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Holiday

BONANZA

INSIDE

*Cocktails
and
Mocktails*

**CHRISTMAS IN
A MEXICAN
HOUSEHOLD**

25 MOVIES
UNTIL CHRISTMAS



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THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Christmas Around the World

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KIM STANFORD

Christmas is celebrated all around the world, but many countries have different Christmas traditions. Here is an overview of some traditions practiced in other countries.

AUSTRALIA:

It is tradition in the weeks before Christmas to join in Christmas picnics organized by various churches and sing Christmas carols on the beach. Since the season is during summertime in Australia, families often gather at the beach.

BRAZIL:

A ‘presepio’, a crib or nativity scene, is usually found in front of a church. ‘Papai Noel’, or Father Christmas, travels from Greenland to Brazil to give presents to Brazilian kids. Many cities display Christmas trees during the month before and often the year ends with a fireworks celebration.

The floating Christmas tree in Rio de Janeiro is said to be the largest Christmas tree in the world (in 2019). ‘Bom Natal’ or ‘Boas Festes’ means Merry Christmas.

FRANCE:

In many regions in France, Christmas starts December 6th with St. Nicholas day. Children get sweets and little gifts. On Christmas eve, children put their polished shoes in front of the chimney hoping ‘Père Noël’ (Father Christmas) fills their shoes with sweets. December 25th is a public holiday and families get together for a big feast. Presents are also exchanged on this day.

GERMANY:

Weeks before Christmas, festive Christmas markets are set up in main squares in many cities. Houses are usually decorated with lights and ornaments in December. However, the Christmas tree is usually put and decorated on the morning of December 24th. Christmas celebrations start on Christmas Eve. December 26th is

a public holiday, and many families celebrate together, go to church or enjoy a trip to nearby park.

ICELAND:

Children put their shoes on the windowsill so the ‘Jule-tide Lads’, Santa Claus, fills the shoes with little goodies. Christmas celebrations start on December 24th. Families get together and enjoy good food and many go to midnight mass.

ISRAEL:

Although the story of Christmas took place in Israel, Christmas is not widely celebrated. Approximately 2.5 percent of Israel’s people are Christians. Christmas is not a public holiday and for most people it is a regular working day. The Jewish festival of Hanukkah is celebrated about the same time as Christmas. This year it will be celebrated December 10th until the evening of December 18th. There is not a public holiday for Hanukkah either.

ITALY:

A nativity scene, a ‘presepe’, is usually put up in churches, town squares, and many homes – it is considered the most important part of Christmas decorations for many. ‘Babbo Natale’ (Father Christmas) hands out presents to children on Christmas Day. Many families exchange gifts only on January 6th which is the Day of Epiphany.

JAMAICA:

Part of the Christmas celebration starts on Christmas Eve with the Grand Market. It is cross between a festival and market. During the day people shop for things like food, sweets, and toys. Around 6:00 p.m. the Grand Market transforms into a celebration and party which lasts until the next morning. People may go to Midnight Mass after the Grand Market or go to church service on Christmas day before the end of the Grand Market.

MALI:

Although a mainly Muslim country, Christmas is an official public holiday. Most Christmas celebrations take place in churches. The festivities start on Christmas Eve with an all-night service. Children and women memorize Bible verses and recite them on Christmas day at church. During Christmas Eve service, each language group sings a song in their language. Most people do not give and receive presents on

Christmas in Mali. Normally, only rich families practice this.

PHILIPPINES:

There is a special tradition of having a Christmas lantern, which is called ‘paról’. The lantern is star-shaped for the star of Bethlehem and is mainly made of bamboo and paper.

PORTUGAL:

Christmas is celebrated on 24th of December. Houses are decorated for Christmas and many families put up a nativity scene (presépio), where Baby Jesus is added to the crib after the family attends Midnight mass. Children put out their shoes for Baby Jesus, not Santa, and gifts are exchanged after the family has attended a Christmas service on Christmas eve. In some towns and villages, the community gathers around a fire in the church parking lot which has been lit and wish each other ‘Feliz Natal’. Christmas markets are not common in Portugal; however, the capital city Lisbon is known for its huge artificial tree which is decorated with thousands of green lights.

SINGAPORE:

About two in ten people are Christians. Christmas, however, is very commercialized in Singapore and Christmas decorations are abundant in the city. Stunning decorations can be seen everywhere in the main shopping district.

SOUTH AFRICA:

People celebrate Christmas on December 25th. On Christmas Day the family gathers at a ‘braai’, which is the South African version of a barbecue (BBQ). In South Africa it is summer season in December. Many people visit Christmas mass on Christmas day as well. There are few natural Christmas trees, but some people put up decorated artificial trees in their homes. Many shopping centers are transformed with Christmas decorations.

SWITZERLAND:

In Switzerland St Nicholas is known as ‘Samichlaus’ and may visit on December 6. If fortune shines, presents may come from baby Jesus (or Father Christmas) on December 25. On Epiphany (January 6) a house can be visited by Befana in South Switzerland or by the Three Kings in the rest of Switzerland.

For more information visit <https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/christmas-around-the-world.html> or <https://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/>

CHRISTMAS IN A MEXICAN HOUSEHOLD

Traditions can be Different but the Spirit Remains the Same

STORY AND PHOTOS BY FRANCISCO LOREDO

There is nothing that I love more than Christmas. Getting to spend time with your loved ones, sharing food and gifts and simply the joy and memories that this season brings us is something to really look forward to throughout the year.

Living in a household where there are two different cultures makes it even more fun. My wife is American born and raised and she comes from a traditional family with what I would consider traditional customs. They normally gather on December 25 at their parents' house.

They show up early and start helping their mom with the dinner preparations, eventually open stocking stuffers and gifts and then have dinner and after that we sit around and talk some, pretty standard if you ask me.

In Mexico, we start the celebration on Christmas Eve night on December 24. As Mexicans we tend to make a big party out of every occasion, and Christmas is no exception.

During Christmas Eve we would normally have a formal dinner where the family dresses up on a semi-formal/casual manner. It is a good excuse to go out and buy some new clothes to wear that night. The dinner can be the same as a traditional American Christmas dinner, or some households would make different things such as tamales, pozole, pork roasts or even barbecues.

Normally in my family it would be a big party since my dad had ten siblings and we are a big family. You can probably imagine that the Christmas celebration would turn into a big party. Music, drinks and good company would make it so the party went on until Christmas morning.

In comparison, even though I enjoy some quiet



Last Loredos entire family Christmas reunion back in 2013



family time on Christmas in the United States, I do tend to miss the big celebration that we used to have in Mexico.

When it comes to presents, stocking stuffers is one of the American traditions that I have enjoyed the most that we don't really do in Mexico. Having all those little gifts to open add up to the excitement and joy that the day generally brings.

In Mexico, depending on what region of the country you are from, Santa Claus might not be the one who brings kids their presents. On Christmas night, Santa Claus might just bring kids a small present or candy, depending on the region you're from; where I am from Santa would bring me all my toys and presents though.

As stated before, there are regions where the 'Three Wise Men' or 'Three Kings' would bring kings their presents on January 6, when we celebrate the 'Three Kings Day'. This celebration is in remembrance of the kings that came to baby Jesus and delivered gifts to him. Mexico is a very catholic country.

In my case, Santa Claus would bring me toys/gifts and the Three Kings would bring me candy and maybe a small gift.

On December 25, most Mexicans really won't do much. Adults wake up tired and sometimes hungover from the previous night's party and tradition dictates that December 25 is therefore our 'leftover day'. We will eat leftovers from the previous night's dinner and sometimes we will go visit our relatives and friends and spend some time with them.

Personally, there is nothing better to me than a good old-fashioned *Lord of the Rings* marathon on Christmas morning while eating all the good food from Christmas Eve.

Since I moved to the United States and I started working for a company where December is our busiest holiday, spending Christmas with my family is not a possibility anymore but we try to carry on with as many traditions as we can in my household. My wife has been very supportive when it comes to helping me feel more at home. We end up having two celebrations when possible, on the 24th and on the 25th.

In retrospect, I gained a new family with a new set of traditions that I enjoy very much and even with the distance, Christmas is a family holiday and I love being able to send out gifts too all of my family and getting on a video call with them on Christmas Eve night. Not even the distance will stop us from being 'together'.



Right: The Three Wise Men bring presents to kids in many parts of Mexico

8 POPULAR HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Where They Got Their Start

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SARAH WALSH

Many of the Christmas traditions celebrated in the United States are ancient. Others have been around for barely over a decade. Several have their origins in Germany, while some were born here in the U.S. Here is an overview of eight of the United State's most popular Christmas traditions and their history.

1. CHRISTMAS TREES

16th century Germans were the first to bring Christmas trees into their homes and decorate them for Christmas. The tradition was not immediately popular in America, where the trees were brought by immigrants in the 18th century. Frivolity was frowned upon during the observance of the sacred holiday and the trees were viewed as a pagan celebration. However, a drawing of Queen Victoria and her German Prince Albert around a Christmas tree in 1846 changed that. Queen Victoria was popular with fashionable Americans and soon U.S. citizens were modeling the queen's tastes and decorating trees in their homes.

2. DOOR WREATHS

In many ancient cultures, evergreen boughs were hung over doors and windows, believed in many countries to ward off witches, ghosts, illness, and evil.

Like evergreen boughs, wreaths were common in ancient Greece and Rome. However, the Christmas wreath is specific to the Christian religion. The circle represents eternal life, and the holly leaves symbolize Christ's crown of thorns while the berries represent his blood.



3. CANDY CANES

Candy Canes are another Christmas tradition that began in Germany, first created in 1670. In the mid-1800s, they were brought to the U.S. by a German-Swedish immigrant. At first, the sweets were straight, white sticks of sugar, but soon the red stripes were added. In the 1920s, they gained popularity when Bob McCormack started a business called Bob's Candies. His

brother-in-law, Gregory Harding Keller, invented the Keller machine that curved the sticks into cane shapes.

4. ADVENT CALENDAR

Credit goes once again to Germany for this Christmas tradition. In 1903, publisher Gerhard Land came up with a way for children to count down the days until Christmas by "opening a "door" or "window" a day to reveal a bible passage, a poem, or a small gift," wrote Lesley Kennedy for History.org. Today, advent calendars are popular with adults as well as children and often include gifts like chocolates or mini bottles of wine.

5. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Edward Hibberd Johnson, a friend of Thomas Edison, was the first to string lightbulbs around a Christmas tree in New York, 1882. Before lightbulbs, Christmas trees were commonly lit with candles to signify the light of Jesus. "You'd look at it for a few seconds and blow them out," said John Hanssen, a collector of Christmas-related antiques. In the 1920s, General Electric's pre-assembled lights became more affordable to the public and Christmas lights became common around American homes.

6. POINSETTIAS

Poinsettias are native to Central America and were first sent to the U.S. by a man named Joel Roberts Poinsett. They were brought publicly to the states in the 1920s by Paul Eck, a horticulturist. The shape of the flower and its leaves are seen by some as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem, which guided the Wise Men to the infant Jesus. The red color is a symbol of Christ's blood and the white represents Christ's purity.

7. CHRISTMAS PICKLE

This is a United States tradition that likely dates back to the 1800s. A pickle ornament is hidden in the Christmas tree. The first child to find it gets to open the first Christmas present, or in some cases, wins a gift. "It's likely it grew from a Woolworths marketing gimmick from the late 1800s, when the retailer received imported German ornaments shaped like a pickle and needed a sales pitch," wrote Kennedy.

8. ELF ON A SHELF

The Elf on a Shelf tradition involves sitting a toy elf somewhere in the house. The elf is Santa's scout and watches the children to make sure they behave. "More than 13 million elves have been "adopted" since 2005" wrote Kennedy. Carol Aebersold and her daughter, Chanda Bell wrote the Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition book that year. The book comes with the toy that quickly made it a real tradition.



A Christmas tree strung with lights



On previous page: a traditional Christmas wreath

1



2



3



4



SPICE UP YOUR WRAP GAME WITH T-SHIRT PRESENTS

A Unique and Fashionable Way to Wrap Your Gifts

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOSEPH VICTORINO

Christmas is just around the corner! Not only is this the season of shoveling snow and slipping on ice, but it's also the season of giving. Use this guide to spruce up your gifts!

Materials

- Gift Wrap
- Scissors
- Clear Tape
- Ribbons
- Hot Glue
- Stick on Gift Bows
- Label Stickers



STEPS

1. Measure & Cut.

Do a loose wrap of your gift using gift wrap still on the roll. This'll give you a rough idea of how much you'll need to completely cover your item. Make sure there is also enough extra paper at the top and bottom of the present for later folds. The amount of paper needed will vary depending on the size and shape of your gift. Reserve an extra portion of paper for the shirt pleat.

2. Starting the Shirt.

Without the item, fold two opposite long sides inwards so that they meet at the center and tape them together.

3. Making the Shirt Pleat.

Using the reserved portion of paper, repeat step 2, however make a very narrow tube, flatten it, and tape it together.

4. Attaching the Shirt Pleat.

Secure the pleat, seam side down, using double sided tape or rolled tape, over the seam of the larger wrapper.

5



6



7



8



5. Making the Base (1/3)

To create the base of the shirt, fold the bottom portion of the wrapper. The amount of paper you will be folding is dependent of how large your item is (if it's a larger and wider item, fold more paper, if it's smaller fold less paper).

6. Making the Base (2/3)

Take the top flap of the fold to create an opening. Press down and flatter the two corners.



7. Making the Base (3/3)

Fold the distal ends of the newly made flaps, so that the overlap and tape them together. You've just created the base of your shirt.



8. Filling the Shirt

Open up the other end of the wrapper and place your item so that it sits at the base.



9



9. Folding the Collar

Fold the top of the bag about 3 times and tape it in the middle. Make sure the folds are on the opposite side of the pleat.



10. Cutting the Collar

Cut 1/3 of the total width of the shirt underneath the fold on both ends.



11. Creating Shoulders.

With the folds facing you take the material underneath the cut and fold them forwards and tape them down. This is the back of the shirt



12. Creating the Collar

Flip the shirt over and bring the two ends of the cut fold together to form the collar. Using double sided tape, or rolled tape, tape each one down.



13



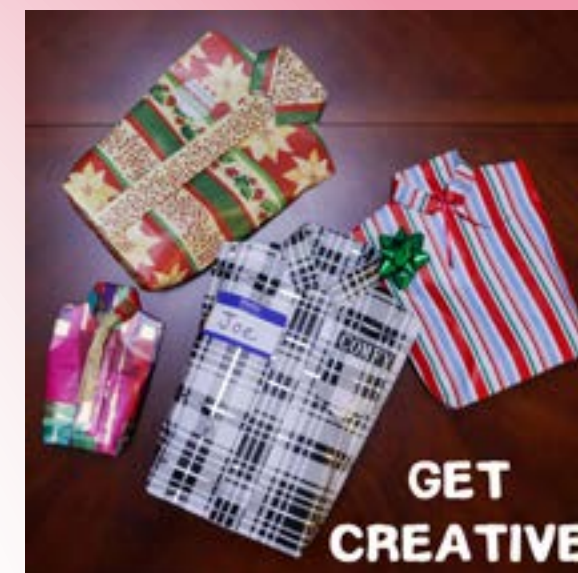
TAKE IT FURTHER

13. Add a Tie /Bow Tie

Using either ribbons or a streamer, create either a tie or bow tie. We used hot glow to fix them on the shirt.



14



14. Get Creative

Have fun with what you have and decorate your shirt! Use name tags a Christmas present labels or vice versa. Use stick on bows to create a boutonniere. Use different gift wrap to get different kinds of shirts. The possibilities end where your creativity ends.

10



11



12



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A row of snow-laden Pine trees

WHERE TO GET A CHRISTMAS TREE IN CONNECTICUT

A LIST OF LOCAL CHRISTMAS TREE FARMS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SARAH WALSH

There are several farms in Connecticut to pick up a tree to grace your home this holiday season. Many are cut-and-choose your own, while others offer pre-cut trees.

Here is a list of a handful of Connecticut’s tree farms. For hours and more information, visit their websites, or call the numbers below.

YETTER ROAD CHRISTMAS TREE FARM

94 Yetter Rd, Mystic, CT 06355
Phone: 860 536 3359
Tree Varieties: Balsam Fir, Douglas Fir, Fraser Fir, Blue Spruce, White Spruce, White Pine, Concolor Fir, Canaan Fir, Corkbark Fir, Nordman Fir, and Turkish Fir

EVERGREEN ACRES TREE FARM

464 Windham Avenue, Colchester, CT 06415.
Phone: 860-463-4014.
Email: gpugatch@comcast.net.
Tree Varieties: Blue Spruce and Fraser Fir

GEER TREE FARM

852 Voluntown Road, Griswold, CT 06351.
Phone: 860-376-5838.
Tree Varieties: Fraser Fir, Douglas Fir, Concolor Fir, White Pine, White Spruce, Blue Spruce

HARTIKKA TREE FARMS

Shetucket Road, Voluntown, CT 06384.
Phone: 860-376-2351.

Email: sales@treeman2.com.
Tree stands, tree bags, tree trays, and tree preservative also for sale.
Tree Varieties: Balsam Fir, Concolor Fir, Canaan Fir, Douglas Fir, Colorado Blue Spruce, Serbian Spruce, White Pine

LANE CHRISTMAS TREE FARM

71 Oil Mill Rd, Waterford, CT 06385.
Phone: (860) 442-9871.
Open: weekends in November, daily in December from 9 am to dusk; from November 1 until December 24; Call for updates to hours and availability.
Payment: Cash, only.
Tree Varieties: Black Hills Spruce, Colorado Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce, Serbian Spruce, White Spruce

LEBANON CHRISTMAS TREE FARM

160 Lebanon Avenue (Route 16), Lebanon, CT 06249.
Phone : 860-642-9989 or 860-642-7082.
Santa visits on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 pm to 3 pm. Weekends on the farm are special with free hot chocolate and fresh popped popcorn.
Tree Varieties: White Spruce, Blue Spruce

BELINSKY FAMILY FARM

132 Moose Hill Road, Oxford, CT 06478.
Phone: 203-888-0322.
Tree Varieties: Red Pine, Concolor Fir, Blue Spruce
In December, other varieties become available.

FOUR FANTASTIC HILLS TO SLED DOWN THIS SNOWFALL

Connecticut Sledding Locations

BY JOSEPH VICTORINO



An aerial view of the Old Lyme Country Golf Club Course

1. OLD LYME COUNTRY CLUB GOLF COURSE

If you're around the Old Lyme area, take a trip to the Old Lyme Country Club Golf Course! Located on 40 McCurdy Rd, this place features two hills for all ages.

Ian Thompson, 22, said that he has been sledding at this golf course since he was 10 and has been there dozens of times. He said it should be perfectly fine to go there when it snows, as the course would typically be closed.

"It's a bit of a trek to the top," Thompson said. "However, once you get to the top, you get 30 seconds of smooth sailing."

Thompson said that parking is fairly easy. The roads are sizable, allowing for parking on the shoulder. It should be perfectly fine. The golf course is closed when it snows.

"Typically, in the winter, there's typically around 10 families at the course post snowstorm. Though in the last few years, it hasn't been as crowded," Thompson said.

In terms of the sledding conditions, the hills themselves aren't all that intense, boasting both a steep and shallow option respectively.

There are some rocks to look out for however, so it isn't recommended to use inflatable tubes here. Additionally, there with the length of the course, you'll be catching plenty of speed. We encourage you to use small plastic sleds, as they'll be nimbler and allow for better maneuverability on the course.

There are some smaller banks where you can catch air as well, so the longer sleds may have some difficulty handling the terrain.

All in all, if you find yourself near the Old Lyme area during a storm, we recommend sliding by!

2. FORT GRISWOLD BATTLEFIELD STATE PARK

Groton offers another wicked descend in the form of Fort Griswold, found at Park Ave & Monument St, Groton.



Sledding and snowboarding at Fort Griswold



A photo of the hill at Mixville Park, by Marshmellow Mike (Google Reviews)

Not only does it feature a steep hill, but it is also known for The Battle of Groton Heights, the largest Revolutionary War Battle in Connecticut. The location is steeped in history and quite scenic as well. While atop the hill, soak in the views of not only the Thames River, but peer further, and you'll see the city of New London. As for the hill itself, it isn't as flat as say a golf course, however, what it does have, is a steep decline.

Once you begin your decent, you'll catch plenty of speed. Don't fret however, as once you reach the bottom, you begin to ascend, slowing you to a safe stop. The only downside I can think of is the long walk back up the hill.

3. MIXVILLE RECREATION AREA

Another place we recommend for some fantastic sledding is Mixville Park, situated at 1300 Notch Road, Cheshire.

Marshmallow Mike on google reviews said, "We go sledding here every year. It's a pretty big hill."

Though, there is a caveat. Mike said that there's a "5 dollar fee for Cheshire residents and a 15 dollar fee for non-residents."

4. WASHINGTON PARK

As our final location, and for a wild ride, visit the hill at Washington Park on 155 Meridian Street, Groton. This is one of my childhood favorites, as it spares no room for second guessing, you just descend and don't look back.

If memory serves me right, the hill was fairly steep, and the climb back up was kind of a hassle. At the bottom of the hill, it's common for relatively large banks to form and you may catch air, so watch you head and try not to bash it on the ground. I learned that the hard way.

The last time I was there, there were about 4 families occupying the area, this could change with the pandemic. Additionally, Washington park features three baseball fields, two softball fields, playground equipment, tennis courts, outdoor fitness circuit, volleyball area, basketball hoops and outdoor pavilions.

Because it's a public park, finding parking is fairly easy and free.

This location is a staple for Groton kids growing up, so I encourage you to make memories here as well.



Washington Park Hill, one of my favorite childhood sledding locations

CHRISTMAS TREES YOU CAN MAKE AT HOME

DIY DECORATION

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH EXLEY

This year has been difficult for everyone, but why not bring a little fun and cheer into your home by creating your own decorations?

These Christmas tree decorations are easy and fun to make for everyone who wants to make one. You can decorate them however you want and in any colors or sizes you choose. All the materials you will need can be found at your local craft store such as Hobby Lobby or Michaels.



Steps 3-5



Steps 1-2

STEP 1: Gather your materials. You will need a hot glue gun, extra hot glue, styrofoam trees, yarn, scissors, decorative string and/or pom poms.

STEP 2: Choose which size tree and what color yarn you would like to use.

STEP 3: Begin by gluing down the end of the yarn to the underneath of the foam tree.

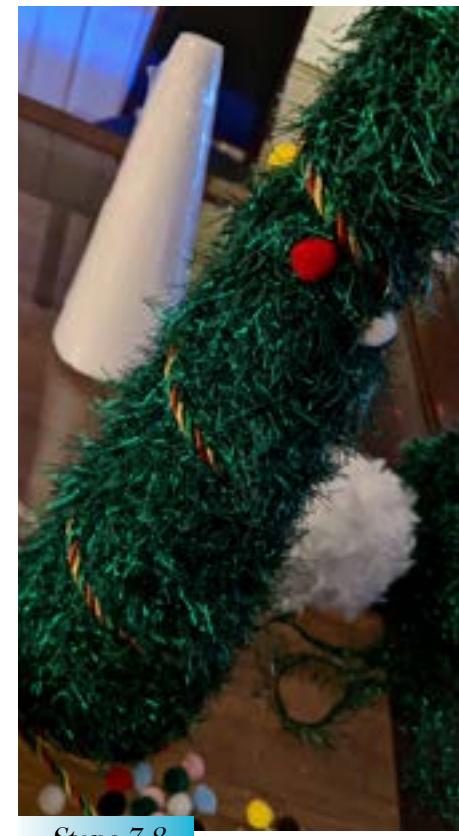
STEP 4: Line the bottom edge of the foam tree with the hot glue and wrap the yarn around it starting from where you glued it to the underneath.

STEP 5: Put a couple inches of hot glue up the side of the foam tree and continue wrapping the yarn around it as close together as you can get it. You only want to put a couple inches of glue at a time so it doesn't dry and harden by the time you get to the top.

STEP 6: Continue putting a little bit of glue up the side and wrapping until you have reached the very top. Once



Step 6



Steps 7-8



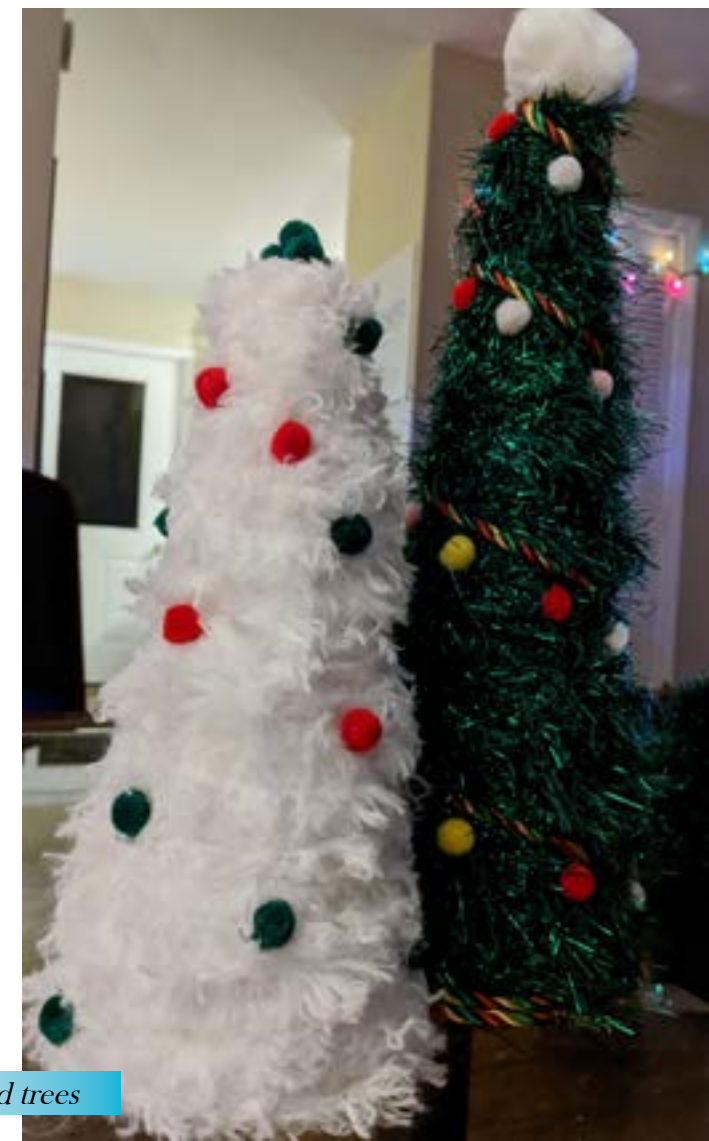
Step 9

you've gotten there, put a little more glue on the top and spiral the yarn into a circle to cover what is left. It helps to use a piece of cardboard to press the yarn into the glue so you don't burn yourself.

STEP 7: Once the tree is covered and it begins to look like a tree, it's time to decorate. Take your ribbon and glue the start of it at the top of your tree and begin wrapping it around. You want to keep these spaced apart to look like string lights wrapping around the tree. For every wrap around put a small dot of glue to keep it in place.

STEP 8: For your pom poms, put a small dot of glue where you want them to sit and quickly, but carefully, put the pom pom on the glue. Top it all off by gluing down a big pom pom right on top to cover your string. You can take creative control wherever you want to put the pom poms or if you even want them.

STEP 9: Repeat these steps for any size tree you choose with any color or type of yarn you think would look best. These are your trees so feel free to put as many or as little decorations on them as you'd like. And don't forget to have fun making them!



Finished trees



Apple pie with fork in tin tray, photo by Maiquynh Truong



Guests getting food; photo from Unsplash.com



Fall themed flower bouquet, photo by Maiquynh Truong

JUST ENOUGH STUFFING

Holiday Healthy Eating Tips

BY MAIQUYNH TRUONG

The holiday season is around the corner and so is a generous helping of scrumptious food and mouth-watering meals.

It is no surprise that we tend to splurge and overeat when we are surrounded by days and days of festivities. However, packing in food means packing on calories and eventually health risks such as diabetes and heart conditions.

And with a dangerous virus that can cause detrimental effects to those with these health risks, it

is best that we watch our eating habits during the holiday season. According to the CDC and the Mayo Clinic, here are some tips to a better holiday eating habit:

1. AVOID LARGE PARTIES AND GATHERINGS

It is a sensible but solemn notion that is necessary. With the Covid-19 pandemic still not under control, the safest way to spend our holidays this year is with the people we are currently living with. In a way, it helps us avoid running into large quantities of high calories food, since cooks tend to go all out and often use excess amounts of unhealthy ingredients. With a smaller group, it is better to cater our meal plan or even try foods that are untradi-

tional or exotic.

2. DON'T SKIP MEALS

We tend to think that by not eating the day before, it will help us avoid the calories intake so we can splurge on the day of the feast. However, this will often backfire causing us to overeat due to excessive hunger. Thus, instead of skipping our meal entirely, eating filling snacks throughout the day like yogurt, nuts or cheese and crackers will help stabilize your stomach.

3. COLOR IS YOUR BEST FRIEND

A plate that is plentiful in a variety of colors is the easiest way to tell that you are eating healthy. Other than light coloring carbs and dark proteins, do not forget to add some green, red, or purple veggies!

4. EAT, WAIT, WALK

It usually takes our body at least 20 minutes to realize that it is full, so instead of constantly eating, it is best

to pace ourselves. Do not gulp down your meal right from the start, eat slowly as you intermingle, chat with family & friends and take time to savor the food. After a meal, walk around the location or do some tidying up. This way, your body will have time to digest the meal while also shaving off some annoying cleaning work later.

5. DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP

If you happen to overeat, try to make sure that your next meal is lighter/healthier. If you have leftovers, don't eat them all at once the next day. Box them up for storage and divide them throughout the week.

6. FRESH AIR AND EXERCISE

Make time to safely venture outside after the meal, go on a short walk around the neighborhood or do some recreational activities in your yard. Don't forget to bundle up and practice social safety guidelines!

COCKTAILS AND MOCKTAILS

Cocktails: Liquid Cookies, Candy Bars, and Pies – Oh My!

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KIM STANFORD

Cheers, it is holiday time. Here are some yummy liquid treats that EVERYONE can enjoy!

For the cocktails, the following recipes will be sweet treats in liquid form. All the cocktail recipes are martinis, so preparation is similar - in a cocktail shaker, place ice in shaker, combine ingredients, shake until cold (about 30 seconds), and strain into glass.

Lactose intolerant? No worries - all milk or cream ingredients can be replaced with Baileys. Adjust for taste and enjoy!

Almond Joy

- Chocolate syrup, for serving
- Finely chopped toasted almonds, for serving
- 1 oz. vodka
- 1 oz. coconut rum
- ½ oz. cream of coconut (such as Coco López)
- ½ oz. amaretto liqueur
- 1 oz. half and half (or Baileys)
- Ice

Place chocolate syrup and chopped almonds on two separate small, shallow plates. Dip rims of martini glasses first in chocolate, then in almond. Chill until ready to use. Drizzle more chocolate inside glasses. Strain cocktail into prepared martini glass to serve.

Carrot Cake

- 1 cup ice cubes, or as needed
- 2 (1.5 fluid ounce) jiggers Irish cream liqueur

(such as Baileys)

- 1 ½ (1.5 fluid ounce) jiggers butterscotch schnapps
- ½ (1.5 fluid ounce) jigger red cinnamon schnapps

Chocolate Martini

- 6 oz. Baileys Irish Cream
- 2 oz. chocolate liqueur
- ¾ oz. vodka
- Chocolate syrup

Pour chocolate syrup onto a shallow plate. Dip rim of martini glasses into chocolate syrup to coat rims. Drizzle the inside of each glass with chocolate syrup.

Oatmeal Cookie

- 1 oz. Buttershots schnapps
- 1 oz. Baileys Irish Cream
- 1 splash of vodka
- 1 splash of Hot Damn (cinnamon schnapps) - be careful, this can easy overpower to taste.

Snickers Bar

- 1 oz. coffee-flavored liqueur (such as Kahlua®)

- 1 oz. Irish cream liqueur
- 1 oz. amaretto liqueur
- 1 oz. hazelnut liqueur (such as Frangelico)
- ½ oz. vodka (whipped cream vodka)

Caramel Snickerdoodle

- ¼ c. caramel, warmed
- 2 tbsp. cinnamon sugar
- 1 c. heavy cream (4 oz. Baileys Irish Cream)
- 2 oz. Smirnoff Kissed Caramel
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- Ice
- Whipped cream, for garnish
- Cinnamon sticks, for garnish

Place caramel on a plate and cinnamon sugar on another. Dip rims of martini glasses in caramel, then in cinnamon sugar.

Toasted Almond

- 1 ½ oz. Amaretto
- 1 oz. Kahlua
- 2 oz. Baileys

For a Roasted Toasted Almond add ½ - 1 oz. vodka

Girl Scout Cookie (Thin Mint)

- ½ oz. Baileys Irish Cream
- ½ oz. Kahlua
- 1 oz. peppermint schnapps or ½ ounce white crème de menthe

Banana Crem Pie

- Cinnamon-sugar
- Lemon wedge
- Ice
- 4 oz. Smirnoff vanilla vodka
- 2 oz. Baileys
- 2 oz. banana liqueur
- Whipped topping
- ¼ c. crushed Nilla wafers
- ¼ banana, sliced

Place cinnamon sugar in a shallow dish. Using a lemon wedge, wet rim of a martini glass, then dip glass in cinnamon sugar to coat rim. Top with whipped cream and crumble Nilla wafers on top. Garnish with banana slices and a sprinkle of cinnamon sugar.

Samoa Cookie

- 2 oz. chocolate liqueur
- 1 1/2 oz. caramel vodka
- 1 1/2 oz. Malibu rum
- 1 oz. half-and-half (Baileys)
- 2 tablespoons chocolate syrup
- 1 teaspoon shredded coconut
- 1 Samoa girl scout cookie (or equivalent - Dollar General sells an off brand that tastes the same)
- 1 tablespoon caramel syrup

Pour about 2 tablespoons chocolate syrup on a plate. Twist the edge of the glass into the syrup coating the entire rim. Sprinkle coconut onto the glass into the syrup. Pour into the glass and then drizzle some caramel syrup on top of the cocktail and on the rim. Garnish with the cookie.

Coconut Cream Pie

- 1 fluid oz. coconut-flavored rum (such as Malibu)
- 1 fluid oz. vanilla schnapps
- 3 fluid oz. half-and-half cream (Baileys Irish Cream)

Health Bar

- ½ oz. Cognac (or brandy in a pinch)
- ½ oz. Coffee liqueur
- ½ oz. Almond liqueur
- ½ oz. Irish cream
- Chocolate for garnish



Above: Almond Joy Martini



Above: Caramel Snickerdoodle Martini

COCKTAILS AND MOCKTAILS

Mocktails: Something Everyone Can Enjoy!



Mock Champagne and Sparkling Blue Mocktail

These colorful drinks have easy to find ingredients and are easy to make. Enjoy!

Virgin Cranberry Basil Sangria

- 3 c. cranberry juice
- Juice of 1 orange (about 1/2 c.)
- 1 (12-oz.) can seltzer
- 1 orange, sliced
- 1 apple, cored and sliced
- 1/3 c. frozen cranberries
- 1/4 c. packed basil leaves
- Ice

In a large pitcher, combine cranberry juice, orange juice, and seltzer. Add fruit and basil and stir to combine. Pour over ice to serve.

Virgin Pina Colada

- 1 (10-oz.) bag frozen pineapple chunks
- 4 large scoops of ice cream (about 1 cup)
- 1 c. coconut milk
- 1/2 c. pineapple juice
- Pineapple wedge, for serving
- Maraschino cherry, for serving

In a blender, blend together frozen pineapple, ice cream, coconut milk, and pineapple juice. Divide between glasses and garnish with a pineapple wedge and maraschino cherry.

Shirley Temple

- Ice
- 3 c. lemon-lime soda
- Juice of 1 lime
- 4 tsp. grenadine
- Maraschino cherries, for serving

Fill 4 glasses with ice. Divide soda and lime juice between glasses and top off with grenadine.

Serve with a maraschino cherry.

Blackberry Virgin Mojito

Mint Syrup

- 1/2 c. packed fresh mint leaves
- 1 c. granulated sugar
- 1 c. water

Mojito

- 1 c. blackberries
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- 1/2 c. lime juice
- Ice
- 2 (12-oz.) cans seltzer
- Fresh mint, for garnish

In a small pot using a wooden spoon or using a mortar and pestle, crush mint leaves. Add sugar and water and bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Let boil 3 minutes. Let cool to room temperature, then strain out mint leaves, pressing with a wooden spoon to help release all liquid. In a small bowl, add blackberries and sugar, and using a wooden spoon, crush blackberries until broken down.

Divide blackberries between 4 glasses and add 2 tablespoons simple syrup and 2 tablespoons lime juice to each glass. Fill glasses with ice and top off with seltzer, then garnish with mint.

Watermelon Lemonade

Tip: Use frozen watermelon instead of ice cubes! (If in season)

Combine half watermelon juice, half lemonade. Pro move: Freeze watermelon chunks to use instead of ice cubes. As they thaw, your drink does not get watered down—and you have a snack for later.

Popsicle Punch

- 4 c. lemon lime soda
- 4 c. lemonade

- 1 (12-oz.) can seltzer
- 1 c. sliced strawberries, plus more garnish
- 2 mangoes, cubed, plus more for garnish
- 3 Popsicle Strawberry Fruit Pops
- 3 Popsicle Mango Fruit Pops

In a large pitcher, stir together soda, lemonade, seltzer, strawberries, and mangoes. Pour into glasses and garnish rim with a strawberry and mango slice. Place a popsicle in as garnish.

Blushing Arnold Palmer

Blend of half iced tea, half lemonade. Add a splash of grenadine before serving.

Purple Punch

- 5 mint leaves, plus more for garnish
- 6 blueberries, plus more for garnish
- 3 lemon wheels, plus more for garnish
- Ice
- Red Bull Purple Edition Sugarfree
- Lemonade

In a glass, muddle mint, blueberries, and lemon wheels. Add ice. Add 4 parts Red Bull Purple Edition Sugarfree to 1 part fresh lemonade, or 8oz Red Bull Purple Edition Sugarfree to 2oz fresh lemonade, and stir with bar spoon. Garnish with more mint leaves, blueberries, and lemon wheels and serve.

Mock Champagne

- 1 bottle (2 liters) ginger ale, chilled
- 1 can (46 oz.) pineapple juice, chilled
- 1 bottle (64 oz.) white grape juice, chilled

In a large punch bowl, combine all ingredients.

Sparkling Blue Mocktail

- 2 ounces blue fruit punch
- Sparkling white grape juice or sparkling cider
- Blue Sprinkles (optional garnish)

Place some of the blue sprinkles on a plate. Dip the top of the champagne glass or other cup in water and then dip it in the blue sprinkles.

Place the 2 ounces of blue fruit punch in the champagne glass or other cup. Then add in the sparkling white grape juice or sparkling cider until full.

25 MOVIES UNTIL CHRISTMAS

Paired Perfectly With Hot Cocoa

BY ELIZABETH EXLEY

As the air gets colder and the nights get longer, the need to cozy up with a movie and hot chocolate gets stronger. Put up some colorful lights and cuddle up with your favorite movie buddy or buddies and check off some of those holiday movie traditions.

Growing up, each member of my family had their pick of what Christmas movie they wanted to watch. Most people have a favorite Christmas movie that is a must watch every year. What better way to count down the days until Christmas than a movie marathon that everyone can enjoy? There's something in there for everyone!

1. ELF
2. THE POLAR EXPRESS
3. THE SANTA CLAUSE (1, 2, & 3)
4. CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
5. A CHRISTMAS STORY
6. HOME ALONE (1 & 2)
7. NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION
8. RISE OF THE GUARDIANS
9. A CHRISTMAS CAROL
10. THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL
11. DR. SEUSS' HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS
12. WHITE CHRISTMAS
13. RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER
14. A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS
15. FROSTY THE SNOWMAN
16. DIE HARD
17. THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS
18. IT'S WONDERFUL LIFE
19. THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
20. THE CHRISTMAS CHRONICLES
21. JACK FROST
22. I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS
23. MICKEY'S ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS
24. EDWARD SCISSORHANDS
25. GREMLINS

HARK! THE SPEAKERS PLAY!

New Holiday Albums to Add to Your Christmas Playlist

BY MAIQUYNH TRUONG

2020 is quite a big year for Christmas album releases as country music icon, Dolly Parton, Carrie Underwood, and pop sensation Meghan Trainor all published their holiday hits in time for Christmas. However, the true holiday album gems this season do not come from big name artists but were created by lesser known musicians.

Here are 3 under-the-radar Christmas albums that will be solid and memorable additions to your holiday music entourage:

TERRI CLARK- "IT'S CHRISTMAS...CHEERS!"
(Country)



Even if you are not a fan of country music, Terri Clark's "It's Christmas...Cheers" is a must-listen to Holiday album of the year. Clark's voice is sultry, resonating yet incredibly comforting. Her tone has that old country twang to it that is reminiscent of legendary vocalists from decades passed, who once made songs like "Winter Wonderland" and "Silent Night" into the classics that they are today.

Clark's renditions are fun, heartwarming and decked out in atmospheric cheer with a little bit of jazz here and a little bit of country there. It is like listening to decades old-sounding songs in crisp and bright audio technicolor.

FRANCESCA BATTISTELLI- "THIS CHRISTMAS"
(Contemporary Christian Music/Pop/Soul)



Francesca Battistelli might be unfamiliar to many mainstream music listeners, but she is not someone to sleep on when it comes to the good old holiday spirit. "This Christmas" is a wonderful album, spearheaded with fun classics like "Rudolph the Rednosed Reindeer" and "Let it Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!" and powerful hymns such as "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

Battistelli is an incredible vocalist, whose voice will transport you to the realm of ethereal, especially with her rendition of Christian based holiday songs. The true shining star, however, is Battistelli's own holiday original called "December We'll Remember," a tune that will certainly be played for years to come.

FOR KING & COUNTRY- "A DRUMMER BOY CHRISTMAS"
(Christian Pop)



For King & Country, a pop-duo described by American Songwriter magazine as "Australia's answer to ColdPlay" is a powerhouse of vocal talents. Their Christmas album, A Drummer Boy Christmas consists of the greatest Christian holiday classics like the titular "Little Drummer Boy," "O Come All Ye Faithful" and of course "Joy to the World." It is the perfect album to listen to during the holiday downtime and self-reflection.

Even if you're not religious, the band's "A Christmas Monologue" will help you meditate on the turmoil of life, and the selfishness and close-mindedness that persists in our world and remind you that kindness and love will always prevail.

Italian Anise Cookies

Happiness in Cookie Form

BY DANIELLE BRANCH

(Recipe courtesy of *Lovebakesgoodcakes.com*)

For the Cookie Dough

- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 tsp. anise extract
- 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt

For the Glaze

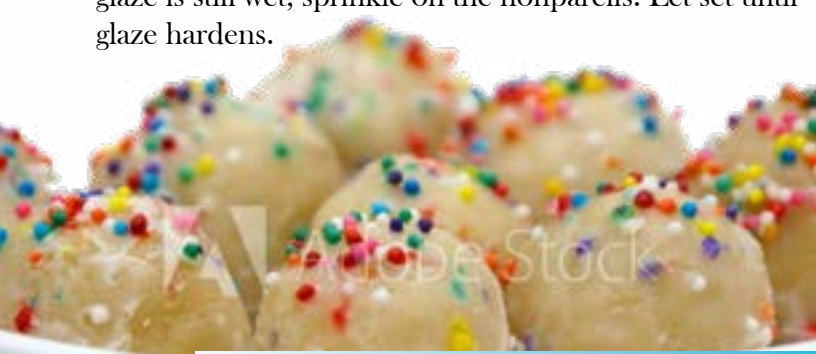
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 4-5 tsp. milk
- 1 tsp. anise extract

Additional Ingredients:

- Nonpareils

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside.
2. Beat the sugar, butter, eggs, milk and anise extract in a large bowl with a mixer until well blended. On low speed, beat in the flour, baking powder and salt until well blended.
3. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto the prepared baking sheets.
4. Bake 8-10 minutes or until the bottoms are a light golden brown. Remove cookies to a wire rack to cool.
5. Prepare the glaze: Whisk the powdered sugar, milk and anise extract in a small bowl until smooth.
6. Dip the tops of the cookies in the glaze, and while the glaze is still wet, sprinkle on the nonpareils. Let set until glaze hardens.



Italian Anise cookies, photo from Adobe Stock



Homemade macaroons, photo from freepik.com

Coconut Macaroons

A Simple Approach to the Classic Coconut Macaroon Recipe

BY DANIELLE BRANCH

(Recipe courtesy of *Cookiesandcups.com*)

- Level: Easy
- Total: 40 min
- Prep: 10 min
- Cook: 20 min
- Yield: about 30 macaroons

Ingredients

- 3 large egg whites
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-14-ounce package sweetened shredded coconut

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Whisk the egg whites, sugar, salt and vanilla in a large bowl until combined; fold in the coconut.
2. Scoop heaping tablespoonfuls of the coconut mixture about 1 inch apart onto the baking sheet. Use your fingers to form into pyramids. Bake until golden brown around the edges, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes on the baking sheet, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

Note: Kick it up a notch by dipping the bottoms in melted chocolate or by adding a chocolate kiss to the top!

'Tis the Season



Across

2. A secular festival observed by many African Americans from December 26 to January 1
6. A form of decoration consisting of thin strips of shiny metal foil
7. A thing willingly given to someone without payment
8. A religious folk song or popular hymn, particularly associated to Christmas
9. A thing used to make something more attractive
10. Archaic term for Christmas
12. The red nose reindeer

Down

1. Known as father Christmas or Khris Kringle
3. An arrangement of flowers, leaves, or stems fastened in a ring and used for decoration
4. A drink made from a mixture of beaten eggs, cream, and flavorings, often with alcohol
5. A device used for cracking nuts
6. Name of a country that also shares names with an animal
11. A feeling of great pleasure or happiness

If you would like to contribute to



Email submissions, responses, and ideas to:

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