



*A Room with a View.*

## DECEMBER 2021



## NOTES & NEWS

### Winter Is Coming

The coldest season will begin Dec. 21.

### Welcoming Wreaths

Wreaths made of greenery have been used since ancient Greece, symbolizing victory, strength and honor. Later, as people decorated their homes in winter with evergreen trees, they used the trimmed branches to weave a wreath, in an effort to reduce waste. Wreaths became a symbol of welcoming, as well as a sign of new life to come in the spring.

### Frozen Food Hangout

Wire shelves in your freezer help maximize space and keep food organized. Create even more storage space by using binder clips to attach bags of frozen fruits and vegetables to the bottom of a wire shelf. This makes them tidy and easily accessible; plus, you may be able to slide more items beneath the hanging bags.

### From the Heart

"It isn't the size of the gift that matters, but the size of the heart that gives it."  
—Eileen Elias Freeman

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Jingle All the Way

The jolly sound of sleigh bells ringing is a sign that winter's on its way. Bells have long been placed on horse harnesses as good luck charms, and before cars were invented, sleigh bells signaled that a horse-drawn carriage was coming down the street. This was especially important when snowy paths softened the sound of the animals' hooves, linking the jingle of bells to the winter season.

### Green Ideas for Greetings

Turn this year's greeting cards into next year's holiday decor. Pop cards with your favorite designs into inexpensive frames to dress them up for a seasonal display. Another green idea for greeting cards is to cut off the fronts and reuse them as gift tags.

### A Popular Plaid Pattern

The iconic uniform of lumberjacks and other outdoorsy types, the pattern known as buffalo plaid starts popping up everywhere as soon as cooler weather sets in. The black-and-red checkered motif has origins with Scotland's MacGregor clan, who wore a similar pattern called Rob Roy tartan that was brought to the U.S. during the 1800s, becoming a favorite of folks on the frontier. Still a fashion staple, buffalo plaid now covers a variety of home goods, from bedding to wall decor and wrapping paper.

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# TRIVIA WHIZ



## A Handful of Facts About Gloves

As temperatures dip with the changing seasons, you may pull on a pair of gloves to keep your fingers warm. But this simple wardrobe staple has had dozens of other handy purposes throughout history.

- The earliest known gloves were found in King Tut's tomb, dating back to 1323 B.C.
- Medieval blacksmiths, woodcutters and masons wore gloves made of leather, metal or wool to protect their hands from injury.
- You may have heard the phrase "throw down the gauntlet," meaning to challenge someone. This saying refers to the heavy metal gloves worn by knights, which could be tossed at the feet of an opponent to begin a duel.
- Long gloves became fashionable for ladies in the 1500s. Queen Elizabeth I of England loved gloves so much that she owned about 2,000 pairs!
- Why do cars have a glove box? Because leather driving gloves were once must-have accessories that protected the hands from a hot or cold steering wheel and provided better grip.
- From baseball to boxing to billiards, gloves are used in many sports for both safety and skill.

## Smitten With Gloves

Gloves have long been associated with romance. Knights were said to carry the glove of a sweetheart in their helmets to bring them good luck. In Victorian England, a suitor would gift a pair of gloves to the girl of his dreams, who'd wear the gloves in public if she returned his affections. And a Latvian tradition calls for brides to fill a hope chest with hundreds of handmade mittens as a sign of devotion.



## 'Tis the Season for Self-Care

Amid the holiday hustle and bustle, make time for some stress-relieving habits.

Establish a self-care routine for the season. Maybe it's starting the day with a workout or taking a few minutes every night to draw or write in a journal. Instead of staying up too late decorating, cooking or wrapping presents, set an alarm for bedtime so you get plenty of sleep.

Distinct sounds and aromas fill the air this time of year. Enjoy a moment

of mindfulness while listening to a cheery tune, savoring a favorite treat or breathing in a seasonal scent.

Part of the joy of the holidays is gathering with friends and family, but you don't have to attend every get-together if you don't have the time or energy. Similarly, if someone gives you a gift, you are not obligated to return the gesture; simply express a sincere thank-you.

Lights, laughter and fa-la-la's are fun and festive, but if your senses need a rest, step away for a little while to relax, practice deep breathing, and recharge. Frequent breaks can help you enjoy the holly jolly moments even more.

Finally, resist the urge to compare yourself to others. Take a break from social media if seeing others' picture-perfect posts about decorations, cookies and family photo sessions cause you stress, and focus on what's making you happy in your own life.

## Get Creative With Clever Gift Wrap

If you're looking for an eco-friendly alternative to wrapping paper—or maybe you've simply used up your stash—try these creative solutions:

*A tisket, a tasket ...* Gift baskets are a classic way to dress up all sorts of goodies. If wicker or fabric doesn't fit your recipient's style, think outside the basket and go for a storage bin, laundry basket, shower caddy or plastic crate.

*Brown paper packages.* Have you received a package that used crumpled paper as padding? Smooth that paper out and use it to wrap gifts. Similar options include lunch sacks, paper grocery and takeout bags, empty cardboard tubes, and cereal boxes that you've turned inside out.

*Plush and practical.* Roll up smaller items in a towel. This works great for themed gifts, such as utensils in a kitchen hand towel; soaps and lotions

in a bathroom towel; or sunglasses and a water tumbler in a beach towel.

*Imaginative upcycling.* Before tossing or recycling glass jars, tin cans and plastic food containers, consider using them to hold small gifts, candy or other treats. Thoroughly clean and dry the items, and spruce them up with paint, ribbon or colorful tape.

*A tote-ally great idea.* Do you have a collection of fabric tote bags that haven't been touched? What about makeup pouches? Pass them on to someone else by placing their presents inside.

*News you can use.* Add a nostalgic touch by wrapping gifts in newspaper, grocery ad mailers and magazines.





## WIT & WISDOM



### Spread Cheer Throughout the Year

Kind words and deeds can warm the hearts of others—and they're good for the giver, too. Research shows that being helpful and generous can boost both physical and mental health, in addition to having a positive effect on the recipient.

Cultivating kind habits just takes a little extra attention in your daily life. For example, if you see something that reminds you of someone, take a moment to reach out to them. Send a quick message letting them know they crossed your mind and it made you smile. This simple gesture may just make their day.

Sincere compliments can also have a huge impact on a person's mood. If you like somebody's clothes, shoes, car, a joke they told, anything—tell them! Whether a stranger or someone close to you, your words will hold meaning. Similarly, thank others for something they did, from a co-worker who went above and beyond to a roommate who did a routine chore. People love hearing that they're appreciated.

Creative types may enjoy making notes to leave around the community. Design bookmarks with a positive message to tuck into library books or leave on car windshields, or paint "kindness rocks" to place in parks and public areas.

It doesn't have to cost a lot to help others out in financial ways. You could leave a few quarters at a laundromat, pay for a person's coffee behind you in line, or drop off a few canned items to a food pantry.



## One Minute Chef

### Hot Cocoa Pancakes

#### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup 2% or nonfat milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups ready-made pancake mix
- 1/4 cup water
- chocolate syrup
- marshmallow spread
- pancake syrup

#### Directions:

Heat a skillet over medium-low heat or an electric griddle to 375° F.

In a microwave-safe bowl, mix cocoa powder, sugar, milk and vanilla until well combined. Heat in the microwave for 30 seconds.

Next, combine the cocoa mixture, pancake mix and water. Stir until large lumps disappear, but do not beat or overmix the batter.

Pour slightly less than 1/4 cup batter onto the lightly greased skillet or griddle. Cook for 90 seconds, or until bubbles appear on the surface. Flip the pancake and cook it for 30 seconds more. Repeat with the remaining batter.

Top pancakes with chocolate syrup, marshmallow spread or pancake syrup.

*Find more recipes at Culinary.net.*



"It is only when the cold season comes that we know the pine and cypress to be evergreens."

—**Chinese proverb**

"Thank goodness for the first snow. It was a reminder—no matter how old you became and how much you'd seen—things could still be new if you were willing to believe they still mattered."

—**Candace Bushnell**

"A good way to remedy a cold morning is to have a warm heart."

—**Keith Wynn**

"Silence can always be broken by the sound of footsteps walking over frozen ground."

—**Merrill Moore**

"A snow day literally and figuratively falls from the sky, unbidden, and seems like a thing of wonder."

—**Susan Orlean**

"Shut the door. Not that it lets in the cold, but that it lets out the coziness."

—**Mark Twain**

"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour."

—**John Boswell**

"Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together."

—**Vesta M. Kelly**

"If flowers can teach themselves how to bloom after winter passes, so can you."

—**Noor Shirazie**



## December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>December</h1>			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 	11
12	13 	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 <b>Christmas (Observed)</b>	25 <b>Christmas</b>
26	27	28	29	30	31 <b>New Year's Day (Observed)</b>	

# "This Month In History"

## DECEMBER

**1901:** With a goal of setting rules and safety standards, representatives from over 60 universities meet to form the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States. In 1910, the organization was renamed the NCAA.

**1924:** At age 2, Judy Garland makes her stage debut at her father's movie theater in Grand Rapids, Minn.

**1948:** The United Nations General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Defining

fundamental freedoms of all human beings, the document has been translated into more than 500 languages.

**1973:** Astronauts on NASA's Skylab 4 mission take a 7-hour spacewalk, the longest at the time.

**1987:** Ron Hextall of the Philadelphia Flyers becomes the first NHL goalie to score a goal by intentionally firing the puck into the other team's net.

**2001:** "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring" premieres. It was the first film in the trilogy based on author J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy series.

**2007:** At 81, Queen Elizabeth II becomes the oldest ever monarch of the U.K., surpassing her great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria.

**2016:** Global retailer Amazon makes its first delivery by drone. The package arrived at its destination 13 minutes after it was ordered.