing onto 1 small rectangle and both medium circles. Add some coloured sprinkles (for the effect of snow).

Step 5

Assemble the engine. Start with 1 large rectangle as a base. You will need 3 medium rectangles for walls, the three large circles and the small circle, plus the iced small rectangle.

Place the engine base on a flat surface and pipe a line of icing along the bottom and sides of one of the medium rectangles. Stand this back wall rectangle upright on the base and firmly attach another medium rectangle to its side using icing as glue. Once set, attach the other side wall.

Use icing to glue the 3 large circles together, each on top of the other. Pipe a thick line of icing along the bottom circle and attach this to the base in front of the engine cabin. Use icing to attach the small circle at the front of the engine.

Finally, use icing as glue to attach the iced roof of the engine cabin. You may need to hold this in place for several minutes, until the icing sets.

Step 6

Assemble the train carriage using the remaining shapes. Use the large rectangle as a base and place it on a flat surface. Attach the two medium rectangles as side walls and the two smaller walls as the front and the back of the carriage. Draw icing along the sides and bottom of each piece to attach the pieces to each other and the base. This will form an open carriage. Finally, attach the last two circles, one on each side as wheels of the carriage.

Step 7

On a flat surface place the engine in front and the carriage behind. You can now decorate the rest of the gingerbread using the colours. For added impact, cover a tray with silver foil and then pipe a railway line in green icing to sit the train on.

Cut a small candy in half and attach the straight half to the back of the engine and the front of the carriage. Attach the other wheels for the engine and the striped bumper at the front of the train. Children will love using their imaginations to decorate the train and fill it with wrapped lollies and candy canes.

You have now created a beautiful table decoration that will certainly be a talking point during Christmas dinner. It is also the perfect treat for your Christmas guests to enjoy with coffee after the dinner. Your gingerbread train will make your Christmas table even more festive and fun.

Christmas Gifts for Kids Without Breaking the Bank

Please the kids without breaking your budget with these smart and practical choices for children's gifts and stocking stuffers that will also benefit them.

Stocking Stuffers: Flashing tops, novelty socks, cartoon character toothbrushes and toothpastes, small collectible toys like cars and pets, digital watches etc.

Books, drawing pads and art materials.

Blow-up trampolines and a bag of balls.

For older kids, moon-walker shoes or mini-trampolines as they are called.

Personalized items – pens, bowls, plates, caps, pillows, towels and soaps with their names engraved, embroidered or painted upon.

Old-fashioned board games.

Magic trick games

Craft kits, making magnets, beads etc.

When purchasing gifts for children, always make sure that you check the manufacturer's recommended ages for the product.



Cheesy Dill Potatoes

Dill is a perennial herb which makes it perfect to spice up Christmas dishes when not many ingredients are freshly available. Give the traditional side dish of potatoes sharpness by adding dill and aged cheddar cheese to them.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon flour
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon dill
1 cup aged cheddar cheese

4 cups cooked potatoes,
sliced in rounds

Make the Cheese Dill Sauce

Melt butter and blend in flour. Cook till slightly brown. Add dill. Add milk and cook, stirring until thick. Add ½ cup cheese and turn off the flame.

Assembly:

Layer the potatoes in a casserole. Pour the sauce over the potatoes and sprinkle the remaining ½ cup cheese over it. Sprinkle some dill lightly over the cheese.

Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Garnish with a sprig of dill and serve.

Another dill delicacy for your Christmas table:

Dill Stuffed Mushrooms

Ingredients:

24 fresh button mushrooms
2 tbsp. sliced green onion
2 tbsp. butter
1/4 cup fine bread crumbs
½ tsp fresh dill weed
1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

Remove stems of the mushrooms and chop. Cook stems and onion in butter till tender. Remove from heat. Stir in bread crumbs, dill weed, and Worcestershire sauce. Fill mushroom crowns with bread crumb mixture. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet for 6 - 8 minutes at 425 degrees.

Christmas Gifts with a Tippy Twist!



Edible Gifts from Your Kitchen for Grown Ups

Nothing says 'I love you' and 'Merry Christmas' to your spouse or a dear friend better than a delectable edible Christmas gift from your own kitchen.

Make these delicious recipes with a tippy twist and package them as if they were Parisian gourmet goodies in lovely boxes and jars trimmed with gold ribbon.

Mixed Brandied Peel

This sparkles like jewels in a beautiful glass jar.

Peel the rind from a large orange and a large lemon. The fruit must be perfect and unmarked. You can peel the rind very thinly or you can leave on some white pith. Cut the strips of peel into small pieces. Put in a pan with just enough water to cover, and bring to the boil. Simmer for 10 minutes. Drain, and repeat the heating process. Drain again, reserving the liquid.

Place the liquid with a cup of sugar back in the pan, dissolve the sugar over low heat, and bring to the boil. Take off the heat, pour over

peel, add 1 quarter cup of brandy, and leave overnight. Next day, return the peel and liquid to the pan with half a cup of sugar, bring to the boil, and simmer for 15 minutes. Spread the peel in a baking tray that has been covered with grease proof paper. Use a fork to separate the bits of peel and let dry overnight before packing in a jar. Use in cake and pastry making.

Oranges with Grand Marnier

Warm their hearts with this delicious dessert

Cut the skin, and the white pith, from eight oranges. The oranges should be very ripe and sweet – Valencias are best. Cut the oranges into

segments – do this in a bowl so the juice doesn't run away. Take out any pips. Dissolve one cup of sugar in one cup of water over low heat then boil for two minutes.

When the sugar syrup has cooled, add a quarter cup of Grand Marnier and pour over the oranges. Bottle in a sterilized jar for presentation. The orange segments are served with the juice and whipped cream for dessert.

Marmalade with Whisky

If you enjoy making preserves, this one is very festive!

Cut six oranges and two lemons into quarters. Stand in

a bowl overnight covered with water.

Next day, put the fruit and water on the stove and bring to the boil. Turn down the heat and simmer for 25 minutes.

Add 4 lb (2kg) sugar to the fruit, let it dissolve over low heat. Bring back to the boil and let boil uncovered for half an hour.

Test the jam by dropping from a spoon into a shallow saucer of cold water. If it jells, it is ready.

Let it cool and add ¼ cup good whiskey. Pour into hot sterilized jars for presentation.

Irish Cream Fudge

Bring together Irish cream and a classic candy.

Melt three ounces of butter with two cups of sugar very gently until the sugar dissolves. Add one 400g can of condensed milk to the sugar and butter and stir well in.

Keep heating gently until it starts to bubble and comes away clean from the bottom of the pan. Watch the heat carefully because if the mixture boils, it burns! Take the pan off the heat and beat ¼ cup of Bailey's Irish Cream into the mixture. Pour into a greased baking tray and allow to cool and set before cutting into squares.

Candy Cane

- Recipes
- Crafts
- Decorating
- Fonts
- Freebies
- Activities & more!

www.ACandyCaneChristmas.com



A Candy Cane Christmas



Baked Apple with Pomegranate Stuffing

Make the holiday season easy upon you as well as your health by whipping up a fruit-based dessert this year. This beautiful dessert blends the seasonal flavors of apples and pomegranates and cake crumbs give the most delicious richness.

Ingredients:

2 Cooking Apples
2 cups cake crumbs
1 cup pomegranate seeds
1/2 cup pomegranate juice
Dried cranberries (craisins)
Unsalted butter
Whipped cream to serve
1/2 cup honey or maple syrup
Makes 4 servings

Peel apples and halve them. Scoop out the centers to hollow out the halves. Remove the seeds and grate or crush the remaining scooped out flesh.

Mix in pomegranate seeds, cake crumbs and honey and stuff back into the hollowed apples. Butter a shallow baking dish and bake the

halves for about 20 minutes.

When serving, pour 1-2 tablespoons of pomegranate juice over each portion and garnish with more seeds and a dollop of whipped cream.

Note: When deseeding the pomegranate, crush the fruit slightly to obtain juice and collect it for serving.





Cranberry Stuffed Onions

Add a unique dish to your dinner table this year. This lovely side dish looks as beautiful as it tastes wonderful

Ingredients:

6 onions
1-1/2 cups (12 oz) dried cranberries
1/2 cup sugar (omit if using sweetened raisins)
1 small onion (for the stuffing)
Dried cranberries (raisins)
4 tablespoons water
1 orange
4 tablespoons stock
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 oz butter

Makes 6 servings

Directions:

1. Boil water in a saucepan and add lemon juice to it. Par boil onions in this water. Cover and cook till done.
2. Scoop out the center of the onion using an apple corer and keep aside.
3. Prepare the cranberry stuffing. Melt a little butter (reserving the rest for later) and cook 1 small finely chopped onion in it. Add cranberries and sugar (if needed) and add the water.
4. When mixture comes to a boil, add orange segments, turn off the stove and cover the pan.

5. Stuff the onions with cranberry stuffing.

6. Place the stuffed onions in a shallow baking dish with butter and stock. Place the remaining stuffing on the same dish and bake for 20 minutes on 400 degrees F or 200 degrees C.

7. Serve with extra stuffing on the side.

Freeze Ahead

The cranberry relish stuffing may be prepared and stored up to 3 months in advance. To serve, thaw for 3-4 hours at room temperature, then stuff in hollowed out onions and bake as mentioned in the recipe.



Welcome back your kids home with the aroma of hot muffins just out from the oven. Rich with condensed milk and lots of chocolate and cranberries make these heavenly muffins a favorite with kids.

You will need:

1 cup flour
2 tbsp cocoa powder
4 tbsp melted butter
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
1 egg or ½ cup milk
A pinch of salt
½ cup chocolate chips
½ cup dried cranberries (Craisins)

Directions:

1. Mix together flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt together and keep aside.
2. Beat egg and add condensed milk, melted butter and vanilla.
3. Add the flour to the condensed milk mixture. If the mixture is too thick, add more milk or water.
4. Fold in chocolate chips and cranberries.
5. Pour the prepared batter in muffin trays and bake for 25-30 minutes at 375 degrees F or 180 degrees C.

Note: The recipe does not include sugar as sweetened condensed milk, chocolate and cranberries provide the required sweetness.

Hanukkah Recipes
Driedel Crafts
Decorating for Hanukkah
DIY Projects
Gift Ideas
Party Planning
Traditional Dinner Menus

Log on to:

www.Celebrating-Hanukkah.com





Paneer Tikka Tree

A twist on the classic Indian dish of Paneer Tikka where juicy chunks of paneer (Indian cheese) is marinated in yogurt and Indian masalas and then grilled to perfection in a traditional Tandoor or at home, on stovetop or in an oven.

Here we add cilantro and mint to the marinade to give the chunks a green color and then serve the Hors d'œuvres dressed as a Christmas tree.

What you will need:

- 400 grams of paneer (available at specialty Indian stores)
- 1 cup yogurt
- 1 cup cilantro, chopped
- ¼ cup mint leaves
- 2-4 Green chilies (optional)
- 1 tsp Garlic paste
- 1 tsp Ginger paste
- 1 tsp Garam masala powder (available at specialty Indian stores)
- 1 tsp Chat masala (available at specialty Indian stores)
- Salt to taste
- 1 large tomato

Blend cilantro, chilies and

mint to form a paste. Add the paste to yogurt. Stir in ginger, garlic, spices and salt and mix well.

Dice paneer in cubes. Chop tomatoes in smaller pieces and cut out a star shape from the top using a paring knife. Marinate paneer and tomatoes in the prepared marinade for 8-10 hours. Spray cooking oil in a pan and grill the marinated paneer and tomatoes.

Serve in a tree shaped dish or in the shape of a tree on a rectangular platter. We have served it in Pfaltzgraff filigree tree-shaped batter.



Festive Chocolate Balls

Two different leftovers created the yummiest chocolate balls in our kitchen and we now share this easy recipe with our readers.

We combined some leftover chocolate buttercream frosting used for frosting a chocolate cake and the remains of a day old cake in the form of crumbs together to form

the tastiest balls ever.

Making the Chocolate Frosting:

You will need:

2 tablespoons butter
1 cup icing sugar
½ cup chocolate chips or pieces

Directions:

Melt chocolate and butter in a microwave or in a double boiler till smooth.

Remove from microwave or heat, allow to cool for 5 minutes before adding sugar

and stir till smooth.

For the Balls:

Mix crumbs from any leftover cake with the frosting to make a mixture that can form balls. Even cakes containing fruits and nuts taste great in these yummy balls.

Roll the prepared balls in crushed peppermint candy.

More Ideas:

You can use cake crumbs to make balls out of any leftover frosting. Chocolate fudge frosting makes especially delicious ones!

Online Resource Guide

Page 6

Kraft Caramels, [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Page 8

Santa Scissors set –
collectionsetc.com

My Little Kitchen Fairies
Collection – efairies.com,
funtocollect.com

Emilia Castillo Ornaments –
Saksfifthavenue.com

Kurt Adler Elvis Stocking –
christmascentral.com

Page 9

Michael Aram Pomegranate
shaker set -
Saksfifthavenue.com

Lavender Drawer liners and
Lotion - crabtree-evelyn.com

French Soaps -
stores.ebay.com/frenchmaison

Page 10

Le Patissier Towels-
www.prairiedog.co.jp

Noritake "Holly & Berry Gold"
Serving Dish – Macys.com

Snowman check basket from
Park designs -
countryporch.com

Page 12

Christmas books for children
– Amazon.com

Page 16

Lilac Lace Dinnerset –
JCPenney.com

GKI Bethlehem ornaments -
christmascentral.com

Page 25

Christmas with Anne, No
Place like Home –
Amazon.com

Royal Albert Pink Roses Lace
Cup and Saucer -
royaldoulton.com

Franciscan Dessert Rose
Teacup and Saucer –
amazon.com

Page 27

BroilKing Multi-level warmer –
JCPenney.com

Spode Baking Days Oven to
Table bakeware – Macys.com

Page 28

Pfaltzgraff tall dessert server
– Pfaltzgraff.com

Page 31

Debbie Mumm Woodland
Santa – eBay.com

Page 32

Debbie Mumm Poinsettia and
Christmas Joy - eBay.com

Page 34/35

Waverly Toile Print Double
sided Wrapping paper -
eBay.com

Page 63

Large Plate – Pfaltzgraff Silk
Rose Dinner Plate -
Pfaltzgraff.com

Wedgwood Queen's Plain
Dessert plate –
Wedgwood.com

Page 64

Wedgwood Ralph Lauren
Claire Bread Plate –
Wedgwood.com

Page 65

Pfaltzgraff Silk Rose Dinner
Plate - Pfaltzgraff.com

Page 67

Pfaltzgraff Filigree tree
Shaped Platter -
Pfaltzgraff.com

Replacements.com

We find replacements.com a
very useful resource to find
lost, broken or missing china.
If your dinner set is missing a
few items, trace your pattern
at replacements.com and
complete your set before you
host your Christmas dinner.

They charge only minimal flat
rate shipping for orders
totaling to any amount.

Celebrate the Season

with Dot Com Women!

RECIPES

TREE DECOR

CRAFTS

FAMILY
ACTIVITIES

PARTY
THEMES

DIY
PROJECTS

DECORATING

HOLIDAY
TIPS



Celebrate the Holiday Season with
Dot Com Women - Internet's Leading Women's Portal

www.DotComWomen.com