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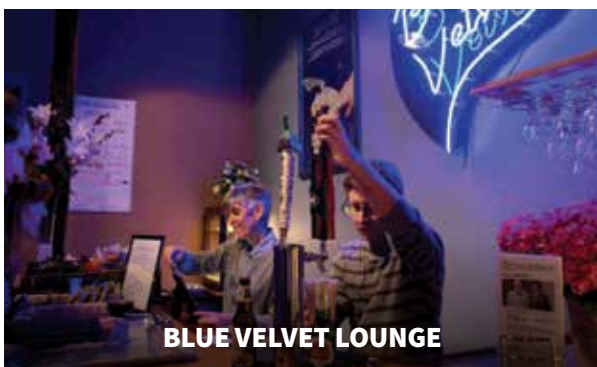
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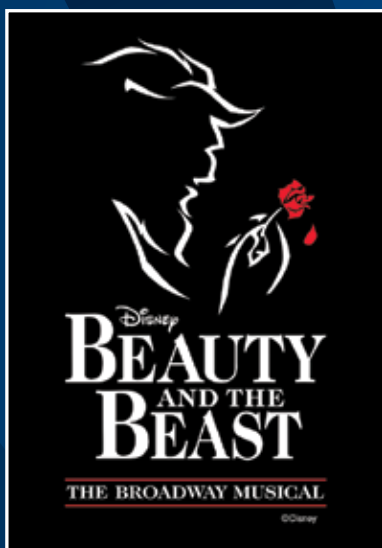


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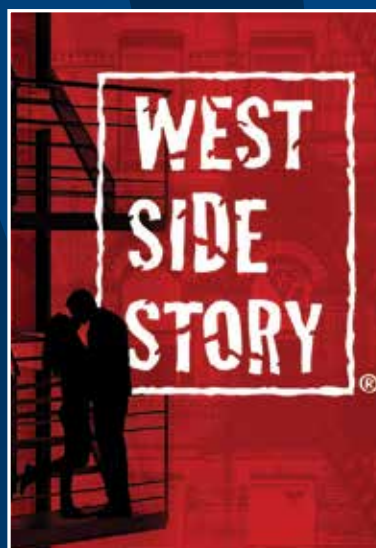
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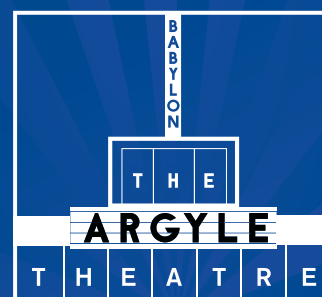


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How to avoid dry turkey this Thanksgiving

Turkey is the centerpiece of Thanksgiving dinners. The National Turkey Federation estimates approximately 46 million turkeys are consumed on Thanksgiving each year, followed by 22 million turkeys at Christmas time.

Turkey makes a pleasing picture on the dinner table. However, some people insist that turkey is their least favorite component of the Thanksgiving meal. One of the biggest complaints is turkey tends to be dry.

There are many reasons why turkey can come out dry. Turkey is a lean meat, and Healthline reports that turkey has slightly less fat in its dark meat than chicken. Another reason why turkey may be dry is due to its poor breast-to-leg ratio. By the time one gets the leg meat to cook to temperature so it's safe for consumption, the breast meat often has dried out. Seeing how many people dive for the breast meat initially, they could dish up some dry bird.

There are many ways home cooks can prevent dry turkey this Thanksgiving. Consider these turkey-tending tips.

Brine your bird. According to ScienceBlogs, what causes a human to perceive a food as juicy may actually be his or her own saliva at work. Salty foods may stimulate the production of saliva in the mouth, helping the food to feel much more moist while on the palate. To adequately inject enough salt into the turkey meat, submerge it in a salt brine for a few days before cooking.

Watch your cook time. It's important to avoid overcooking the turkey, which will turn it as dry as the Sahara. Some turkeys come equipped with pop-up timers to help cooks gauge when to take them out of the oven. However, a more accurate tool is a digital food thermometer that can be set to go off when the turkey reaches the correct internal temperature.

Cook the turkey parts separately. As previously noted, the breast meat will likely reach the desired temperature before the leg meat. To fix this, take the turkey out of the oven when it reaches five to 10 degrees before safe temperature for the breast meat, around 165 F. (Remember, the meat will continue to cook while "resting.") Let guests "ooh and aah" over the picture-perfect turkey. Then cut off the legs and return them to the oven until they are done. Arrange the properly cooked breast and leg meat together on a serving platter.

Offer condiments. A moist dollop of stuffing, a drizzle of gravy or a scoop of cranberry sauce can add moisture to turkey. This approach does not prevent drying out, but it can make a turkey that has dried out a bit more satisfying.

Dry turkey can put off diners. However, some strategies can harness as much moisture as possible to enhance Thanksgiving dinners.

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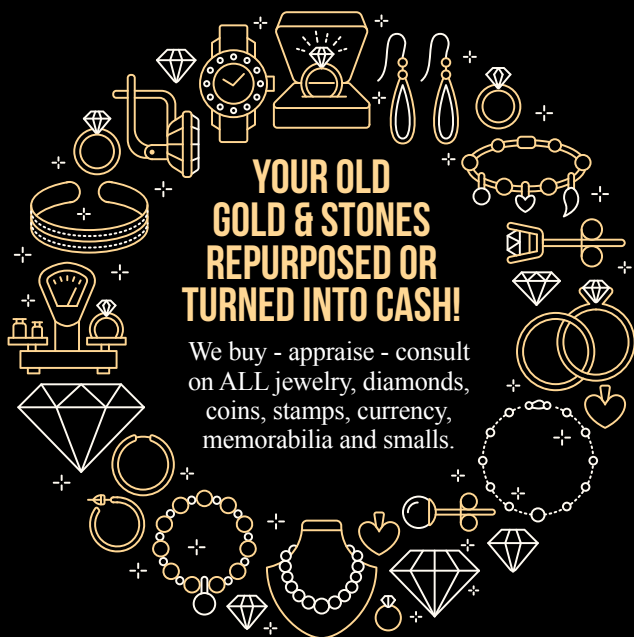


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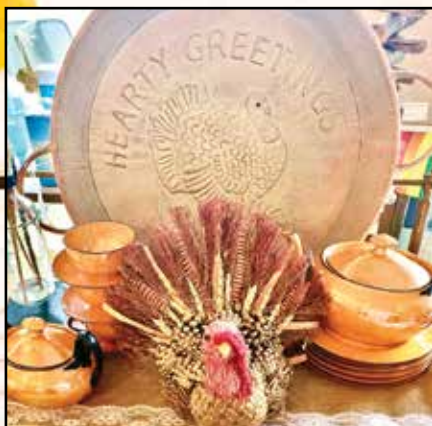
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How to pet proof your home when decking the halls

The holiday season is a special time of year. Many factors combine to make the holiday season so unique and festive, and that includes all the effort people put into decorating their homes.

Much thought is given to holiday lighting arrangements and which tree to buy, but it's equally important to consider pets when decorating. Many common household pets are naturally curious, and that curiosity can make it difficult to decorate safely come the holiday season. But various pet-proofing strategies can ensure holiday decorations and displays aren't compromised by four-legged friends this season.

Secure the Christmas tree.

Much like other residents of the home, pets may be mesmerized by a glowing Christmas tree. Pets may sniff around the tree or investigate it closely, which can increase the chances that it tips over. That poses a significant safety hazard and underscores the importance of using a sturdy stand. Fastening the tree to a wall, much like one might do with a television that isn't mounted, adds a further layer of protection from tip-overs.

Block off the base of a live tree.

Live trees need water to stay green and keep their needles throughout the season. That water could prove enticing to thirsty pets. Drinking water from a tree stand could increase the risk of the tree tipping over and the water could upset the stomach of pets if the tree was treated with pesticides prior to

being brought home. When decorating with a live tree, make sure the base of the tree where the water will be is blocked off. A small fence around the tree could keep curious pets away. The room where the tree is located should be locked or inaccessible when pets are home alone.

Inspect and conceal light wires.

Wires can become frayed over time, and that could pique pets' curiosity. Lighting wires should always be inspected prior to decorating and frayed or damaged wires should be thrown away, even if it means replacing lights. If wires are still sturdy, conceal them along the base of the wall using a cable concealer, which prevents pets from chewing on them.

Avoid lighting candles.

Candles should not be lit in homes with pets. Even candles on shelves that are seemingly beyond pets' reach can be hazardous, as pets, especially cats, have a way of accessing spaces they seemingly shouldn't be able to reach. Use electric candles in lieu of traditional ones.

Speak to a vet

about seasonal plants and flowers before bringing them into the home. Pet owners can speak with their veterinarians before bringing poinsettias, holly and other seasonal plants and flowers into their homes. Some pets could suffer allergic reactions if they eat certain seasonal plants, so it's best to err on the side of caution and speak to a vet before including live plants and flowers in decorative displays.

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Lesser known Chanukah traditions

Chanukah is a relatively modern holiday in regard to the Hebrew calendar. Unlike Yom Kippur or Passover, which are steeped in rich traditions, there are few Chanukah customs.

Chanukah celebrants still participate in various customs each year, some of which are customized according to family preferences. While some traditions, such as the lighting of the Chanukah menorah, are familiar, others may not be as widely known — especially to those outside of the faith. Here's a look at a select few..

Saying the Shehecheyanu blessing.

Traditionally, there are two blessings that some people say each night while lighting the candles. The first is recited while holding the lit shamash, and the second is said while lighting the candles. Another blessing, known as the "Shehecheyanu," is said the first night. According to 18Doors, a resource on the Jewish faith, it's the same blessing traditionally said on the first night of all Jewish holidays and other special occasions.

Display or use of the shofar.

A shofar is a type of instrument made from a ram's horn. It is a symbol of the ram that Abraham offered as a sacrifice in place of his son Isaac, exemplifying heroic faith of the fathers of the Jewish people. The shofar also serves as a reminder of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, and calls people to strive for Israel's renewal and fellowship with God.

Singing "Ma'oz Tzur".

Chanukah songs may not be as numerous or as widely sung as Christmas carols during the holiday season, but there are a select few that are part of the festivities. "Oh Chanukah Oh Chanukah" and "The Dreidl Song" are some of the most widely known songs, but some people also follow the custom of singing "Ma'oz Tzur (Rock of Ages)" around the menorah. The words were composed in the 13th century, and the song summarizes historical challenges faced by the Jewish people that were overcome with God's help.

Use of oil in Chanukah feasts.

It's well known that latkes, or fried potato pancakes, are served around Chanukah. The reason is due to the oil used to fry them, which traditionally is olive oil. Fried foods call to mind a specific Chanukah miracle. After the Greeks destroyed the sanctuary and defiled what was thought to be all of the oil, one jug sealed with the imprint of the High Priest was found. That one jug managed to keep the Temple's menorah lit for eight days, despite it being insufficient to handle this task. This was considered a miracle and celebrated in subsequent years.

Chanukah is a relatively modern holiday with few traditions. However, the customs associated with this holiday are held dear.



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Holiday Happenings

Saturday November 19

Craft & Gift Fair – Annual holiday fair, Nov. 19 and 20, at East Islip High School, 1 Redmen Ave., Islip Terrace, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Proceeds benefit the East Islip HS PTSA Scholarship Fund. Featuring fine art, photography, handcrafted items. Jewelry designers, local ceramicist, wearable art, organic beauty products, fabric and wood crafts, soy candles, soft sculpture, floral designs, and home décor. Free admission.

Sunday, November 20

Patchogue Christmas Boat Parade – 27th annual Christmas/Holiday parade on the Patchogue river starts at 6-ish. Free public viewing at Sandspit Park (Davis Park Ferry Terminal) and FINS (Watch Hill terminal) as well as all the waterfront restaurants. Preview night on Saturday, 5-9 p.m. Visit patchogue.com for information.

Saturday, November 26

Small Business Saturday – Kick off your holiday shopping with all-day specials at local small businesses.

Sayville Holiday Events – The annual holiday parade down Main Street, Sayville, 10 a.m., followed by Winter Wonderland shopping, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Miracle on Main, family holiday fun with rides, displays and performances, 5-9 p.m. Tree lighting in Sparrow Park at 6:30 p.m. Visit www.greatersayvillechamber.com.

Community Read-Aloud – Join in reading a part of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" with Sayville Library during Sayville's Miracle on Main, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Join the community at the Library tent near the Christmas Tree in town. Come listen to or read (or both!) this holiday classic. Refreshments will be served.

Patchogue Village Parade – Holiday parade along Main Street, Patchogue, 6-8 p.m.

Snowflake Sale – Annual winter open house at Bay Shore Historical Society, 22 Maple Ave., Bay Shore, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Special visit from Victorian St. Nicholas at 11 a.m. Bring your own cameras. No charge for pictures.

The Polar Express & Visit with Santa – Favorite family holiday film showing at Patchogue Theatre, followed by a magical Christmas scene where children can meet Santa Claus and take photos, 3 p.m. For tickets, call the box office at 631-207-1313 or visit www.patchoguetheatre.org.

Saturday, December 3

Holiday House at Sagtikos – "Decking the Halls" holiday house tours at Sagtikos Manor run Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 3-4, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with tours leaving every 15 minutes. Reserve online. For information, visit www.sagtikosmanor.org or call 516-885-4797.

Holiday Bazaar & Luncheon – Annual craft and vendor sale at St. Mark's Church, 754 Montauk Hwy., Islip, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Ornaments, baked goods, greenery, jewelry, raffles and more. Visit from Santa. Call 631-581-4950.

SVIS Holiday Party – The Sayville Village Improvement Society will

hold its annual party at the Gillette House, 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$25 pp includes music, beverages, food, and fun. Prizes and drawings. Call Suzanne Robilotta at 631-589-9113.

Yaphank Christmas Parade – Yaphank Fire Dept. Ladies Auxiliary parade kicks off at 4:30 p.m. Craft fair at 3 p.m. Tree lighting at the Gazebo immediately following the parade. Rain date: Dec. 4.

Bellport Tree Lighting – Bellport Christmas Parade and Tree-lighting event at Bellport Fire Dept. Visit www.bellportchamber.org.

Sunday, December 4

Vendor/Craft Fair – Medford Chamber of Commerce shopping event at Medford VFW Hall, 507 Long Island Ave., noon to 6 p.m.

Friday, December 9

Design-Your-Own Holiday Cards – Program at Sayville Library will show you how to make holiday cards with Canva, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Register at sayvillelibrary.org/events or call 631-589-4440, ext. 305.

Sunday, December 11

Holiday Concert – Long Island Harmonizers, will perform four-part a cappella harmony in barbershop style at Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library, 1 p.m. Register online or call 631-665-4350.

Carpenters Holiday Show – The Karpenteers will be at Sayville Library, 2-3 p.m., performing the very best of the Carpenters and music from their Holiday Collection. Register online or call 631-589-4440, ext. 305.

Of Note ...

Holiday Food Drive – Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library is collecting donations of canned soups, canned vegetables, canned fruit, canned fish and meat, whole wheat pasta and cereal as well as nutritional beverages such as Boost and Ensure and also personal care items. The drive will run through Dec. 15. Call 631-665-4350.

Holiday Light Show – The Annual Girl Scouts of Suffolk County holiday drive-thru event at Smith Point County Park, Nov. 26 through Dec. 30. For tickets, visit www.gssc.us/en/event/holidaylightshow.html.

Gift Wrap and Gift Bag Swap – Did you know that Americans spend approximately \$3.2 billion a year on gift wrap, most of which goes directly to the landfill? This year, instead of throwing out unwanted but still usable gift wrap or gift bags, now through Dec. 23, bring them to Sayville Library's swap. While you're here, pick up some new to you gift wrap or gift bags for your holiday gift giving. Call 631-589-4440.

SVIS Winter Coat Drive – November 28 through December 31, Sayville Library will collecting new or gently used winter coats at the donation box in the lobby and Sayville Village Improvement Society will get it to local charitable organizations that help people in need. Call 631-589-4440.

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Simple ways to involve kids in holiday decorating

Millions of people across the globe feel that the holiday season is a magical time of year. Though those people come from all walks of life, it's likely that no group is as taken by the unique spirit of the holiday season as much as children.

Whether they're looking forward to Santa's arrival or preparing for a school holiday pageant, kids have much to be excited about come December. Parents can channel that enthusiasm by involving kids when decorating around the house this holiday season.

Make homemade ornaments.

The options are limitless when making holiday ornaments with children. From simple ornaments made from pine cones picked up outside to more complex projects designed for children nearing adolescence, parents can look to the internet to find design ideas and directions for hundreds of ornaments.

Let kids lead the way when decorating the tree.

Families that celebrate Christmas can let kids lead the way when decorating their Christmas tree. Kids are likely to spend the weeks leading up to Santa's arrival gazing in awe at the tree, and knowing they decided where to place the various ornaments on it might make the season even more special for youngsters.

Take kids along when choosing lawn ornaments.

It's not safe to involve children when installing lighting displays, but kids will get a kick out of choosing inflatable lawn decorations and other items to place around the yard. Take kids along when buying new items and then seek their input when placing Frosty, Santa and his reindeer friends around the yard.

Include kids in culinary decor.

Many celebrants cannot imagine a holiday season without gingerbread houses and cookies. These traditions provide another great opportunity to involve children in holiday decorating. Set aside some time to make homemade gingerbread houses, which can be used as decorations before they're ultimately eaten. Cookies may not have the shelf life of a typical gingerbread house, but kids can pitch in and decorate cookies prior to a holiday party or family meal.

The spirit of the holiday season can be seen on the faces of children each December. Inviting kids to pitch in when decorating for the holidays can make the season even more special for its youngest celebrants.

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Craft an entire day around tree shopping

Though retailers may begin playing holiday tunes shortly after Halloween, for many people, no date on the calendar marks the beginning of the holiday season better than the day they pick up their Christmas tree.

There are many different ways to acquire a Christmas tree. Some people prefer artificial Christmas trees that can be stored and taken out each year. Others make a yearly expedition to a tree lot or a Christmas tree farm to find the perfect fir or spruce. Historians believe a man named W.V. McGallard planted 25,000 Norway spruce seedlings at his Mercer County, New Jersey farm in 1901, essentially establishing the first commercial Christmas tree farm. By 1908, customers could visit the farm and choose trees for \$1 each. McGallard helped create an entirely new industry that now accounts for 350 million trees being grown and sold in the United States every year.

Selecting a Christmas tree may not take more than an hour or two, but there are ways for families and other tree shoppers to maximize their time spent looking for a tree.

Bring refreshments.

Couple Christmas tree shopping with picnicking if the weather is amenable. Pack some foldable chairs into the vehicle (sitting

on the ground on a blanket may be too cold) and bring along thermoses of coffee or hot cocoa. Snacks like granola bars, Christmas cookies or other filling treats can keep everyone satisfied and energized while they shop for a tree.

Pair tree shopping with a trip to see lighting displays.

Find the tree lot or tree farm and then scope out potentially scenic spots to view holiday lighting displays nearby. Neighborhood Facebook or other social media groups often tout homes that put up eye-catching displays. Ask around for addresses and plan your own tours.

Plan a night out.

Everyone may be tired and hungry after a long day of Christmas tree hunting. Plus, it's typically a good idea to wait some time for boughs to open before decorating. Use this opportunity to dine out and return home ready to decorate. Make it a regular occurrence that Christmas tree shopping is followed by a family meal at a favorite restaurant.

Make a day of selecting and putting up the Christmas tree each year. Doing so can enhance the holidays and make for an entertaining way to spend time together as a couple or family



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A guide to picking the perfect fresh Christmas tree

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

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

Choose your species.

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

Space for ornaments.

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

Measure your space.

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

Perform a needle check.

Every tree will drop some needles, and most evergreens hold their foliage. Modest needle loss is not an indicator of a poor tree. However, Decker’s Nursery in Greenlawn, NY says if 50 percent of the needles are lost when you swipe your hand down three to five different branches around the tree, the tree likely is not a good choice. In addition, avoid a tree that has glaring defects in the trunk as it can impede water flow through the tree.

Heavier is better.

A heavy pre-cut tree means it is full of water and has been cut more recently. A healthy, fresh tree is going to require an effort to lift. Older, dried out trees will not be heavy. Upon arriving home, make a fresh cut off the tree trunk and get it in water as soon as possible — even if that’s a bucket until the tree stand can be set up.



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Gifts to excite the family athlete this holiday season

Holiday shoppers know that few things can match the joy of finding the perfect gift for a loved one. Whether that loved one is a tiny tot who can't wait to unwrap this year's must-have toy or an adult hoping to find the latest gadget under the tree on Christmas morning, the thrill of giving a great gift is part of what makes the holiday season so enjoyable.

Friends and family members may fall into certain categories, and that can make holiday shopping a little easier. For example, loved ones who can't wait to sit down with a good book would no doubt appreciate a new e-reader or the latest bestseller. When it comes to gifting the family athlete, the following ideas can provide the inspiration shoppers need to put a smile on the face of fitness-minded friends and family members.

Weighted vest.

Weighted vests have gained popularity in recent years. Available from a variety of manufacturers and for athletes of varying skill levels, weighted vests can be ideal for athletes who want to burn more calories and build strength during their workouts. This can be an especially useful gift for endurance athletes who want their training sessions to mimic the challenges posed by nature or difficult competitive terrains.


Noise-canceling headphones or earbuds:

Many athletes relish their workouts not only as opportunities

to zero in on their fitness goals, but also as chances to block out distractions and clear their heads for an hour or two each day. Noise-cancelling headphones or earbuds effectively block out external noises, allowing athletes to direct all of their focus on their workouts and training sessions.

It's never been easier to shop for the family athlete during the holiday season. A heightened focus on fitness ensures there's something for every type of athlete on your holiday shopping list.

Happy Thanksgiving



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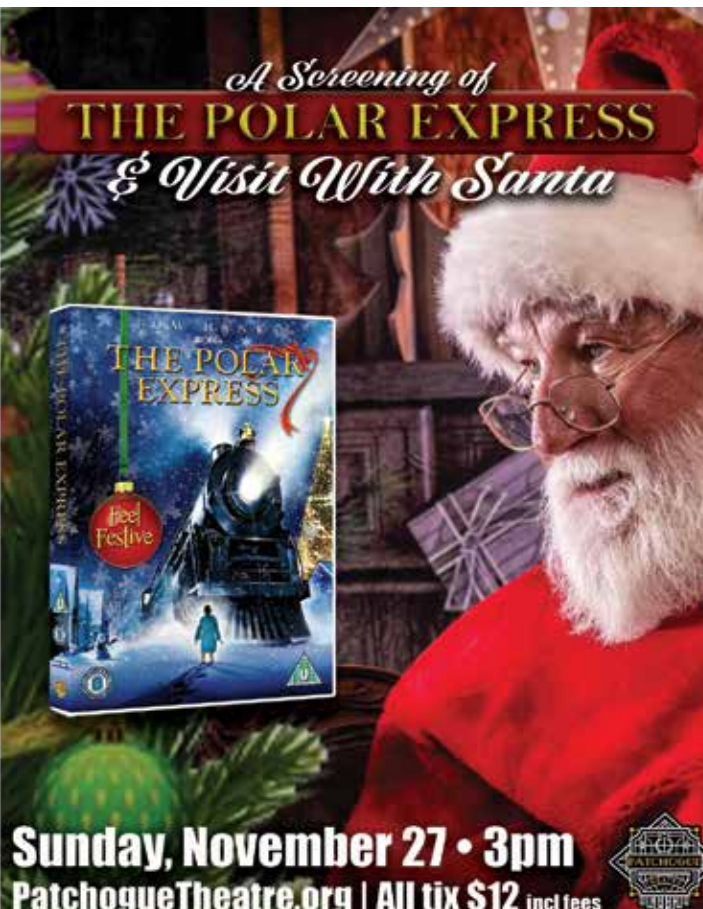
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Bake up a sweet holiday treat

Entertaining is a big part of the holiday season. Calendars are packed this time of year with gatherings with friends, family and professional colleagues.

Entertaining requires keeping plenty of refreshments on hand to ensure guests maintain their holiday spirit. Dessert is no stranger to the season, with office break rooms, dining tables and buffet stations brimming with sweet treats to tempt celebrants' palates. Everyone should have a go-to dessert to bring along to a holiday party or to offer guests when hosting their own fêtes. Cookies are a standard due to their versatility and portability.

Festive "Sour Cream Cookies" provide all of the holiday feels and can be customized in color to reflect celebrations of Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, or New Year's. Bake up a batch, courtesy of "Live Well Bake Cookies" (Rock Point) by Danielle Rye.

SOUR CREAM COOKIES

Makes 22 cookies

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup sour cream, at room temperature

Vanilla Buttercream Frosting

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon heavy whipping cream or milk
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Gel food coloring (optional)

1. To make the cookies: Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats and set aside.

2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt until well combined. Set aside.

3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or in a large mixing bowl using a handheld mixer, beat the butter and granulated sugar together for 1 to 2 minutes, or until well combined.

4. Mix in the egg and vanilla extract until fully combined, making sure to stop and scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed.

5. Mix in the dry ingredients in two additions, alternating with the sour cream. Make sure to mix in each addition until just combined, and be careful not to overmix the batter.

CONTINUED on page 26

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Sour Cream Cookies

CONTINUED from page 24

6. Using a 1½-tablespoon cookie scoop, scoop the cookie dough onto the prepared baking sheets, making sure to leave a little room between each one.

7. Bake for 14 to 16 minutes, or until the tops of the cookies are set and spring back when touched lightly. Remove from the oven, and allow to cool on the baking sheets for 10 minutes, then carefully transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool completely.

8. To make the vanilla buttercream frosting: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment or in a large mixing bowl using a handheld mixer, beat the butter for 1 to 2 minutes, or until smooth. Add the powdered sugar, ½ cup at a time, mixing in each addition until well combined.

9. Add the heavy whipping cream, vanilla extract, and gel food coloring (if using), and continue mixing until fully combined.

10. Once the cookies have cooled completely, spread the frosting on top of the cookies.

11. Store the cookies in an airtight container at room temperature or in the refrigerator for up to 4 days



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