THE REPORTER

HOMETOWN Holiday GUIDE

The reasons to stay local when shopping this holiday season

Holiday shoppers have no shortage of retailers competing for their dollars come December. The National Retail Federation estimated 2025 holiday spending exceeded $1 trillion, and there's little reason to suspect 2026 spending will not match or exceed that amount.

With so much money being spent, retailers have much to gain from attracting holiday shoppers. While big box stores and online retailers may beckon shoppers louder than anyone this December, there's plenty of reasons to look local when buying gifts for loved ones during the holiday season.

• **Buying local pays you back.** Communities benefit when shoppers spend their money at locally owned businesses. According to the Local Business Institute, $48 of every $100 spent at a locally owned business ultimately recirculates in the community. That means supporting one business in your community indirectly leads to supporting others. And residents should know that a thriving local business sector is great for property values, as buyers tend to be willing to pay more to live in locations with successful shops, cafes and restaurants.

• **Buying local encourages additional investment.** New Jersey-based Spencer Savings Bank notes the appeal of already thriving business sectors on other entrepreneurs seeking to open their businesses. By supporting existing local businesses now, residents are helping to establish a foundation for future economic growth within their communities. The holiday season is a particularly lucrative time for businesses of all sizes, so that makes it a perfect time for locals to support the establishments in their community.



• **Buying local offers more chances to find something unique.** Buying local also pays more immediate dividends come the holiday season. Big box stores and online retailers sell the same items to people regardless of where they live, whereas independently owned local businesses tend to feature more unique items that can only be found in their stores. Shoppers looking for unique gifts for their loved ones need look no further than Main Street to find such items.

• **Buying local benefits the environment.** Eco-conscious holiday shoppers should know that buying local is often beneficial for the environment. Locally crafted and purchased items will not require as much packaging as items purchased from big box stores or online retailers that must protect products from the wear and tear of long distance travel. And that travel also has a negative impact on the environment, as the longer distance it takes to get a product from a warehouse to a consumer's home, the more harmful the transaction typically is on the environment.

The holiday season is a lucrative time of year for retailers, and there are numerous reasons why shoppers should focus their buying power on local businesses this year and in the years to come.

Pet-friendly holiday decorating



Decorating is one of the great joys of the holiday season. Stores adorn their front-facing windows with amazing displays and homeowners often deck out residences from top to bottom with all measures of holiday wonderment.

Approximately 94 million households in the United States feature a pet, according to the American Pet Products Association. Many of those households will be decorating for the holidays and must figure out ways to keep homes safe for all residents — including those covered in fur. These tips can ensure a pet-friendly season with lots of holiday decor.

• **Choose shatterproof decorations.** Select shatterproof ornaments and other decorative items that are durable and non-toxic. Items made from felt, fabric or wood tend to be safer than items that can break.

• **Pick pet-friendly plants.** Poinsettias and mistletoe may be traditional, but they can be toxic to pets. Additional options like Christmas cactus can be safer. Artificial plants are another alternative to consider.

• **Opt out of open flames.** It is best to avoid traditional candles when pets are around. Instead, there are plenty of those powered by LED lights that even mimic the flicker of real candles.

• **Avoid tinsel and ribbons.** Digestive issues or blockages can affect pets who ingest tinsel or ribbons. Select pet-safe ribbons or garlands, and skip the tinsel entirely.

• **Avoid edible decor.** Candy canes on trees or popcorn garlands are festive, but they may prove too tempting for pets to resist. Animals can get sick and may knock over the Christmas tree or other items to access the food.

• **Secure decorative items.** Position the Christmas tree in an area that is not easily accessible. Avoid putting it near furniture that can be used as a jumping-off point. Make sure the tree stand is sturdy enough to prevent tipping, and consider using wire or string to tie the tree to a ceiling or wall anchor for further stability.

• **Mind the scents.** Some fragrances can be overwhelming or irritating for pets, so use scented diffusers or plug-ins sparingly. A simmering pot of cloves, cinnamon sticks and orange rinds can create a welcoming, all-natural aroma.

• **Create a sanctuary.** Try not to move too many of the pet's creature comforts, such as favorite toys or bedding. If you must move these items out of the way, gradually introduce the pet to his or her new area, which can be set away from the hustle of the main entertaining area.

A pet-friendly holiday season involves being mindful of pets' safety while decorating.

Holiday Gift Shoppe
Nov. 27, 28, 29
Dec. 5, 12, 19, 23, 24
10am-3pm
or by appointment
Maple Syrup, Maple Cream, *Boxed* Maple Candy, Maple Cream-filled Chocolate Truffles, Rum Cashews, *Boxed homemade* Cookies, Christmas Soaps & Lotions
...and many more great gift items!
MAPLEWOOD FARM AND ORCHARD Gift Shoppe
74 Meredith St. (Rt. 28), Delhi Village • 607-746-6339
Look for the Red Signs!

Heart of the Catskills Humane Society
www.heartofthecatskills.org
Holiday for the Heart Tree Celebration
Saturday, December 5th • 11am - 3pm
Delaware County Historical Association
46549 State Highway 10, Delhi
Holiday Music - Bake Sale - Holiday Shopping
Seasonal Warm Refreshments
Preview holiday trees & other holiday items:
Monday, Nov. 30th - Friday, Dec. 4th
11am - 4pm
Raffle to win holiday trees:
Saturday, Dec. 5th at 3pm
For more information visit heartofthecatskills.org

Christmas Stroll House Tour & Holiday Market
Saturday, Dec. 12th
Franklin, NY
Christmas Stroll:
1 pm to 5 pm
Visit 5 homes in the Village of Franklin, beautifully decorated for Christmas!
$10 per person, $15 per couple
Get tickets December 12th at the Firehouse Holiday Market, 10am to 3pm
Firehouse Holiday Market
10am-3pm
351 Main Street
Christmas Cookie Sale
Hot Soup, Drinks & Snacks
Gift Sale & Wrap for Kids
10am-2pm at Methodist Church
475 Main Street
Trees and Trains for Christmas
10am-5pm at the Railroad Museum
572 Main Street
Wine and Cheese Tastings
10am-6pm at Good Taste Market
438 Main Street
Holiday Stories and Santa's Visit
11am at the Franklin Free Library
334 Main Street
Tree Lighting, Carols & Santa's Arrival on the Fire Truck
5:15pm, Franklin Park, Main St.
Meet Santa and Mrs. Claus
6pm at Firehouse
351 Main Street
A CBC Christmas Carol
FREE Live Performance
by Local Children and Adults
7:30pm at Community Bible Church
89 Center Street
Info: franklinny.org/stroll26 or Facebook @FranklinNYStroll

Bring Your Family to The Schoolhouse for
Thanksgiving Buffet 1pm-5pm
$36.95 Adults
$12.50 Children 10 & Under • 3 & Under Free
• Hand-Carved Turkey with all the Trimmings
• Hand-Carved Prime Rib
• Shrimp Salad Bar • Dessert Bar
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~ Rooms Available ~
www.oldschoolhouseinn.com

Punch Up Your Holiday Beverage Menu

This time of year is all about food and sweet desserts, but don't forget to quench guests' thirst with a seasonal sip. This Christmas Cranberry Punch offers a slightly less sweet take on traditional punch so you can add a touch of tart to the beverage cart. Visit Culinary.net to find more delicious holiday recipe ideas.

Christmas Cranberry Punch

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"



1 package fresh cranberries
1 can pineapple chunks
3-4 rosemary twigs
6 cans lemon-lime soda, divided
64 ounces cranberry juice
20 ounces orange pineapple juice
1 orange

The night before, place four cranberries, two pineapple chunks and a few rosemary sprigs in each hole of silicone muffin pan or ice tray. Cover with 1 can lemon-lime soda and freeze.

Chill remaining soda, cranberry juice and orange pineapple juice overnight.

In punch bowl, mix remaining soda, cranberry juice and orange pineapple juice. Slice orange into 5-6 slices. Add lemon-lime soda ice cubes, handful of cranberries and orange slices. Serve.

#17304 Source: Culinary.net

A less traditional take on a family dinner staple

Fried foods are often characterized as guilty pleasures. Though frying might not be the healthiest way to make a meal, it's hard to argue against the flavor profile of fried foods.

Air frying can produce meals that call to mind the familiar flavors of fried foods and do so in a far healthier way. This holiday season, hosts can look to air frying as a means to crafting flavorful meals without a lot of the negatives of traditional frying. That's even possible with traditional family staples like roast beef. With that in mind, hosts can try their hands at this recipe for air-fried "Roast Beef" courtesy of Lines+Angles.

Roast Beef

Makes 4 to 6 servings

1 2-pound beef roast, trimmed
2 tablespoons olive oil
Flaked sea salt
Freshly ground mixed peppercorns

1. Preheat air fryer to 360 F. Rub beef roast with olive oil and liberally season with salt and mixed peppercorns.

2. Tie at intervals with kitchen twine to secure.

3. Spritz air fryer basket with cooking spray. Place beef roast in basket and cook for 45 minutes for medium-rare; cook for additional 5-minute intervals for more well-done meat.

4. Remove beef roast from air fryer and cover loosely with aluminum foil, letting it rest for at least 10 minutes before slicing and serving.



Upcycle boxes to make a gingerbread village



Building gingerbread houses is a holiday tradition in many classrooms and households. But as any adult enlisted to help out with the project can attest, constructing gingerbread creations tends to be a messy business. Kids and counters are covered in sticky icing, candy rolls onto the floor, and unless the builders are especially adept, many gingerbread homes topple over before they can be appreciated. Plus, the recipes to create strong gingerbread for building tend to be dense and less palatable than others, meaning kids are not likely to munch on the gingerbread after the thrill of building is over.

Children can recreate the appeal of making gingerbread houses by turning to non-edible materials. Chances are most homes have plenty of shipping boxes and other cardboard around this time of year, especially since online shopping is so prolific. These boxes — with a few extra materials — can be transformed into entire gingerbread villages.

Collect the materials

Kids can begin by gathering the necessary materials. Depending on the desired size of the finished project, boxes can be small, like those that contain tea, hot cocoa or cereal, or larger shipping boxes can be utilized for more ambitious undertakings. Scraps of wrapping paper, postal paper, construction paper, colored markers, crayons, washable paints, and additional decorative materials also can be gathered.

Cut house panels

For thicker cardboard, adults may need to use a craft or utility knife to score through the cardboard and get kids started. Prepare gingerbread house "walls" and triangular portions that can be used to make roofs. Kids may be able to cut through thinner boxes with their own safety scissors.

Design and build

Before they are stuck together, children can be encouraged to decorate their gingerbread homes by drawing, painting or gluing items on, or adding whatever embellishments they desire onto the cardboard panels. Once ready to go, the house can be constructed by using masking tape to attach the corners of walls and roof pieces together. Painters tape is another option, as it is less sticky, and can be removed and repositioned more easily if a mistake happens.

Display and play

Children can take pride in displaying their homemade gingerbread villages among the rest of the holiday decor. Kids can use their imaginations and create stories and other play using their cardboard gingerbread houses as the backdrop. When the holiday season is over, the cardboard can be recycled and ideas for a new batch of gingerbread village creations can take root.

Upcycling cardboard boxes into materials to build gingerbread-style homes is a way to foster creativity among kids and add to the holiday magic.

NINTH OF JUNE
DELHI
SHOES ETC.

KEEP IT LOCAL ALL SEASON LONG!

Friday, November 20:
Early Black Friday
Special discounts just for our local community

Black Friday Weekend:
• 20% off all Red Wing Heritage styles
• Spend more, save more on shoes & clothing for all

Friday, December 4:
Holiday Glow-Ups:
A special collaboration with Heaven on Main Street
5:00 - 8:00 pm

Private Shopping
Book the store for a date night, a friends night out, or just for yourself!

Follow us @ninthofjunedelhi for news about sales and events this holiday season.

NINTH OF JUNE
2 COURT STREET - DELHI
607-422-7425



UNADILLA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE "THE MEETING PLACE"

PATRONIZE THESE UNADILLA CHAMBER BUSINESSES

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Green's Long River Inn & Liquor Store 54 St.Hwy 357
The Green Giraffe 179 Main Street
Village Variety 233 Main Street
Brown's Pharmacy 225 Main Street
House of Consignment 214 Main Street
Kwik Fill Convenience Store/Gas Station 248 Main St
Mirabito Convenience Store/Gas Station 180 Main St
Covered Bridge Farm Market 331 Covered Bridge Rd
Sunshine House Alterations 16 Martin Brook St
Unadilla Beauty Studio 1004 State Hwy 7
Country Squire Realty 1639 State Hwy 7
Muse Gifts & Vintage 192 Main Street
Hannlore Kennels County Hwy 23
The Village Table 198 Main St

Gift Certificates Available

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS
IN THE VILLAGE OF UNADILLA
FRIDAY DECEMBER 11TH
TREE LIGHTING 5:45PM
COMMUNITY LAWN 193 MAIN ST
COME EARLY FOR FREE HOT COCOA
IN MEMORY OF TANYA MARTINI
SANTA PARADE 6PM
MAIN STREET UNADILLA
VISIT & PHOTOS WITH SANTA
WM. BAUER COMMUNITY CENTER (MASONIC TEMPLE)
246 MAIN ST. UNADILLA

Small touches make a big impact in apartments

Decorations are among the most notable signs that the holiday season has arrived. Stores are decked out in garlands and lights, and a quick drive around one's neighborhood will reveal a bevy of festively decorated homes. Some people display a lawn full of inflatables while others prefer a more subtle look of classic white lights wrapped around trees.

Apartment dwellers may wonder how they can make their abodes more festive for the holidays as well. Although not as visible to passersby as single-family homes, apartments can still be decorated. Apartment dwellers can employ a few tips to maximize space and decorating potential.

• Work within your existing square footage. A large Christmas tree can take up a lot of real estate in an apartment. As an alternative, people can set up a slim, miniature or a wall-mounted tree.

• Use damage-free mounting. Landlords may have strict rules about what can or cannot be hung on walls. Nail-free adhesive hooks are an option to hang wreaths and lights to minimize



damage.

• String lights everywhere. Lights can be strung around windows, mirrors or bookshelves to create a cozy glow.

• Invest in pillow covers. Instead of buying new pillows for the holidays, existing throw pillows can be tucked into holiday-hued covers.

• Go with miniature details. Decorating a small apartment is an opportunity to display small collections. An array of miniature trees or delicate glass ornaments on shelves is festive without overwhelming residents and guests, according to West Elm.

• Utilize the balcony. Apartment dwellers who have a patio or balcony can use it to enhance the holiday spirit. Dangling outdoor lanterns or string lights on the railing will add a touch of sparkle.

• Pick cohesive colors. A color palette of two or three tones will help smaller rooms look organized instead of cluttered, according to Food52.

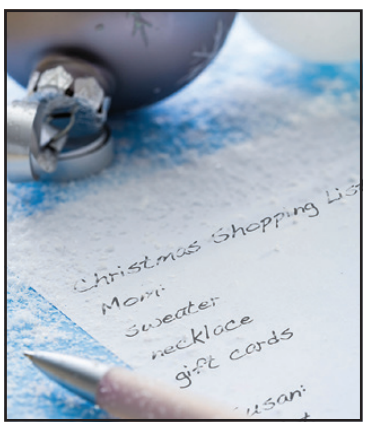
• Bring in nature. Even though an apartment may be in an urban area, that doesn't mean one can't enjoy a little nature. Display pine branches and real pine cones in vases to create an easy centerpiece.

• Display a seasonal doormat. A festive doormat is a simple way to spread cheer and welcome guests. It's also an inexpensive and impactful decorative item that can be used year after year.

• Dress up windows. Windows can be adorned with curtains that add a touch of glam or holiday colors. A simple string of lights across the curtain rod adds whimsy and illumination.

Apartments can be adorned in holiday finery with simple touches that won't overwhelm compact spaces.

Holiday shopping in an era marked by high prices



The holiday season is a special time of year when families and friends gather to celebrate their faith and enjoy opportunities to spend time together. Many a tradition has come to define the holiday season, and exchanging gifts with loved ones is among the most popular customs come December.

Shopping for holiday gifts commands a lot of attention. Holiday shopping also is a costly endeavor, particularly in an era marked by high prices. Despite the rising costs associated with inflation, consumers appear ready to spend this holiday season. According to the Basis 2026 Winter Holiday Shopping Trends study, 35 percent of consumers are planning to increase their holiday spending this season. But 57 percent of consumers acknowledge they intend to look for deals and discounts more actively this holiday season, while one in three admits they will shop while sticking to a stricter budget.

As high prices loom over the holiday season, shoppers can keep these tips in mind to avoid overspending.

• *Avoid blind shopping.* Starting a holiday shopping excursion without knowing what you're looking for can lead to impulse buying and overspending. Prior to shopping, make a list of the people you will be shopping for and the dollar amount you intend to spend on each person. Once that list has been made, jot down some gift ideas next to each person's name. Gift ideas should reflect how much you intend to spend on each person. This pre-shopping planning should not take long, and it can reduce the risk of overspending and even save time on shopping excursions.

• *Track your spending.* It's easy to lose track of holiday spending, particularly for shoppers who start months in advance of the holiday season. But tracking all gift-related spending, including dollars spent on items purchased months in advance of the holiday season, is vital to staying within your budget.

• *Take advantage of retail holidays at local businesses.* Many retailers, whether they're big box stores or locally owned independent businesses, participate in retail holidays like Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Such days offer plenty of opportunities to find great deals. This can be especially true when shopping at locally owned, independent retailers. Big box stores and online retailers may offer great deals, but only limited inventories. By the time shoppers get to the store or visit the website, many of the best deals might be gone, and shoppers will then settle for non-sale items. Smaller businesses may offer store-wide discounts on retail holidays, ensuring shoppers can find great deals throughout the day and not just during the small window when sale items are still available.

• *Coordinate with fellow shoppers.* Pooling resources with family members is a great way to find great gifts without breaking the bank. If someone on your list really wants a big ticket item like a new tablet or television, coordinate with your family members to pool your resources so that wish can be granted without anyone ending up in debt.

Holiday shopping when inflation is high can be difficult. But there are many ways to shop and save even when prices are high.



The many reasons to support Small Business Saturday

Small business is big business across much of North America. According to a 2024 report from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, nearly 98 percent of all businesses in Canada are small businesses, which the Government of Canada defines as firms with one to 99 paid employees. Small businesses boast an equally notable presence in the United States, where the Small Business Administration reports such establishments account for 99 percent of the nation's firms.



With such a profound presence in both Canada and the United States, it's no wonder small businesses are championed at a point in time when shopping takes center stage. Small Business Saturday occurs each year on the Saturday after American Thanksgiving, making it part of a weekend that is often characterized as the start of the holiday shopping season. With small businesses set to take their well-earned turn in the spotlight, consumers can ponder the many reasons to support Small Business Saturday this year.

• **Small businesses are significant employers.** The term "small business" can be misleading, particularly in terms of job creation. While small businesses are generally described as firms with fewer than 500 employees, recent data from the SBA indicated small companies accounted for two-thirds of employment growth across the U.S. over the last quarter century, ultimately generating around 13 million jobs during that time period. Small businesses also are big-time employers in Canada, where the ISEDC notes such firms employed 46.5 percent of the nation's total private labor force in 2023. Those jobs are filled by consumers' family members, friends and neighbors, and supporting these employers ensures those individuals can keep earning.

• **Small businesses help to fund vital local services.** Another notable reason to support small businesses is their role in creating strong local tax bases. The revenue generated by successful, local small businesses strengthens communities because it translates into tax income for local towns, which benefits schools, community organizations and public safety.

• **Small business spending is more likely to stay in the local community.** Another way supporting small businesses benefits communities relates to where consumers' dollars go once they're spent. Data from the American Independent Business Alliance indicates 48 percent of each purchase at a local independent business was recirculated locally. By comparison, just 14 percent of purchases at chain stores was recirculated locally. That means more than three times as much money is staying in communities when consumers buy from locally owned businesses compared to chain retailers.

There's no shortage of reasons to support Small Business Saturday. This year, consumers can do their part and give local small businesses, and the communities they call home, their unwavering support by shopping local on Small Business Saturday.

BLACK FRIDAY
SHOP LOCAL SATURDAY
NOV. 27 & 28 • 9am - 4pm
The Kirk Shoppe
4 Clinton Street, Delhi
MANY SPECIALS BOTH DAYS!

Remember When Donating:
Clothing should be in NEW or nearly New CONDITION.
NO: car seats, helmets, electronics, or books.
Furniture accepted on staff approval.
Contact Kirk Shoppe with photos or bring to shop on Monday or Thursday A.M. for approval.
We need your cooperation so that The Kirk can continue to provide a low-cost shopping venue for local folks and financial support for local missions.

Thank you for your help & support.
May God bless you.



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MRC

Bake a tasty batch of gingerbread cookies this holiday season

The holiday season wouldn't be the same without the various traditions that make this special time of year so unique. Baking is arguably among the most cherished holiday traditions, as many cannot imagine what the month of December might be like without cookies. That's a reality those who love to bake need not confront, and this recipe for "Gingerbread Holiday Cookies" from Lines+Angles ensures holiday celebrants can meet their need for cookies this season.

Gingerbread Holiday Cookies



Makes 36 to 48 cookies

- 1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 11/2 cups packed dark brown sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 71/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for work surface
- 4 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt

For Royal Icing:

- 4 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted (plus extra if needed)
- 3 tablespoons meringue powder
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ½ cup warm water with ¼ cup more, if necessary

In Addition

- Food coloring, gel paste preferred

1. Using an electric mixer set on low speed, cream together the butter and sugar until thoroughly combined. Add the eggs and molasses and mix until incorporated. Sift together the flour, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, baking soda, and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture and mix well.

2. Divide dough in half and wrap each portion in plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour, or until firm.

3. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line two cookie sheets with cooking parchment paper.

4. Allow dough to sit at room temperature until pliable, about 15 minutes. Take about ½ cup of dough at a time and roll out onto a floured surface to a thickness of ⅛-inch. Cut out desired holiday shapes with cookie cutters. You can re-roll the scrap pieces. Transfer the cookies to the prepared cookie sheets, using a spatula.

5. Bake for 10 minutes, or until just brown around the edges. Transfer to wire rack to cool.

For Royal Icing:

1. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the confectioners' sugar and meringue powder until combined. Add the vanilla and ½ cup water and beat on medium to high speed for 5 to 7 minutes or until glossy and stiff peaks form. Test the consistency by spreading a small amount of icing on a cookie using a knife; if the icing runs off the edge of the cookie, add more confectioners' sugar until the desired consistency is achieved; if too thick, add more water.

2. Working quickly, divide icing between bowls and add food coloring. Decorate as desired. Icing hardens quickly when exposed to air. Store remaining icing in an airtight container.

Note: Yield will vary depending on the size of the cutters.

Holiday crafts for kids



Many people celebrate the holiday season, but perhaps no people enjoy this festive time of year as much as young children. Kids' eager eyes cannot wait to see homes transformed into winter wonderlands, and kids anxiously count down the days until they can tear into mountains of presents.

The weeks leading up to the holidays are among the most exciting of the year. When looking to wrangle kids' nervous holiday season energy, simple crafts are great at keeping little ones busy while parents tackle holiday responsibilities. These crafty projects can serve as new family traditions or a way to increase the number of holiday keepsakes. Here are several holiday craft ideas that the young (and young at heart) can enjoy, courtesy of Good Housekeeping, Women's Day and Chalk Academy.

Popsicle stick trees

What would a kids' craft be if it didn't include popsicle sticks? Cut colorful (or handpainted) popsicle sticks into pieces that gradually get smaller to mimic the triangle taper of a Christmas tree. Glue each cut piece to an intact, vertical popsicle stick, leaving a little space between "boughs." Attach a star on the top of the tree, and glue on rhinestones or metallic accents for some bling. A loop of ribbon or jute rope is the finishing touch glued on to the top so these adorable trees can be hung on the actual Christmas tree.

Paper plate angels

No tree is complete without a topper, and a smiling angel fits the bill perfectly. Visit a party store to purchase gold or silver paper plates. Also, pick up wooden balls for the face, wood dowels, glue, and ribbon. Pipe cleaners can be bent into a halo, too. Cut a V shape out of what will serve as the top of the angel, and the bottom left and right sides. This will make wing and skirt shapes from the plate. Glue the dowel to the ball, and then attach to the back of the cut plate. Add the halo and ribbon around the neck and any other embellishments. You also can draw a face on the wood ball with permanent markers.

Pipe cleaner garland

Kids can make festive garland to hang on the tree with something as simple as pipe cleaners. The pipe cleaners can be bent into circles or other shapes and linked together. Any extras can be turned into bows to use on presents.

Customized Christmas stockings

Kids can personalize their own stocking with some craft supplies. Provide a plain burlap or felt stocking and various decorations, including ribbon, pom poms, trim, cut-outs, stickers, and more. Fabric glue or another sturdy adhesive will keep all the items in place.

Bird feeder wreath

This idea blends crafting, science and a love of nature. Kids can place sliced fruit, berries, small sprigs of rosemary, and nuts into a bundt cake tray filled with water. Freeze the tray overnight. Then release the ice wreath and hang outside to add a festive touch and bring winter wildlife to the yard.

Holiday craft projects are a great way to keep little ones busy while parents tend to holiday planning and other seasonal tasks.







Turn Leftover Holiday Ham Into Crave-Worthy Meals

Ham is a traditional centerpiece of holiday feasts for many families. Once the festivities wind down, you might find yourself with a refrigerator full of leftovers ready to be transformed into quick, flavorful meals.

Bone-in holiday hams or single-serving ham steaks from Coleman All Natural Meats can become mouthwatering, savory leftovers for a variety of everyday dishes like these, with the bonus of having no antibiotics ever or added hormones.

For a protein-rich breakfast, crispy fried ham joins eggs, cheese and hash brown patties in these Crispy Ham Steak Breakfast Wraps with Hot Honey.

When it's time for lunch or dinner, these nutritious Ham Steak Grain Bowls with Honey Mustard Vinaigrette combine savory ham with tender roasted vegetables and wholesome farro or quinoa. Dressed in a tangy honey mustard vinaigrette, they get an extra pop of freshness from leafy greens and diced apples.

Discover more delicious ways to use leftover ham at ColemanNatural.com.

Ham Steak Grain Bowls with Honey Mustard Vinaigrette

Prep time: 15 minutes Cook time: 30 minutes Servings: 4

- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and diced into small cubes
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 small head broccoli, cut into florets
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, plus additional to taste, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 cup dry farro or quinoa
- 2 Coleman All Natural Meats ham steaks, 6-8 ounces each, diced
- 2 cups fresh baby spinach
- 1 medium crisp apple, diced

Honey Mustard Dressing:

- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons plain Greek yogurt
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- kosher salt
- freshly cracked black pepper

Preheat oven to 425 F. Line large baking sheet with parchment paper.

In large bowl, add sweet potatoes, carrots and broccoli. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil and season with kosher salt and black pepper. Toss to coat then spread evenly on baking sheet.

Roast 20-30 minutes, stirring halfway through, until vegetables are tender and lightly caramelized. Remove broccoli earlier if finished before root vegetables.

Prepare farro or quinoa according to package instructions. Fluff with fork and set aside.

In large skillet over medium heat, heat remaining olive oil. Add ham steak and cook 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until edges are golden and crispy.

Divide cooked farro or quinoa among four bowls. Add roasted vegetables, ham steak, fresh spinach and apples.

To make dressing: In small bowl or jar, combine Dijon mustard, honey, olive oil, apple cider vinegar, Greek yogurt, garlic, salt and pepper. Whisk or shake until smooth.

Drizzle bowls with honey mustard dressing.

#17959 Source: Coleman Natural



Crispy Ham Steak Breakfast Wraps with Hot Honey

Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 15 minutes Servings: 2

- 2 frozen hash brown patties
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, divided
- 1 Coleman All Natural Meats ham steak, 6-8 ounces, diced small
- 2 large eggs
- kosher salt
- freshly cracked black pepper
- 2 large flour tortillas
- ½ cup freshly shredded cheddar or Colby Jack cheese, divided
- 2 teaspoons hot honey, plus more for serving, divided

Cook frozen hash brown patties according to package instructions until golden brown and crispy. Set aside.

In skillet over medium heat, melt 1/2 tablespoon butter. Add diced ham steak and cook 4-6 minutes, stirring occasionally, until golden and lightly crispy. Transfer to plate.

Reduce skillet heat to medium-low then add remaining butter. Whisk eggs with salt and pepper; add to skillet. Cook gently, stirring occasionally, until just set.

Lay tortillas flat. Sprinkle approximately 2 tablespoons shredded cheese in center of each tortilla, leaving wide border around edges.

Divide eggs and ham between tortillas. Add one hash brown patty to each, drizzle with approximately 1 teaspoon hot honey and finish with remaining shredded cheese.



Fold tortilla edges inward, creating overlapping pleats until filling is enclosed. If necessary, use small piece of another tortilla to cover openings before folding.

Heat lightly greased nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Place each wrap seam-side down and cook 2-3 minutes until golden brown and sealed.

Flip and cook 2-3 minutes until second side is crispy.

Transfer to cutting board, rest 1 minute then slice in half. Serve with additional hot honey, if desired.

Burn candles safely for the holidays and beyond

Candles are not in short supply come the holiday season. During Chanukah, candles are an integral component of celebrating the miracle of oil that burned in the Temple for eight days. Celebrants of Kwanzaa utilize candles to represent the seven principles of the holiday. Christians light candles during Christmas services and in their homes to represent the light Jesus brought to the world.



There is no denying the warmth and beauty candles can bring to a home when they are flickering delicately. But candles have open flames, so caution must reign supreme when they are in use. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission says 85 percent of candle fires can be prevented by following some key safety precautions. The National Fire Protection Association says Christmas is the most dangerous day for candle fires. Here is how to burn candles safely.

- Always trim wicks to 1/4-inch before burning candles. Long or crooked wicks can cause uneven burning, dripping or flaring.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy and will not tip over easily.
- Use a long match or long lighter to light candles to prevent fingers and hands from getting too close to the flames.
- Run used matches under water to cool them down and prevent fires from occurring after matches are disposed in the trash.
- Never leave a candle unattended. It should be in sight at all times.
- Place and store candles beyond the reach of children and pets where they will be less likely to get knocked over.
- Never touch or move a candle while it is burning or while the wax is liquefied.
- Place candles on stable, heat-resistant surfaces.
- Keep candles away from drafts, vents and air currents.
- Follow candle manufacturers' recommendations on burn time and proper use.
- When utilizing multiple candles, place them at least three inches apart from one another. This reduces the chances for the candles to melt one another, or create their own drafts that will cause the candles to burn improperly.
- Extinguish a candle if the flame becomes too high or flickers repeatedly.
- Refrain from burning a candle longer than three hours at a time, and never burn a candle when there is less than one centimeter of wax at the base.
- Use a candle snuffer to safely extinguish a candle, and make sure the candle is completely out (wick ember is no longer glowing) before leaving the room.

Candles can be awe-inspiring components of holiday decor. But caution must always be the top priority when lighting candles inside a home.











A roasted turkey to serve as the centerpiece of a holiday meal

Turkey might only be prepared on the rarest of occasions, but it certainly takes center stage come the holiday season. As families prepare to spend time together during this special time of year, hosts undoubtedly recognize turkey as a potential centerpiece of the holiday meal. With that in mind, hosts can utilize the following recipe for "Whole Roast Turkey With Cranberries and Bay Leaves" from Lines+Angles.

Whole Roast Turkey With Cranberries and Bay Leaves



Serves 15

- 1 whole fresh turkey, approximately 15 pounds, rinsed and patted dry
- 10 tablespoons butter, softened
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh sage
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 4 bay leaves, plus extra to serve
- 2 large carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 large celery stalks, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 small onions, quartered
- 4 cups chicken stock, kept warm on stove over very low heat
- 10 ounces fresh cranberries, washed (optional)
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black peppercorns

1. Remove turkey from fridge 1 hour prior to preparation.
2. Mash together butter, chopped herbs, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon black pepper in a bowl; alternatively, pulse together in a food processor.
3. Preheat oven to 450 F. Season main cavity of the turkey with plenty of salt and pepper. Stuff cavity with bay leaves and vegetables.
4. Place turkey on a trivet or wire rack set inside a large roasting pan. Rub herb butter all over outside of turkey and season with more salt and pepper.
5. Roast in oven until lightly brown, about 45 minutes. Reduce oven to 350 F and continue to roast until thickest part of thighs register at least 160 F on an instant-read thermometer, 2 to 2½ hours; baste turkey every 15 to 20 minutes with warm chicken stock.
6. Remove from oven and let rest, loosely tented with aluminum foil, for at least 30 minutes before serving on a bed of cranberries and bay leaves.

How to stay within budget when hosting for the holidays



Family and friends are a big part of the holiday season. Countless people reunite with family and friends between late November and early January, and many even host loved ones during this festive time of year.

Hosting loved ones during the holiday season can fill a home with love and laughter. Hosting can save guests the cost of staying in a hotel, but it can put a strain on hosts' finances at a point in the year when budgets may already be stretched thin. Thankfully, there are many ways to stay within budget when hosting for the holidays.

• *Trim the guest list.* Rising food costs have been a topic of discussion for much of the year, so hosts can anticipate spending more to feed their guests in 2026. The Economic Research Service reports that food-at-home costs increased by roughly 3 percent between June 2025 and June 2026, and the cost of holiday season staples like beef and veal experienced particularly large price swings. The ERS also notes that food prices tend to spike each December due to increased demand. Hosts can combat rising food costs by trimming their guest lists to include only family and close friends.

• *Shop in advance.* While food costs tend to spike in December, many holiday season staples can be purchased in advance and frozen. Beef, chicken, veal, and other main courses can be purchased prior to December and stored in the freezer. This can help hosts avoid rising food costs and also offers a way to spread out hosting-related costs so hosts are not spending extra money on food during a time of year when they also need to shop for gifts and possibly even spend on travel.

• *Request that guests help to share the cost.* Hosts may handle the cooking, but that does not mean they need to provide everything. Ask guests to bring snacks, desserts, and beverages. Sharing food and beverage responsibilities saves hosts money and many guests would love to pitch in.

• *Simplify at the bar.* Alcohol prices do not necessarily experience the same dramatic spike in cost as food come the holiday season. But spirits can still be expensive, and prices can always rise. When planning the drinks menu for a holiday party, hosts can emphasize simple and less expensive beverages like beer and wine. Cocktails might be a go-to for some people, but they often require multiple ingredients in addition to the more costly spirits like whiskey and vodka.

Hosting for the holidays can make the season more fun but also more expensive for hosts. These strategies and more can help hosts stay on budget this December.

Christmas stocking decorating tips and tricks



Hanging Christmas stockings is just one of the many traditions that fill the days leading up to Christmas. One theory regarding the origins of stockings says the tradition began when a poor widower who had three daughters worried over having enough money for their wedding dowries to help secure the daughters' futures. The women, who had hung their stockings by the fireplace to dry, woke up to find solid gold spheres inside. This legend suggests kindly St. Nicholas visited the home in the night and left the presents, helping ensure the daughters could marry well, after all.

Christmas stockings were the first places where gifts were stowed, before under the boughs of Christmas trees became the primary spot for placing gifts. Then stockings were secondary vessels reserved for small trinkets. Today stockings are largely Christmas decorations rather than places to place gifts. Still, they're a key component of holiday magic.

When including stockings in holiday festivities, follow these tips for whimsy and more.

• Utilize stocking holders. Stocking holders are either metal or wooden devices that are placed on mantels. Hooks on the holders suspend the stockings. Just be sure the holders are sturdy enough to handle the weight of a stuffed stocking if you plan on filling it with goodies.

• Determine your style. There are Christmas stockings that coordinate to just about any interior design style. From farmhouse to modern to traditional, choose one that fits with your aesthetic. That isn't to say you can't mix and match stockings if you prefer a more eclectic, homespun feel.

• Enhance your stocking look. If stockings are strictly decorative, enhance their look with a few tricks. First, use tissue paper or balled up shopping bags to stuff the stockings and give them shape. Fill a small baggie with sand or florist glass and place in the heel of the stocking to balance it out and prevent the stocking from blowing around in the breeze.

• No fireplace; no problem. Stockings are traditionally hung from the fireplace mantel, but if you don't have a fireplace there is no need to fret. Simply use ribbons to hang them from the bannister of a staircase, or hang stockings right on walls with removable hooks, or from sturdy shelves. You also can think creatively and hang larger stockings on a door like you might a wreath.

Whether they're decorative or functional, stockings can be an integral component of holiday decor in a home.





