

12 Tips for Holiday Entertaining

HGTV's host Sandra Lee shares a dozen expert tips to make your holiday decorating and entertaining a snap.



1. Forgo a traditional floral centerpiece on the dining table and instead create a charming holiday scene featuring gingerbread houses or ceramic Christmas village miniatures. First sprinkle faux snow along the center of the table, then place homes, stores, trees and people to create a focal point that will delight guests of all ages.

2. Rather than rushing out to buy expensive new china, glasses and silverware for a holiday get-together, consider renting it. No matter where you live, chances are there's a party rental store near you. The prices are reasonable and by renting rather than buying you also avoid having to store the items year after year.

3. A simple way to give your holiday decorations a professionally decorated look is to stick to just two or three colors. Deciding on a palette before you shop makes the selection process quick and easy.



4. Flickering candlelight is beautiful, but if small children or pets will be part of the celebration substitute battery-powered votive and pillar candles for a warm glow without the worries.

5. For a custom look that's easy to achieve, add ornaments, wrapped candies, children's toys or glittered greenery to a plain wreath. The decorating options are nearly endless and embellishing a wreath is a fun project to do with the kids.



6. Adding a vintage element, such as homemade gingerbread men, hand-strung popcorn or a cranberry garland to your holiday decorations lends a sentimental, old-fashioned feel.

7. Always test Christmas lights before adding them to the tree. Nothing is more disappointing (and frustrating) than spending an afternoon carefully wrapping the

Winter Preparation Reminders!!

1. Remove your garden hoses from facets to avoid costly repair in freezing temps!
2. Close exterior crawl space vents if applicable.
3. Change filters on heat/air units.
4. Change smoke detector batteries.

tree with lights only to plug them in and discover that they don't work.

8. Give your chandelier a holiday update by draping the arms with an evergreen garland, dangling ornaments, or embellishing plain paper shades with an assortment of ribbon attached with hot glue.



9. To cover an unusually shaped or extra-long table, simply drape it with fabric from the bolt. Measure the length of the table keeping in mind that 36 inches is equivalent to one yard. Add a few inches to each side to allow the fabric to puddle on the ground — no sewing required.

10. Add fragrance and an unexpected touch to evergreen garlands and the Christmas tree by placing fresh flowers among the greenery. To keep flowers fresh for days, first clip the ends then insert into water-filled bubble tubes which are available at florist-supply stores.

11. A lit fireplace is beautiful but can quickly heat up a room filled with guests. To get the look without the warmth, instead fill the hearth with lit pillar candles.



12. Make your decorations shine by working strands of twinkling mini lights into garlands, topiaries and tablescapes. If you plan on using lights outdoors, check the packaging to make sure that both lights and any needed drop cords are rated safe for outdoor use.



*Thank you
 for your business.
 We wish you blessings of the
 Christmas Season and a wonderful,
 prosperous New Year!*

Linda & Richard Dillon
 Karyn, Larissa, Susan, Valencia,
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Honey Glazed Holiday Ham

by Frontier Natural Products



Just one bite of this succulent ham will conjure memories of past holidays spent around Grandma's dining room table.

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 1 hour
Servings: 18

INGREDIENTS

4 1/2 lb. ham
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper

DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 325 degrees.

Place ham in shallow roasting pan. Cover tightly with aluminum foil or tight-fitting lid. Cook ham for approximately 10 minutes per pound or until meat reaches an internal temperature of 145 degrees.

In a small saucepan, combine all remaining ingredients; stir constantly over medium heat until thoroughly warmed. Remove ham from oven and increase oven temperature to 400 degrees. Pour or brush glaze over ham.

Return ham to oven for about 15 minutes. Do not cover during the last 15 minutes of baking.

Chef Suggestions

For a crispier outer edge, place under the broiler for the last few minutes of baking.

Savory Sweet Potatoes

by Frontier Natural Products

While sweet potatoes are a holiday favorite, this dish is anything but expected.



Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 50 minutes
Servings: 6

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into wedges
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon sea salt
1 tablespoon parsley

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Toss sweet potatoes with olive oil and spread in roasting pan.

Roast until just tender, about 40 minutes, turning once with a spatula after 20 minutes.

Melt together remaining ingredients and pour over potatoes in pan.

Return to oven for an additional 5 to 10 minutes, until nicely glazed.

Serve immediately.

For more information:



www.LindaDillon.com
615-890-6565

HOLIDAY CLEANING TIPS

When you're renting, even minor damages can lead to loss of your security deposit, and one of the most frustrating culprits is the dreaded carpet stain. Carpet stains are especially aggravating given the conflicting information about how to combat them.

Always act quickly. And when you act, blot, don't rub. Secondly, use a clean cloth or plain paper towels to tackle stains. Also, always try water before using any other substances, and if you do use a cleaner, test it on a hidden piece of a carpet first and rinse thoroughly with water after. Lastly, dry the spot after cleaning.

Pet Stains

For fresh stains, soak up as much as you can with a thick layer of paper towels covered by a thick layer of newspapers. Repeat as necessary (you can even stand on the newspaper) until everything has been absorbed. Then, rinse with cold water, and dry. For tougher stains, try a wet vac. To eliminate odor, use a pet odor neutralizer (available at pet stores) or a quality carpet cleaning product (without harsh chemicals). Remember to blot, rinse and dry.

Wine

Immediately soak up the spill with a clean dry cloth. Then rinse and blot the spot with water, working from the outside in. If the stain is still noticeable, use a carpet cleaner or detergent, such as Dawn dishwashing soap (a few drops in about two cups of water) to wash the spot. Rinse, repeat and dry until the stain is gone.

Ink

If the ink is dry and not coming out with a simple water rinse, put a small amount of rubbing alcohol (preferably 90%) on a clean cloth and dab the spot. Be sure to rinse away the alcohol afterward.

Coffee

One of the best ways to remove a tough java stain is to use another pantry staple – white vinegar. After blotting and rinsing with water, put a touch of vinegar on a hot, wet cloth. Rinse again with cold water, and dry.

Wax

After scraping away as much of the loose wax as possible, place a new, brown paper bag over the spot. Turn an iron on its lowest setting, and place it on top of the bag without pressing down. Leave the iron for 15 minutes. Repeat as necessary until all wax is removed.