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November 2007

A
“Simply Florida”
Holiday
Extravaganza!

Guide to
Celebrating the
Holidays in Style
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# References

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- 9 Fabulous Fall Centerpieces—Better Homes and Garden—www.bhg.com/100days
- Easy Centerpieces for Thanksgiving—Better Homes and Garden—www.bhg.com/100days
- Simple Christmas Centerpieces—Better Homes and Garden—www.bhg.com/100days
- 24 Elegant Holiday Arrangements—Better Homes and Garden—www.bhg.com/100days
- Table Setting 101. www.allrecipes.com
- Setting the Table. www.winn-dixie.com
- Table Setting Ideas. www.6869.com
Simple Gifts

Gifts don't have to be expensive to mean much. Often, the best gifts are those that come from the heart and have a personal touch. Listed below are several gifts you can give that don't take much time, nor often, much money.

Herb shakers

Make at Home Mixes

Plant a tree ($10 at arborday.org) or commit a “random act of kindness” in your recipient's honor

Arrange and frame a family tree photo collage

Repot herbs and pass along plants

Plan an outing to a zoo, museum, or park with your favorite person

Time is important – share your time with a loved one – special activities, a candlelight dinner, massage, or picnic

Make an emergency kit for someone for their car or house. Include things such as a blanket, flashlight, gas can, jumper cables, etc.

Dinner Menu—Option 1

For this dinner option, choose one meat and two to three sides, plus one to two desserts.

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<td>Whole Wheat Dinner Rolls</td>
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<td>Classic Cream Pound Cake</td>
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<td>Pecan Pie</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flan</td>
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</table>

Optional:

Light Cream of Broccoli Soup               | 136         |
Dinner Menu—Option 2

This menu offers a more non-traditional meal that is appropriate for vegetarians or those who want to cut back on their meat consumption.

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<td>Garden Waldorf Salad</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese Garlic Biscuits</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Lime Pie</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen Peanut Butter Pie</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional: Tropical Gazpacho Soup</td>
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Table Decorations

Christmas

Place a platter in the center of the table. Form a foundation using real or artificial magnolia leaves (spritz with gold paint if you please). Place several large colored ornaments on top of the leaves and fill in with berry sprigs.

Begin by wrapping a box in holiday paper (or better yet, find one already decorated). Fill box with holiday ornaments, then top with small wrapped gifts, topped with bows made from sheer ribbon.

For this easy centerpiece, simply fill a large, clear glass bowl with ornaments that share a particular color or style theme. Vary the size and shape of the ornaments to add pizzazz.

Place a red table runner length-wise on the table. Use four clear candlesticks of varying sizes and place a red over-sized ornament on top of each candlestick. Each ornament should have a letter to spell NOEL. Vary the amount of candlesticks and ornaments to make different words.
Table Decorations

Hanukkah

Fill a silver bowl with shining silver or blue beads, a pillar candle, and several medium-sized glass balls. Drape beads over the side of the bowl to add effect.

Lay a blue table runner the length of your table. Gather the middle of the runner using a wide velvet ribbon. On the runner, line up tall tapers in simple candlesticks and embellish with star cutouts and beads. To make cutouts, cut out pieces of cardboard in the shape of a star, cover with decorative paper and embellish with beads. (Tip—Make extra stars to serve as placecards for seating)

Buffet Menu

This menu is well suited to a meal that is served buffet-style and is more casual in nature.

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<th>Item</th>
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<td>Cheddar Spinach Quiche</td>
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<td>Hot Chicken Salad</td>
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<td>Crab Casserole</td>
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<td>Party Potatoes</td>
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<td>Broccoli Raisin Salad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bacon &amp; Cherry Tomato Bites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lemon Bars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citrus Cookies</td>
<td>122</td>
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</table>
**Appetizers**

This menu works for informal social gatherings that do not include a formal meal. You can choose all items or pick from a variety of them. Dips can be served with bread, crackers or chips of your choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Germ Deviled Eggs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smoky Salmon Cheese Ball</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked Spinach &amp; Artichoke Dip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Crab, Pepper &amp; Onion Dip</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confetti Quesadillas with Cilantro Yogurt Dip</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crostini with Fresh Tomato Basil Topping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flavored Pecans:</td>
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<td>Curried</td>
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<td>Spiced</td>
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<td>Sweet &amp; Salty</td>
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<td>Spicy Mango &amp; Avocado Salsa</td>
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<td>Veggie Christmas Tree</td>
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**Table Decorations**

**Thanksgiving**

Swirl a bittersweet vine around a fat pumpkin. Place pumpkin on a platter so that moisture won’t ruin the tablecloth. Decorate area around pumpkin with star anise and dried fruit slices, or pinecones, moss and natural elements.

Line up a set of appetizer plates and garnish with large sunflower heads. A small amount of water in the plates will help keep flowers fresh for a couple of days.

Place a 6-inch pillar candle inside a snuggly fit hole carved into the top of a medium-sized pumpkin. Tuck a few leaves and sprigs of bittersweet or other vine around the base of the candle.
Place Cards

Tie ribbon around a napkin. Tuck artificial leaf sprig with name written on it inside ribbon. Plate on plate or to the side of forks. Tips: For a special touch, have a stationary or party store custom print a special message on your ribbon.

Spray paint pine cones in gold or silver (or leave natural), and stick a name card into slot in pine cone.

Place an ornament with each guest's name on top of a wine glass at each table setting.

Use a small frame and place each guest's picture inside to indicate their seating position.

Make dreidel cut-outs using cardboard or heavy-weight cardstock and place each guest's name on one. Attach to ribbon securing a napkin in the center of the plate.

For a whimsical place card, spray-paint a Styrofoam cone with silver paint and hot-glue green mint candies to cover. Set on silver candleholders and attach a name card to the stem of the candleholder.

Attach an ornament to a sprig of holly (you can keep it natural or spray paint it). Attach a place card to another piece of wire through a hole in the corner. Secure the two pieces together and attach to the back of a chair. Finish with ribbon tied into a bow.

Photo: Better Homes & Gardens

Meal Planning

Color—Make your plate look like a painter's palette. The greater the number of different colors on your plate, the more varied and healthy your diet will be. As long as your plate is colorful you can generally be assured that you are eating enough fruits and vegetables and your meals are balanced. Plus a colorful plate is a treat for the eyes!

Temperature—Choose some cold foods, some served at room temperature, and some hot. Varied temperatures can help to stimulate appetite and make your meals more interesting.

Texture—should be varied to add interest and make the meal more pleasing to the palate. Crisp, crunchy, smooth, chunky, and tender are all textures you should think about. Vary texture by adding chewy breads, crunchy grains, and smooth, tender pasta to help add the essential servings of grains.

Variety—The most important meal planning tip of all: eat a variety of foods. For instance, don’t plan meals with chicken four days in a row. Eat a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, meats, and dairy products to ensure the most balanced diet.

When choosing recipes, pay attention to the nutrients listed as percentage of Daily Values. These values are set by the USDA to meet the nutritional requirements of the average American. These Values are set for protein, fat, vitamins, minerals, sodium and fiber.
Food Safety

Clean—Wash hands, utensils and surfaces with warm, soapy water before and after food preparation. To protect against bacteria, always wash after preparing meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood. For added protection, use a disinfectant cleaner or a mixture of bleach and water on surfaces.

Separate—Never place cooked food on an unwashed plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, eggs or seafood. Keep raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood, and their juices, away from ready-to-eat food.

Chill—Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food, and leftovers within two hours. Make sure the refrigerator is set at no higher than 40 degrees F and that the freezer is set at 0 degrees F.

Cook—Cook food to the proper internal temperature. Check for doneness with a food thermometer. Cook eggs until both the yolk and white are firm.

Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures—

Use a thermometer! It is the only way to tell if your food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy harmful bacteria.

140 F — Ham, fully cooked (to reheat)
145 F — Beef, lamb & veal steaks & roasts (medium rare)
160 F — Ground beef, pork, veal & lamb
Beef, lamb and veal steaks & roasts (medium)
Pork chops, ribs & roasts
Egg dishes
165 F — Ground chicken & turkey
Chicken & turkey—whole bird, breasts, legs, thighs & wings
Stuffing & casseroles
Leftovers

Guide to Setting a Buffet

When setting a buffet, table placement is key. The buffet should be placed in the center of the room, or two identical lines can be placed on each side of the table. When serving a large buffet and to help avoid a traffic jam, a separate area can be set up for beverages, where guests can serve themselves.

Empty boxes, pans, or bowls can be placed upside down and under a tablecloth, large piece of fabric, or napkin to provide a multi-level buffet.

If using a centerpiece, make sure it is in a place that can be admired, but that does not interfere with the serving of the food.

A decorative menu can be placed at the beginning of the buffet to let guests know what the meal will be. It is also a good idea to set out name cards by unusual foods or those that contain nuts, alcohol, or other ingredients that may cause allergic interactions.
Pyramid
1. Fold napkin in half diagonally.
2. Fold corners to meet top point
3. Turn napkin over and fold in half.
4. Pick up at center and stand on base of triangle.

Source: Custom Linen Service

Lady Windemere's Fan
1. Fold napkin in half.
2. Make 1/2" accordion pleats, starting at bottom.
3. Fold in half with pleating on the outside.
4. Fold upper right corner diagonally down to folded base of pleats and turn under edge.
5. Place on table and release pleats to create fan.

Source: Custom Linen Service

Table Setting

When setting a table, keep in mind the following:

Dinner plates should be placed approximately 2 inches from the table's edge, centered on the placemat (if using placemats) or squarely in front of each chair.

Soup bowls are placed on top of the dinner plate.

Salad plates are placed to the left of and just above the forks.

The bread plate should be placed to the right and slightly above the salad plate.

Lower edges of utensils are aligned with the bottom of the rim of the plate, about 1 inch up from the edge of the table, and approximately 1 inch away from the side of the plate.

Flatware is laid on the table in the order of use, starting on the outside of the place setting, and moving inward toward the plate.

The knife and spoon are laid on the right side of the plate setting, and the fork on the left. However, this can be reversed for left-handed diners.
The blade of the knife faces the plate.

Stemware is placed on the table in a way that is comfortable, convenient and symmetrical, and is determined by the dining occasion. At a formal affair, stemware is aligned symmetrically at the top right. In informal dining, comfort is more important, and stemware is placed to accommodate the handedness of the diner.

The water glass is placed approximately 1 inch above the tip of the dinner knife, and others are to the right of the water glass.

Coffee cups and saucers may be placed on the table to the right of the knife and spoon.

**Table Setting—Formal**

A. Napkin  E. Water Glass  J. Salad Fork
B. Service Plate  F. White Wine  K. Service Knife
C. Soup Bowl  G. Red Wine  L. Fish Knife
D. Butter Plate/Butter Knife or Salad Plate  H. Fish Fork
I. Dinner Fork  M. Soup Spoon
L. Dessert Fork/Spoon

**Pocket 1**
1. Fold the upper left hand corner over to the center of the napkin
2. Fold the bottom half of the napkin over.
3. Fold the napkin in half
4. Fold back the right hand side along the dotted line
5. Place your utensils inside the pocket.
**The Rose**
1. Fold all 4 corners of open napkin to center.
2. Fold new corners to center.
3. Turn napkin over and fold all 4 corners to center.
4. Holding center firmly, reach under each corner and pull up flaps to form petals. Reach between petals and pull flaps from underneath.

![Diagram of The Rose napkin folding steps](source:Custom Linen Service)

**Corn**
1. Fold the napkin in half diagonally. Bring the corners over to the middle.
2. Fold the bottom to the other side and turn the napkin over.
3. Fold the sides along the dotted lines to the middle.
4. Fold the bottom to the other side.
5. Fold the napkin back along the central axis.
6. Loosely pull open the “skin” of the corn.
7. Place the napkin in a wine glass.

![Diagram of Corn napkin folding steps](source:Custom Linen Service)

**Table Setting—Informal**

![Informal table setting diagram](source:Winn-Dixie.com)

- A. Service Plate
- B. Salad Plate
- C. Butter Plate, Butter Knife
- D. Water Glass
- E. Wine Glass
- F. Salad Fork
- G. Dinner Fork
- H. Dinner Knife
- I. Salad Knife

**Table Setting—Casual**

![Casual table setting diagram](source:Winn-Dixie.com)

- A. Service Plate
- B. Salad Plate
- C. Water Glass
- D. Salad Fork
- E. Dinner Fork
- F. Dinner Knife
- G. Teaspoon
Napkins

Napkins are provided to blot the lips and wipe fingertips, and help to provide ambience to the table setting. Napkins are placed according to the formality of the dinner.

At a formal meal, the napkins is placed on the service lace. If a hot soup will be served, the napkin is placed to the left of the forks.

At an informal meal, the napkin may be placed wherever the host chooses. Some common placements include: in the center of the plate, to the left of the forks, above the plate, under the plate, on the bread and butter place, in the wine glass, draped over the chair, wrapped around flatware on a buffet, or arranged decoratively in a container.

Napkin Folding

Bowtie
1. Fold the napkin into fourths.
2. Fold the ends over to the sides.
3. Fold the corners over.
4. Fold the ends over.
5. Fold the ends over.
6. Flip it
7. Done

The Crown
1. Fold napkin in half diagonally.
2. Fold corners to meet at top point.
3. Fold bottom point 2/3 way to top and fold back onto itself.
4. Turn napkin over bringing corners together, tucking one into the other.
5. Peel two top corners to make crown.
6. Open base of fold and stand upright.

Source: Custom Linen Service

Source: The Cuke Zone