



# Holiday Traditions

November 2021  
A Special Supplement to

**Lake Okeechobee News**

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- Recipes | Gift Ideas
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- Holiday Tips | And So Much More!

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# Holiday Traditions

## WHO WE ARE:

Lake Okeechobee News' annual section **Holiday Traditions** publishes just in time for Thanksgiving to kick off the holidays. Featuring recipes, gift giving ideas, shopping tips and more, this special section will have you feeling festive in no time! In addition to this print edition, the special section is available online for one full year at [southcentralfloralife.com/holiday!](http://southcentralfloralife.com/holiday!)

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# Five ways to support small businesses this holiday season

**S**mall businesses long have been the heart and soul of local communities. There is something to be said about being on a first-name basis with a local restaurateur or another small business owner, as such familiarity often translates into exemplary service.

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses account for 99.9 percent of companies in the country, due in large part to the broad definition of small businesses (those with fewer than 500 employees). However, the vast majority of businesses in the United States have a staff that's smaller than 20 workers, according to the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council. These firms employ nearly 60 million workers, says the SBA.

Despite the prevalence of small businesses, fewer than 80 percent of entrepreneurial small business ventures make it beyond their first year, and only around half make it beyond five years.

Consumers who want to help their favorite small businesses survive can use the holiday season and beyond to set the course for success. Consumers can make a concerted effort to fuel this important cog in their local economic engines.

**SHOP LOCAL.** The concept is simple but effective. Opting to shop in local stores over larger conglomerates and franchises can help small businesses take root. Before making holiday shopping lists, visit local stores and base gift ideas on items they have in stock. Chances are those gifts will be one-of-a-kind.

**PURCHASE GIFT CARDS/CERTIFICATES.** All businesses have slow periods, and post-holidays is often a time when sales stagnate. Gift cards may bring new customers into local businesses who might otherwise not have patronized them, potentially creating new repeat customers.

**CATER HOLIDAY MEALS AND GATHERINGS.** The holiday season is chock-full of entertainment opportunities. Individuals can rely on nearby restaurants and other food and beverage businesses to cater holiday parties. Some businesses also may be willing to discount or donate food for nonprofit group activities, such as church holiday bazaars, school holiday concerts or fundraising fairs.

**MENTION SMALL BUSINESSES ON SOCIAL MEDIA.** The holiday season breeds excitement. Therefore, when shoppers are in local stores, they can snap pictures of products and overflowing shopping bags and post them online while praising local businesses.

**THINK ABOUT SUBSCRIPTION GIFTS.** Enrollment in a health club or a massage therapy service are gifts that keep on giving for the recipient, but also help ensure consistent incoming cash for the business providing the service.

When shopping this holiday season, consumers can look to the small, local businesses in their communities that help make towns and cities unique.



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# Add grapes to your holiday gatherings

FAMILY FEATURES

Add a special touch this holiday season with simple yet stunning small plates that add beauty and flavor to gatherings with friends and family.

Available into January, California grapes offer a way to make the season special as an ingredient in your favorite recipes or as decoration for a festive centerpiece. Pops of red, green and black provide a seasonal touch and they're perfect as an easy, fresh, healthy snack.

Plus, you can dip grapes in nut butter and finish with coatings of coconut, dark chocolate and almonds to make these Peanut Butter Grape Bites for a holiday treat that's simply divine – without spending hours in the kitchen.

Visit [grapesfromcalifornia.com](http://grapesfromcalifornia.com) to find more holiday recipe inspiration.

## Peanut Butter Grape Bites

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 5 minutes

Yield: 12 pieces

- 12 California grapes, chilled
- 1/3 cup natural peanut or almond butter
- 1/4 cup shredded coconut
- 1/4 cup chopped dark chocolate
- 1/4 cup chopped almonds

Place sheet of wax paper on baking sheet. Dip each grape in nut butter to coat half then dip in either coconut, dark chocolate or chopped almonds. Transfer to sheet then chill until ready to serve.



**Nutritional analysis per serving:** 70 calories; 2 g protein; 4 g carbohydrates; 5 g fat (64% calories from fat); 1.5 g saturated fat (19% calories from saturated fat); 0 mg cholesterol; 25 mg sodium; 1 g fiber.



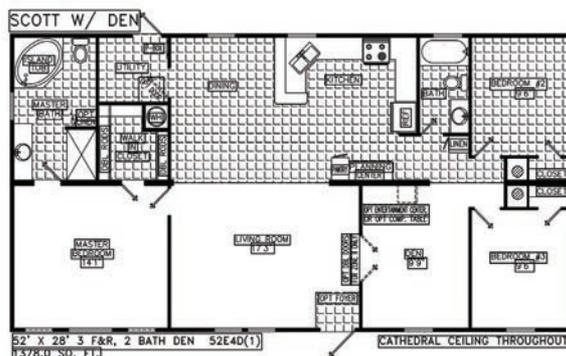
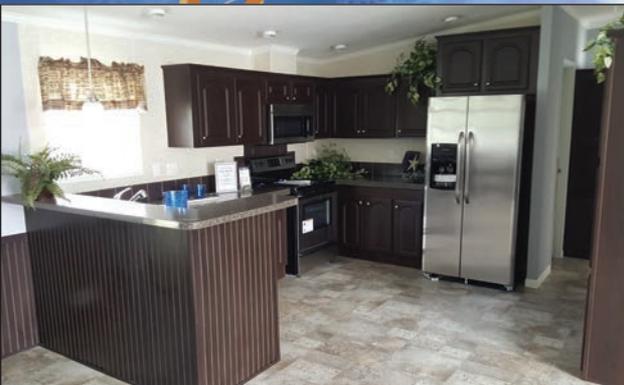
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# Special centerpieces for holiday celebrations

## FAMILY FEATURES

**F**ew things bring family and friends together quite like the holidays, and serving up an elegant, seasonal meal centered around a mouthwatering main dish is a recipe for creating lasting memories with the ones you love.

Forging a fabulous holiday experience for the special people in your life starts with choosing a flavorful, tender cut of meat to serve as the centerpiece of the meal. Hand-cut by expert butchers, options like Spiral-Sliced Ham, Boneless Heart of Prime Rib Roast and Butcher's Cut Filet Mignons from Omaha Steaks can serve as the focal point of a memorable holiday dinner. Flash frozen to capture freshness and flavor, you can select a standout cut of meat from the comfort of your home and have it delivered directly to your door in time to put together a tender, juicy main course.

Find more holiday recipe inspiration at [OmahaSteaks.com/blog/recipes](https://OmahaSteaks.com/blog/recipes).

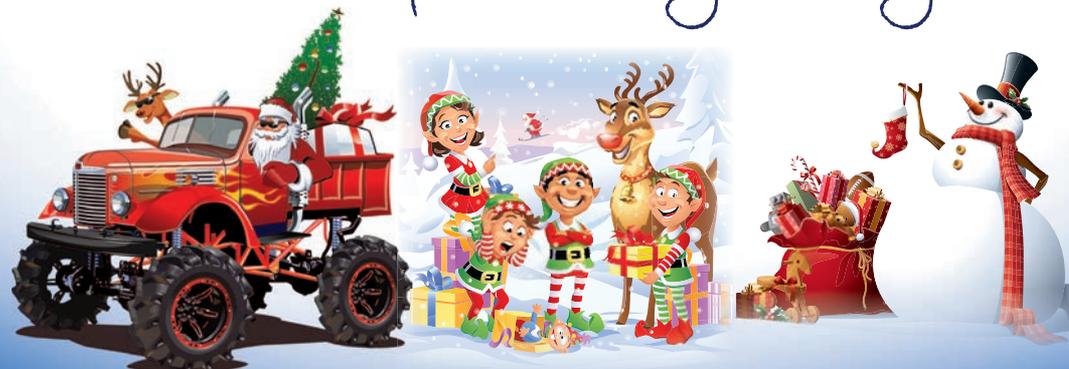


Rum and Cola Holiday Ham



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## Rum and Cola Holiday Ham

Recipe courtesy of Omaha Steaks Executive Chef David Rose  
 Prep time: 30 minutes  
 Cook time: 80 minutes  
 Servings: 10-12

**Ham:**  
 1 Omaha Steaks Spiral-Sliced Ham (8 pounds)

**Glaze:**  
 1 cup cherry fruit spread  
 3/4 cup dark spiced rum  
 3/4 cup cola  
 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce  
 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

To make ham: Thaw frozen ham in refrigerator 24-48 hours. Remove from refrigerator and let ham come to room temperature, about 30-45 minutes. Preheat oven to 325 F. Remove ham from foil and film. Return ham to foil wrapping and place in oven-safe roasting pan. Roll foil down leaving 2 inches of foil around bottom of ham. Place roasting pan with ham in oven on lower rack and heat uncovered 60-75 minutes, until ham starts to brown. While ham cooks, make glaze.

To make glaze: In medium saucepot, whisk fruit spread, rum, cola, Worcestershire sauce, Dijon mustard and salt until well incorporated. Bring to boil then reduce heat to medium. Simmer over medium heat 10 minutes then remove from heat. Cool to room temperature.

During last 15 minutes of cooking, glaze ham every 5 minutes.



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## Dijon-Herb Prime Rib Roast with Garlic Butter Mushrooms

Recipe courtesy of Omaha Steaks Executive Chef David Rose

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 3 hours

Servings: 4-6

### Dijon-Herb Rub:

- 1/4 cup minced fresh Italian parsley
- 1/4 cup minced fresh oregano
- 1/4 cup minced fresh thyme leaves
- 1/4 cup minced fresh rosemary leaves
- 3 fresh garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika

### Prime Rib Roast:

- 1 Omaha Steaks Boneless Heart of Prime Rib Roast (4 pounds), thawed
- kosher salt, to taste
- ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup canola oil

### Garlic Butter Mushrooms:

- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup small diced yellow onion
- 4 fresh garlic cloves, minced
- 1 pound button mushrooms, cleaned and quartered
- 1 pinch kosher salt, plus additional, to taste, divided
- 1 pinch ground black pepper, plus additional, to taste, divided
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup finely chopped Italian parsley

To make rub: In medium bowl, whisk parsley, oregano, thyme, rosemary, garlic, Dijon mustard, oil, salt, black pepper and paprika until well incorporated.

To make prime rib roast: Pat prime rib roast dry on all sides with paper towels. Season generously with salt and pepper, to taste. Allow roast to come to room temperature about 30 minutes.

Rub Dijon herb rub all over prime rib roast and allow to stand 10 minutes.

Preheat oven to 250 F.

In large cast-iron pan, warm oil over medium-high heat.

Sear roast on all sides until golden brown, 2-3 minutes per side.

Place seared prime rib on wire rack-lined sheet pan and place in oven.

Cook until internal temperature is 10 F below desired cooking doneness.

Rest 15-20 minutes before slicing.

To make mushrooms: In large pan, warm olive oil over medium-high heat. Add diced onions and saute about 1 minute.

Add minced garlic and lightly saute until fragrant, about 20 seconds.

Add mushrooms and pinch of salt and ground pepper to pan. Saute 3-4 minutes, or until mushrooms are tender.

Add chicken stock and reduce to one-third in volume, 3-4 minutes.

Add butter and parsley to pan and saute until butter is melted and incorporated. Immediately remove from heat and season, to taste, with salt and pepper.

Serve mushrooms with prime rib roast.



*Merry Christmas*

*May this Christmas  
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## Suya-Dusted Filet Mignon with “Red Rice” Risotto

Recipe courtesy of Omaha Steaks Executive Chef David Rose

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour

Servings: 4

**Suya Dust:**

- 2 cups roasted cashews
- 1 tablespoon chicken bouillon
- 1 tablespoon, plus 1 teaspoon, smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons onion powder

**“Red Rice” Risotto:**

- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 cup diced yellow onion
- 3 fresh garlic cloves, smashed
- 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 large beefsteak tomato (about 1/2 pound), chopped
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus additional, to taste, divided (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper, plus additional, to taste, divided (optional)

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups Arborio rice
- 4 cups warmed chicken stock, divided
- 1/2 cup finely chopped Italian parsley
- 1 cup freshly shredded Parmesan cheese

**Filet Mignon:**

- 4 Omaha Steaks Butcher’s Cut Filet Mignons (6 ounces each)
- kosher salt
- ground black pepper
- 4 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 thyme sprig

To make suya dust: In food processor, blend cashews, chicken bouillon, paprika, cayenne pepper, bell pepper, black pepper, ginger, garlic powder and onion powder into fine powder.

To make “red rice” risotto: In medium saucepan, warm canola oil over medium-high heat. Add onions, garlic and red bell pepper, sauteing until lightly caramelized, about 1 minute.

Add tomato paste to pan and saute until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add chopped tomato, Worcestershire sauce, paprika, 1 teaspoon kosher salt and 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper; continue sauteing until tomato starts to break down and soften, 3-4 minutes. Reduce heat to simmer and cook 3-4 minutes.

Remove from heat and finely blend in food processor. Set aside.



In separate medium saucepan, warm olive oil and butter over medium-high heat.

Add Arborio rice and stir until slightly nutty and translucent, about 1 minute.

Add pureed tomato-pepper mixture and 1 cup chicken stock; bring to boil then reduce heat to medium.

Add 1 cup stock each time Arborio rice absorbs almost all broth. Continuously stir risotto each time stock is added to rice. Keep adding stock until risotto is al dente and still viscous then stir in parsley and Parmesan cheese. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper, if desired.

To make filet mignon: Pat steaks dry with paper towels and liberally season with salt and ground black pepper on both sides.

In large cast-iron skillet, warm canola oil over medium-high heat.

Place filets in skillet and sear 3 minutes.

Flip steaks and add butter, garlic clove and thyme. Baste steaks with butter and allow filets to finish cooking, 3-4 minutes for medium-rare doneness.

Rest filets 7-8 minutes. Serve over “red rice” risotto and sprinkle suya dust over filets.

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# A guide to picking the perfect fresh Christmas tree

Come the holiday season, perhaps no tradition evokes the warm and fuzzy “feels” more than a family outing to pick a Christmas tree. Whether it’s a trek to a live Christmas tree farm or a short drive to the nearest pre-cut tree lot, the process of selecting a tree that will serve as the crown jewel of the entire season is a great way to make lasting memories.

Selecting a tree is a yearly ritual and each person has his or her set of criteria for what makes the ideal Christmas tree. These tips can help families find the right tree.

## Choose your species

Do some homework on the type of tree you want prior to buying the tree. Balsam fir and fraser fir are popular Christmas tree varieties, but there are many others, such as noble fir and Norway spruce. Balsams are known for having the most fragrant smell, but frasers tend to keep their needles the longest. For those who prefer a douglas fir, keep in mind that they sometimes drop their needles prematurely due to foliar diseases like needle-cast fungus.

## Space for ornaments

In addition to aroma and needle

longevity, look for trees that have a desirable shape and allow for adequate space between branches, advises the home and garden resource The Spruce. Trees groomed to be lush and full will look beautiful unadorned, but once ornaments are added, full branches may cause those ornaments to hang low or even fall off. Trees with sparse branches allow for ornaments to hang straight.

## Measure your space

Trees in the field or in a lot may look much smaller than they do when brought into the living room. Don’t make the mistake of selecting a tree that is too large for your home. The agricultural firm Ragan & Masey says to measure the room from floor to ceiling and subtract the height of the tree stand and tree topper. It’s equally important to measure the width of the area where the tree will stand and allow for ample space for foot traffic around the tree.

## Perform a needle check

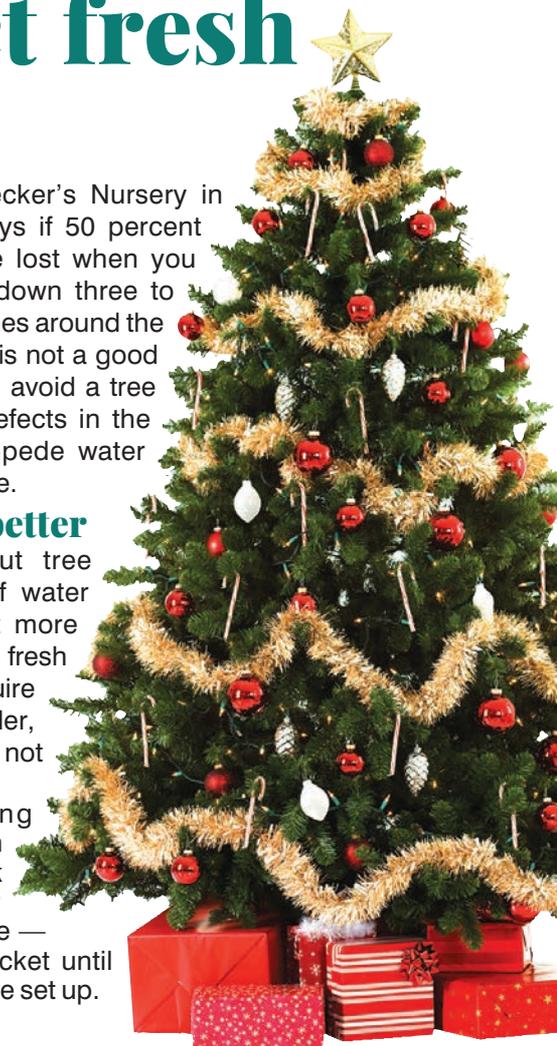
Every tree will drop some needles, and most evergreens hold their foliage. Modest needle loss is not an indicator of a poor

tree. However, Decker’s Nursery in Greenlawn, NY says if 50 percent of the needles are lost when you swipe your hand down three to five different branches around the tree, the tree likely is not a good choice. In addition, avoid a tree that has glaring defects in the trunk as it can impede water flow through the tree.

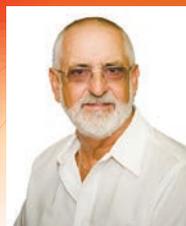
## Heavier is better

A heavy pre-cut tree means it is full of water and has been cut more recently. A healthy, fresh tree is going to require an effort to lift. Older, dried out trees will not be heavy.

Upon arriving home, make a fresh cut off the tree trunk and get it in water as soon as possible — even if that’s a bucket until the tree stand can be set up.



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# Great holiday gifts for retirees who can't wait to travel

**R**etirement provides a chance for adults who have worked throughout their lives to take a step back, relax and enjoy the fruits of their labors. Though the most indelible image associated with retirement might once have been a rocking chair, modern retirees like to get up and go, and holiday shoppers can take that joie de vivre into consideration as they look for the perfect gift for retirees who can't wait to fly the friendly skies or hit the open road.

**Maps:** It might seem simple, but roadmaps can be an ideal gift for retirees. A recent poll from RBC Wealth Management found that 63 percent of Americans age 50 and older say travel is an important retirement goal. Roadmaps of their own country or a foreign country can help seniors plan their dream vacations. Seniors can study maps and create their own routes as they visit popular tourist attractions and find lesser known locales along the way.

**Vouchers/gift cards:** Airline vouchers can inspire retirees to take to the skies and visit locales that have long taken up real estate on their bucket lists. If seniors prefer to take to the open road, hotel vouchers or Visa gift cards that can be spent anywhere that accepts credit cards can help pay for gas, meals or entry to popular parks and tourist attractions.

**Projector and portable screen:** Retirees may want to get away from it all, but that doesn't mean they have to leave everything behind. A projector and portable screen can let on-the-go seniors enjoy movie night under the stars or watch their favorite teams even when they're far from home. This can be an especially good gift for retirees who are anxious to gas up their RV and leave home behind for a few weeks.

**Lifetime pass to world-renowned parks:** All United States citizens or permanent residents are eligible for the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Senior Pass, which provides access to more than 2,000 recreation sites across the country.



Those sites are managed by federal agencies like the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation, among others. A similar system is in place in Canada, where adults age 65 and up can gain unlimited admission for a full year to more than 80 Parks Canada locations across the country.

**Tablet:** Of course, retirees may still want to enjoy some of the comforts of home while they're off in parts unknown. A new tablet can help traveling retirees read the latest bestsellers and stay in touch with family and friends via video conferencing apps like Zoom. Many campgrounds and hotels now provide free WiFi to guests, so a tablet can be just what on-the-go retirees need to stay connected to life back home.

Holiday shoppers can make the season bright for their favorite retirees who can't wait to spend their newfound free time traveling the world.

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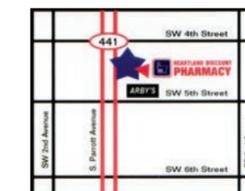
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## Three holiday crafts families can make together

**D**ecorating for the holidays can be made even more special when decorations are handmade creations families can cherish for years to come. Holiday crafting is an enjoyable way to pass some time and create lasting holiday traditions and memories. The following are some crafts families can make together.

### Personalized elf

For families who want to make their own personalized elf dolls, all it takes is a little comput-

er knowledge, some clever photo work and a some sewing skills. Find a template for a rag doll sewing pattern or an illustration of an elf online. Superimpose an image of your child's face on the template in a photo editing program. Print out the entire image onto iron-on fabric transfer paper. Iron it on to a light-colored piece of fabric from the craft store according to the product directions. Cut out the fabric with ironed-on decal, leaving about a one-inch margin to allow

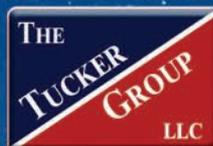
for sewing and eventual stuffing. Duplicate the shape of the doll onto another piece of fabric to make the back of the elf doll. Place the front elf image face down on the back piece of fabric and sew the edges together, leaving a small opening at the end. Using that opening, flip the elf right-side out and stuff with pillow fill material. Sew the small opening closed and enjoy a personalized elf doll for the holidays.

# Merry Christmas

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

*Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son; and he called his name JESUS.*

**Matthew 1:23-25**



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### Holiday candle

This craft is attractive and also smells good. Gather one bar of fragrant soap (like Irish spring); a small, white washcloth; red and green ribbon; a round of colorful mesh or tulle fabric measuring roughly 12 inches or enough to wrap your bar of soap; craft glue; a piece of yellow felt cut to look like a flame; and one or two sewing pins. Roll the washcloth into a cylinder shape to serve as the “wick” of the candle. Glue the edges together and wrap a piece of ribbon diagonally around the wick and adhere to secure even further. Glue the felt flame to the top of the wick. Place the soap in the center of the round piece of fabric. Attach the wick vertically to the soap using the pins. Then gather the tops of the mesh fabric around the base of the wick and use another piece of ribbon to tie into a bow and secure the fabric to the wick base.

The soap and pins should now be concealed. Place the “candle” out of direct sunlight and away from heat, preferably on a little dish so the soap will not damage any furniture.

### Growth indicator ornament

Purchase a large glass or plastic Christmas tree ball. Select an acrylic paint in your color of choice and squirt some into a paper plate. Have a child dip his or her hand into the paint and then transfer the handprint to the ornament. Let dry and then attach a ribbon to hang on the tree. Through the years see how much children have grown from that little handprint.

## The most popular gift 25 years ago

It's easy for adults to experience a little nostalgia when holiday shopping for their children. The holiday season has long been considered a special time of year, and much of that magic can be traced to the joy kids feel when unwrapping gifts from mom, dad and, of course, Santa Claus. Many parents who now have youngsters at home grew up in the 1990s. When such moms and dads are shopping for holiday gifts this season, they might wonder what was the must-have item for them back when they anxiously awaited the arrival of Christmas morning? According to Insider.com, who worked in conjunction with the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, 1996 was the year of “Tickle Me Elmo.”

This ticklish toy was the most sought-after item of the 1996 holiday season, and it was so popular that retailers experienced shortages. Those shortages led to some surprising sales on the secondary market, with figures that will undoubtedly drop some jaws even now, a quarter century after the Tickle Me Elmo craze erupted. Though the Tickle Me Elmo doll retailed for around \$30 in 1996, some parents intent on getting their youngsters the most in-demand gift that year reportedly spent more than \$1,000 on a single doll.

To put that latter figure into perspective, data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis indicates that the average price of a new car in 1996 was \$18,525. And according to Yahoo! Finance, drivers in the market for a used car in 1996 could have purchased a 1986 four-door Oldsmobile for just over \$2,600.

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# Classic holiday films families can enjoy together



The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Few traditions may elicit more collective belly laughs than holiday movie night, a tradition in millions of households across the globe. Families can consider these classic holiday films as they plan family movie night this holiday season.

**“Miracle on 34th Street” (1947):** This classic is centered around a man named “Kris Kringle” (Edmund Gwenn) who claims to be the real Santa Claus after a successful stint as a

department store Santa in midtown Manhattan. A trial to determine if Mr. Kringle is telling the truth soon follows. This version of the tale has earned a 96 percent rating on the popular film review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes.

**“A Christmas Story” (1983):** Though it airs all day long on Christmas on the cable television network TBS, families can get a head-start on that marathon

and watch the film uninterrupted whenever they choose. Families can laugh together as 9-year-old Ralphie (Peter Billingsley) hopes to unwrap his official Red Ryder BB gun on Christmas morning. The film, which boasts an 89 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, includes a memorable performance by Darren McGavin, who plays Ralphie’s father.

**“Babes In Toyland” (1934):** Also known as “March of the Wooden Soldiers,” this nearly century-old classic stars the legendary comedy

duo Laurel and Hardy as two helpful tenants living in Mother Peep’s shoe in Toyland.

**“How the Grinch Stole Christmas” (1967):** An animated version of the Dr. Seuss classic, this film has entertained scores of children since it was first released more than 50 years ago.

**“Holiday Inn” (1942):** Hollywood legends Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire star in this classic that is perhaps most remembered for introducing the Irving Berlin classic “White Christmas” to the masses. The film boasts a 100 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes and has something for fans of song, dance and romance.

**“Arthur Christmas” (2011):** Not all Christmas films date back to the 20th century. This animated tale tells the story of Yuletide (voiced by James McAvoy), Santa’s youngest son who is thrust into the Christmas Eve business of delivering presents when his father fails to deliver a present to one child out of the hundreds of millions of kids on his list.

**“A Christmas Carol” (1951):** Many holiday season celebrants cannot imagine letting a season go by without watching at least one adaptation of Charles Dickens’ classic tale. The 1951 version is widely considered the most faithful to Dickens’ 1843 novella that recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge. Alastair Sim stars as Scrooge, and many consider his performance the best of any actor to take a turn as the notorious 19th century miser.

## Happy Holidays



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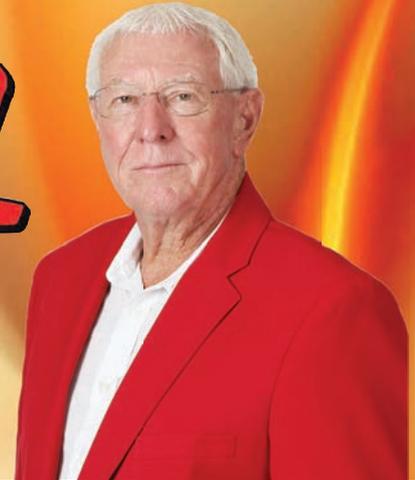
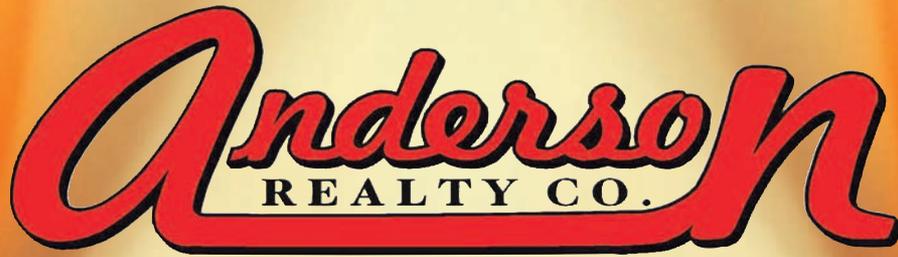
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# Great homemade food gifts

**G**ifts from the heart are among the most coveted and appreciated come the holiday season. Hobbyists from all walks of life can turn their passions into handmade gifts, but few gifts may be as welcomed as those that can be eaten.

Cooking and baking ramps up during the holiday season. People can turn extra time in the kitchen into opportunities to create festive treats that are ideal for gifting. But which items are the best of the best? Even though tastes are singular, these items will appeal to most foodies and others on your gift list.

**Jams and preserves:** Fruit jams and preserves are versatile foods. They are as at home on toast and biscuits as they are as fillings in cookies and tarts. Jams and preserves can be made with relatively few ingredients and work well with seasonal fruits.

**Cinnamon rolls:** Warm, sticky and full of aromatic spice, cinnamon rolls are the perfect comfort foods. These rolls do not typically have a long shelf life, so be sure to present them promptly before they get stale.

**Pancakes (or cookies) in a jar:** If you have a fantastic recipe that you can't resist sharing, try turning it into a gift. Measure and package the ingredients into mason jars, tie with ribbons and include directions for preparation and cooking.

**Mini bundt cakes:** Fruit cakes may be a

holiday standard, but bundt cakes make for great and traditional offerings as well. Miniature bundts filled with chocolate chips, dried fruits or even those soaked in a favorite boozy-butter glaze can be moist and delicious.

**Chocolate barks or fudges:** Seasonal flavors can come to life in chocolate treats. White chocolate filled with peppermint pieces or dark chocolate and cherry chunks are tasty pairings. Break apart portions of the bark or cut the fudge with cookie cutters and gift inside cello bags tied with ribbons or in cardboard candy boxes.

**Cocktail syrups:** Create spicy or sweet syrups that are tailor-made for enhancing cocktails. Anyone on your gift list can then become a master mixologist.

**Shortbread cookie ornaments:** Circular shortbread cookies can be decorated with royal icing to look like Christmas ornaments. They can be eaten or even placed on trees to complete holiday decor.

**Festive cookie pops:** Cookie pops can be made by mixing homemade or pre-purchased crumbled cake with frosting or softened cream cheese and formed into balls. Insert a lollipop stick and dip the balls into melted chocolate or candy melts. Sprinkles, nonpareils or luster dust can be used to enhance the covered pops.

Food gifts are perfect for the holiday season. Handmade treats from the heart show loved ones how just much you care.



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# How to make the most of Small Business Saturday

Gifts and gatherings take center stage come the holiday season. The holiday season begins on Thanksgiving and continues until New Year's Day. During that time, families gather to exchange gifts, break bread, celebrate their faith, and toast the year to come.

The good times and gatherings that are such a big part of the holiday season were absent from many celebrations in 2020. Though the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, the successful rollout of various vaccines should make the coming holiday season feel more normal. That means gift exchanges and gatherings are back in play. Savvy celebrants recognize the benefits of shopping early, and Small Business Saturday is a great chance to get back in the holiday swing of things while supporting the local businesses that make communities so unique.

Plan ahead. Small Business Saturday takes place each year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving in the United States. Since its inception in 2010, Small Business Saturday has grown in popularity. American Express estimates that 110 million people participated in Small Business Saturday in 2019, which underscores how shoppers can benefit from planning ahead. Research sales and inventories of local businesses you want to support so you're ready to go come Saturday morning. Doing your homework can make it easier to navigate the crowds.

Reserve a table at your favorite restaurant. A great meal with friends and family can be an ideal way to cap off a day of shopping, and it's a great way to support a local restaurant. It's worth noting that a National Today survey of 1,000 shoppers that focused on Small Business Saturday shopping habits found that food and groceries were the most popular things to buy local. Saturday is traditionally a popular night to dine out, and that popularity is even



greater on Small Business Saturday. Shoppers can ensure they aren't waiting for a table by booking a reservation in advance.

Check your social media feeds. Many small businesses have recognized the value of communicating directly with consumers through their social media feeds. Throughout the day, shoppers can keep an eye on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to learn about special sales or events. In addition, shoppers can share their shopping experiences via their own feeds. Many small businesses rely on word-of-mouth from existing customers, so this can be another way to show your support for the establishments that call your community home.

Small Business Saturday is a great way to begin the holiday shopping season on the right foot.

I CAME FOR YOU  
~ JESUS

THE PEOPLE WALKING IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT.

Isaiah 9:2 NIV

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# 'Tis the season for gingerbread cookies

**T**radition plays a big role during the holiday season. Food is at the center of many families' traditions, which may include big family dinners and Sunday brunches together.

Holiday baking sessions also hold a sacred spot in many households. Such sessions are a great opportunity for adults and children to have some fun in the kitchen and create some tasty treats the whole family can enjoy.

Baked goods devotees may find it hard to imagine the holidays without gingerbread, and this recipe for Soft Glazed Gingerbread from Elisabeth M. Prueitt and Chad Robertson's "Tartine" (Chronicle Books) can ensure the whole family enjoys this holiday season staple.

## Soft Glazed Gingerbread

**Yields 12 to 20 cookies**

### Dough

- 3 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 4 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> teaspoons ground cloves
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cup blackstrap or other dark molasses
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup

### Glaze

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons water

To make the dough, stir together the flour, cocoa powder, ginger, cloves, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, and pepper in a mixing bowl. Set aside. Using a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium-high speed until creamy. Slowly add the granulated sugar and mix on medium speed until the mixture is completely smooth and soft. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Add the egg and mix well.

Add the molasses and corn syrup and beat until incorporated. Stop the mixer again and scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the flour mixture and beat on low speed until a dough forms that pulls away from the sides of the bowl and all the ingredients are well incorporated. Remove the dough from the bowl, flatten it on a large piece of plastic wrap into a rectangle about 1 inch thick, cover the dough with the plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper on a nonstick liner.

Unwrap the dough and place on a floured work surface. If using a plaque with a design, roll out the dough 1U3-inch thick, lightly dust the top with flour, press your cookie molds over the dough, and then cut out the shapes with a small knife and place on the prepared baking sheet, spacing them about 1 inch apart. Alternatively, using the



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mold as a guide, cut around it with a small knife, flip the mold over so the design is facing you, and place the dough over it, pressing it into the design. Unmold the shapes onto the prepared baking sheet, leaving about 1 inch between them.

If using a patterned rolling pin, lightly dust the lined baking sheet with flour and transfer the dough to the pan. Lightly dust the top of the dough with flour and roll it into a rectangle about 1/3-inch thick with a plain pin. Then, using the patterned pin, roll over the dough with enough pressure to ensure a clear impression of the design. Trim the sides with a small knife. It is not necessary to cut into smaller sizes before baking.

Bake the cookies until lightly golden along the sides but still soft to the touch in the centers, 7 to 15 minutes. The timing will depend on the size of the individual cookies, or if you have made a single large patterned piece that will be cut after baking.

While the cookies are baking, prepare the glaze. In a small bowl, whisk together the confectioners' sugar and water until smooth.

When the cookies are ready, remove from the oven and let cool in the pan on a wire rack for about 10 minutes. Then, while the cookies are still warm, using even strokes, brush a light coat of glaze on the top of each cookie, evenly covering it. Let the cookies cool completely. When the glaze dries, it should leave a shiny, opaque finish. If you have used a patterned pin to make a single large plaque, cut into the desired sizes with a small, very sharp knife. The cookies will keep in an airtight container in a cool place for about 2 weeks. They do not freeze well, however, as the glaze becomes watery when they are thawed. HL21A337

## Make Chanukah special with these traditions

**F**or eight nights each winter, candles burn in commemoration of a miraculous and joyous event. Chanukah, often referred to as the Festival of Lights, commemorates an ancient miracle that occurred after the Jewish people waged a hard-fought battle against religious oppression.

A small contingent of Jewish warriors led by Judah Maccabee rebelled against Syrian Greek rulers who desecrated the holy Second Temple in Jerusalem and tortured and persecuted those who did not adopt their religious beliefs. After the Maccabees came out victorious, they set out to rededicate the Temple, which included lighting a menorah. They could only find enough oil for the candelabra to burn for one night. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight nights and the Temple was kept holy. This miracle is the inspiration for Chanukah.

Various iconic Chanukah traditions have been borne out of that evening in 164 BCE. Below are some of the most prominent traditions associated with Chanukah festivities.

### Lighting the menorah

The menorah is traditionally a seven-branched candelabra

lit by ritually-pure olive oil used in Jewish places of worship. However, in commemoration of the Chanukah miracle, a special menorah, called a hanukkiah, is used. This menorah is a nine-branched version that enables a candle to be lit for each day the rededicated Temple candles burned. The middle, highest candle from which the others are lit is called the shamash. The hanukkiah is traditionally placed in a visible space, such as the front window of celebrants' homes.

### Playing with the dreidel

Jews were forbidden from studying their own religious texts like the Torah, but they found ways to do so anyway. They would quickly hide their books and take out spinning tops to pretend to be playing with them when the Greeks were watching. In commemoration, these little tops, or dreidels, are taken out on Chanukah. The dreidels are marked with four Hebrew letters, which represent the phrase "nes gadol haya sham," or "a great miracle happened there."

### Eating fried foods

Frying foods in olive oil has become tradition and a way to acknowledge the miraculous Temple oil burning. Jelly-filled



doughnuts called "sufganiyot" are popular, as are latkes, which are fried potato pancakes.

### Donations and gifts

In addition to Chanukah gelt (small chocolate coins) and money given out to children and adults, many Jewish families make "tzedakah" (donations) to nonprofits and other charitable organizations during Chanukah. The sixth night of Chanukah has recently become associated with charitable giving and other gifting.

### Family time

In addition to these traditions, Chanukah is an ideal opportunity for Jewish family members to gather under one roof. It also may be an opportunity for them to share their celebrations and religious customs with non-Jewish friends.

Chanukah is a celebratory time that looks back to a significant miracle in Jewish history. It's an opportunity to engage in many different traditions with family and friends.

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

*Isaiah 9:6*



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

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