

Holiday Entertaining Guide



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Welcome to the **Holiday Season**

The holiday season is here, and Homes.com and ForRent.com are eager for the festivities to begin! We're *merry* excited to provide you with this holiday-inspired eBook, guaranteed to brighten the season!

This entertainment guide is sure to make your holiday planning a little easier and a whole lot more fun. In it, you'll find various recipes to satisfy any appetite, fun refreshments to keep the party jolly, family-friendly activities, and creative inspiration for your home's décor.

The holidays can be a stressful time, so just relax and leave the planning to us! Just think of Homes.com and ForRent.com as your partners for entertaining this holiday season. We'll plan the party – you get to create lasting memories with family and friends!





04 | holiday safety tips

05 | entertaining checklist

06 | recipes

appetizers
main dishes
side dishes
desserts

14 | décor

traditional
whimsical wonderland
red, white and blue

18 | activities

thankful board
mini pumpkin or apple place card holders
wooden snowman tutorial

19 | about us

table of contents

holiday safety tips



At [Homes.com](#) and [ForRent.com](#), safety is top of mind during the holiday season. We've partnered with Allstate to bring you a list of top safety tips to help keep you and your loved ones protected in your home.

- 1 Don't overload outlets. Check the light strings to ensure they are not getting too warm and always unplug lights when you're not home.
- 2 Choose non-flammable & flame retardant decorations. Certain decorations may be gorgeous, but are made of highly flammable materials. Make sure to keep paper, lace or fabric decorations away from heat sources.
- 3 Inspect decorative lights for flaws. Frayed wires are a recipe for disaster!
- 4 Check smoke and carbon monoxide detection device batteries and replace them regularly. Test them to make sure they are in working order.
- 5 Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen. The extinguisher should be rated for both grease and electrical fires. To use it, remember the acronym P.A.S.S.: **P**ull the pin; **A**im the nozzle at the base of the fire; **S**queeze the nozzle to spray; **S**weep back and forth at the base of the fire as you spray.
- 6 Woof! Keep all food out of your pet's reach. Remember, dogs cannot eat chocolate and any animal that consumes alcohol may experience nausea or an upset stomach.
- 7 When traveling this holiday season, don't forget to pack emergency gear! Your winter kit can include: blankets; warm clothing; sand, cat litter or traction mats; a small shovel; a flashlight with fresh batteries; warning flares or triangles; drinking water; and anything else you might need.

holiday entertaining checklist

before the party:

- Choose a theme.
- Make a guest list and send paper invites or email invites with a provider like Evite.
- Delegate responsibility to family and friends so party planning stress doesn't land on one person.
- Plan the menu early to make shopping a cinch. Don't forget wood if you plan on building a fire.
- Clean and organize your home a week before so on the morning of, a quick once-over will do.
- Be sure to arrange furniture to make mingling easier on your guests. If you're expecting little ones, create a "kid-friendly" zone.
- Decorate a few days before the party.
 - *Stick to two or three colors, giving holiday décor a professional, polished look.*
 - *Switch out lightweight pillows and fabrics for richer fabrics and shades, creating a warm, welcoming atmosphere.*
 - *Get crafty with the kids and have them create a custom banner welcoming guests to the party.*
- Safety First! Ensure your fireplace is clean, safe, and has a gate if you have little ones attending the party. Move candles away from fabrics to avoid accidents.

the day of:

- Set the table and determine how you want the food served. Buffet or traditional?
 - *Put a few zip-close bags inside a pillow box, and leave a box at each place setting including a handwritten note asking guests to take home leftovers of their favorites.*
- Set out appetizers – and any other food that won't spoil.
 - *Instead of a communal bowl, try a more hygienic presentation by putting snacks and party mix in clear-glass narrow-necked decanters.*
- Greet guests as they arrive so they feel more welcome.
- Enjoy the party; after all, you're the hostess with the mostess!

“ I absolutely cannot live without my Mom’s holiday cookies. They’re perfect with a cup of hot cocoa or apple cider, sitting by the fire with loved ones, and watching holiday movies! ”

– Courtney Whitmore
Pizzazzerie.com



recipes

Vegetarian options are denoted by this symbol throughout the guide: (V)

Toffee Caramel **Apple Dip** (V)

INGREDIENTS:

1-16 oz tub caramel dip
 1-8 oz pkg cream cheese
 1 bag toffee bits
 Granny Smith apples

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Allow cream cheese to soften a bit and then spread it out on the bottom of a shallow rimmed dish, like a glass pie plate.
- 2 Pour the caramel dip on top of the cream cheese and spread it out. Do not mix in with cream cheese; just spread it over the top. **[TIP: you may need to zap the caramel dip with the top off in the microwave for a few seconds to soften it up.]**
- 3 Sprinkle the toffee bits all over the top of the caramel. Slice up your Granny Smith apples into small wedges and dip away!



Source: UncommonDesignsOnline.com



Source: HomeStoriesAtoZ.com

Bacon-Wrapped Apricots with Cranberry Dipping Sauce

INGREDIENTS:

2 tsp cornstarch mixed with 2 tsp water	12 slices bacon, sliced in half
¾ tsp mustard [grain]	24 dried apricots
1-½ tsp brown sugar, packed	1-½ cups cranberry cocktail
½ tsp ground nutmeg	

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Boil cranberry cocktail in a medium saucepan over high heat until reduced to 1 cup. In a small bowl, mix cornstarch with water to make a paste and add it to the pan. Next, whisk in the brown sugar, mustard, and nutmeg.
- 2 Bring to a boil over medium heat and boil 1 minute until thickened. Cool to room temperature. Reserve ½ cup of the glaze for later dipping.
- 3 Line rimmed baking sheet with foil. Set wire rack over foil and spray with cooking spray. Wrap bacon halves around apricots and place on rack. Brush with cranberry glaze.
- 4 Broil 3 to 7 minutes, or until bacon is browned. Place toothpicks in apricots and serve warm with the reserved cranberry cocktail dipping sauce.

Sweet Candied Smoked Paprika Cherry Berries

INGREDIENTS:

5 slices of bacon, cooked crispy and chopped
2 tbsp salted butter, divided
1 pint Cherry Berries tomatoes
1-½ tbsp white sugar
½ tsp smoked paprika
1 whole-wheat baguette [20 slices]
5.2 oz container of garlic & herb soft cheese
½ cup green onions, diced
Granny Smith apples

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Cook bacon and remove from frying pan to drain and rest. Once cooled, chop bacon and set aside.
- 2 Rinse Cherry Berries under cool water. Slice each Cherry Berry in half vertically. Place in a medium bowl and toss until each tomato is well coated with sugar and paprika.
- 3 Slice baguette into ¼ inch thick pieces. Take one slice and spread a generous amount of garlic and herb soft cheese onto it. Repeat until you have 20 slices, or half the baguette.
- 4 Toast until bread is crispy and cheese is slightly melted.
- 5 In a medium frying pan on high heat, add 1 tbsp of salted butter.
- 6 When butter melts [about 30 seconds], add half the bowl of sugar/paprika coated Cherry Berries to the pan.
- 7 Sauté on high for three to five minutes until tomatoes turn golden in color and begin to sweat and caramelize. Once the tomatoes are candied, remove from the frying pan and place in a clean bowl.
- 8 Repeat this step for the other half of the sugar paprika coated tomatoes.
- 9 Arrange appetizer by placing three or four caramelized Cherry Berries on each baguette slice with the garlic & herb cheese.
- 10 Top with chopped bacon and green onions. Repeat until all 20 baguette slices have been filled. Serve and enjoy.



Source: [KatiesCucina.com](https://www.katiescucina.com) originally posted for [Lipman Tomatoes](https://www.lipmantomatoes.com)

Cranberry Orange Christmas Ham

INGREDIENTS:

16-18 lb fully cooked spiral ham
30 [approx] whole cloves
20 fresh cranberries or maraschino cherries
2 ½ cups brown sugar, divided
2-3 oranges sliced width-wise
1 ½ tbsp flour
3 tbsp butter
1-½ cups cranberry juice
½ cup honey
¼ cup apple cider vinegar
3 tbsp prepared mustard

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Pre-heat oven to 325°F.
- 2 Remove ham from packaging. Set on rack in roasting pan, flat side down.
- 3 Insert cloves approx 2 inches apart.
- 4 Press 2 cups brown sugar, making a coating on the ham.
- 5 Place orange slices on ham, using a toothpick poked through the middle of each.
- 6 Place a cranberry on the end of each toothpick.
- 7 Cover with roasting lid or foil and bake for 3 hours.

GLAZE:

- 1 Melt butter in sauce pan, add flour with wire whisk.
- 2 Add cranberry juice, honey, ½ cup brown sugar, apple cider vinegar, 3 tbsp mustard. Bring to a boil and cook for 1 minute, stirring.
- 3 Remove from oven. Let rest for 10 minutes. Serve!



Leftover Turkey Soup

INGREDIENTS:

3 cups shredded cooked turkey
[white or dark]
1 large onion, diced
3 potatoes, scrubbed and cubed
4 carrots, scrubbed and sliced
4 celery stalks, sliced
2 bay leaves
1 tsp sea salt
1 tsp poultry seasoning

1 tsp dried thyme
½ tsp pepper
6 cups chicken broth [or 6 cups
water and 6 chicken bouillon
cubes]
1 can corn, drained

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Combine all ingredients in slow cooker and cook on low 6 hours or high 3 hours. Serve!





Source: bellalimento.com

Four Cheese Macaroni 👍

INGREDIENTS:

1 lb macaroni
 3 tbsp unsalted butter
 ½ cup milk
 ½ cup fresh mozzarella, cubed
 ½ cup Emmenthal cheese, cubed
 ½ cup Grana Padano cheese, grated
 ½ cup Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
 salt

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Pre heat oven to 325°F.
- 2 Place a large pot of water on to boil and generously season with salt. When boiling, add pasta and cook until just under al dente.
- 3 Right after you put the pasta in the water to cook, add butter and milk into a separate saucepan and heat until combined.
- 4 Add cheeses and stir together until well combined. If mixture is too thick, add a smidge more milk to loosen. Check for seasoning and add salt if desired.
- 5 Drain pasta and pour into an ovenproof dish that has been sprayed with cooking spray.
- 6 Pour over melted cheeses and mix together well. Optional: sprinkle top with additional cheese of choice.
- 7 Bake for approximately 20 minutes or until macaroni is bubbling. Let cook a little bit longer if you prefer your macaroni and cheese to have a crunch on top.

Sweet Potato Crostini

INGREDIENTS:

1 pkg sweet potato rolls [or your favorite dinner roll]
 1 large onion
 ¼ cup fig preserves
 ¼ lb prosciutto [roughly 6 slices], sliced thin
 3 cups baby arugula
 3 tbsp olive oil

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake frozen sweet potato rolls for 3-4 minutes or until thawed. Use a bread knife to cut each roll into 3 slices [across top.] Discard the edges. This should make 24 crostini. Return to oven for 8-10 minutes or until lightly toasted.
- 2 Put 2 tbsp olive oil in a pan and bring to medium heat. Dice onion and toss in pan. Stir until caramelized and soft. Remove from heat and set aside.
- 3 Spread each crostini with fig preserves. Top with caramelized onions.
- 4 Lay a slice of prosciutto on top of the onions.
- 5 Return to oven for 2-3 minutes to warm ingredients [optional.]
- 6 Toss arugula with remaining tbsp of olive oil. Top crostini with arugula and serve!



Source: Pizzazzerie.com

Winter Squash with Rice, Cranberries, & Pecans V

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup wild rice blend
- 1½ cups low-sodium vegetable broth, divided
- 1 cup water
- 8 carnival squash [1 pound each] or 16 small sweet dumpling squash or pumpkins [1/2 pound each] or a combination
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra
- 1½ cups finely chopped leeks [about 8 slender leeks, white part only]
- 1 tsp dried rubbed sage
- 1 tbsp minced fresh thyme leaves
- 1-¾ cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 3-4 oz goat cheese

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 In a medium saucepan, combine rice with 1 cup broth and 1 cup water.
- 2 Bring to a boil. Stir and reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 35 minutes, until just al dente. Remove from heat.
- 3 Preheat oven to 425°F. Cut off top ½ inch of squash; reserve tops.
- 4 Trim bottoms if necessary to sit level. Scoop out seeds and strings.
- 5 Brush insides with olive oil.
- 6 Sprinkle with coarse salt and ground pepper.
- 7 Place squash, cut side down, on a baking sheet.
- 8 Roast until barely tender [about 20 minutes for small squash, 25 minutes for medium squash].
- 9 Meanwhile, place 1 tbsp oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat.
- 10 Add leeks and cook until tender, but not brown [5-7 minutes].
- 11 Add sage and thyme, season with salt and pepper, and stir to coat.
- 12 Add 3 cups cooked rice (save remainder for another use) and remaining ½ cup broth; simmer until heated through and liquid is absorbed [4-5 minutes].
- 13 Remove from heat. Stir in cranberries, pecans, and goat cheese. Season to taste.
- 14 Spoon rice mixture into each squash and drizzle remaining oil over top. Replace squash tops. Arrange squash in a roasting pan.
- 15 Reduce oven temperature to 375°F. Bake squash for 20 minutes, then remove tops and continue to bake until heated through, about 10 minutes more.
- 16 Remove from oven and let stand 5 minutes. Replace tops and transfer squash to a serving platter.



Caramel Apple Cheesecake

INGREDIENTS:

- 2-8oz pkgs cream cheese
- ½ cup of granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup crushed graham crackers
- 3 tbsps of melted butter
- 2 tbsp sour cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Topping:

- ¼ cup butter
- ½ cup of sugar
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 5 large Granny Smith apples, peeled and cut into ½" wedges
- 1 tbsp cinnamon

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F and line a cupcake pan with baking cups.



- 2 Add the tsp of cinnamon to the crushed graham crackers and mix with melted butter.
- 3 Press one heaping tablespoon of the graham cracker crumb mixture into each baking cup.
- 4 Mix together cream cheese, sugar, and sour cream. Add in

eggs and vanilla until light and fluffy.

- 5 Fill baking cups ¾ way full; bake for 22-24 minutes.
- 6 Remove from oven and let cool; add apple topping and walnuts.

Source: APumpkin&APrincess.com



Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies


INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1 cup white sugar
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 egg
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp milk
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 In a mixing bowl, combine pumpkin, sugar, vegetable oil, and egg.
- 2 In a separate bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, ground cinnamon, and salt.
- 3 Stir in and dissolve the baking soda in the milk.
- 4 Add flour mixture to pumpkin mixture and mix well.
- 5 Add vanilla and chocolate chips.

Source: MigonisHome.com



“ I love the holidays because it's always filled with so much excitement and fun! From the family and friend gatherings to the beautiful décor, yummy food and twinkly lights, the holidays are the best time to celebrate! ”

– Shelley Smith
The House of Smiths

décor

Red and green have been the traditional holiday colors for many years and for good reason – they're gorgeous! However, decorating with traditional colors doesn't mean you're limited to standard patterns and hues. Use these tips to add pizzazz to your traditional holiday décor this year.

traditional décor

1

Along with the traditional reds and greens, work in trendy patterns and colors that you happen to love to give your décor a unique and modern twist.

2

Use glittery name tags and snow-dusted pine cones for an easy and classy touch.

3

Use deep, bold holiday colors, like dark red, burgundy, and gold to add warmth to a room.



Source: TheHouseofSmiths.com





one

Use family silhouettes as decorations. This lets the whole family participate in decorating [even the family pet].

two

Repurpose faux plants by adding gift bows to them, or transform old containers by filling them with brightly colored ornaments.

three

Don't limit yourself on what can be used as garland; try using something fun like a blue or green feather boa to add personality to your holiday décor.



Source: PositivelySplendid.com

We're thinking outside the gift box with these holiday décor ideas. These tips will help you create a bright and fun space in your home that will delight adults and children alike.

whimsical wonderland décor

Decking your halls doesn't have to be an expensive endeavor. Try these creative and affordable ways to bring holiday cheer into your home.

red, white, and blue holiday décor



Source: Tatertots&Jello.com

1


Decorate using paper tissue fans. Not only do they add a surprise element while keeping in your color scheme, but they also save you money!

2

Wrap candles in holiday wrapping paper to easily incorporate festive colors and designs into your home's display.

3

If you do not have a mantel in your home, use shelves or a dessert table to display holiday decorations.



“The cooler days allow for fun outdoor activities to spend quality time with each other. I have so many great memories that center around this time of year. I look forward to creating many more with my family in the years to come!”

– Emily Morgenstern
52Mantels.com

activities

Thankful Board

SUPPLIES:

Window frame

Twine

22-24 Colored miniature envelopes

22-24 Miniature clothespins

6 Push pins to secure twine

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Number the envelopes 1-22 or 1-24.
- 2 String 3 pieces of twine parallel across the window frame.
- 3 Hang the numbered envelopes with the clothespins to the twine.
- 4 Each day in November or December, have your family write what they are thankful for on the back of the envelope.
- 5 During your holiday meal, share what everyone is thankful for.





Source: 52mantels.com

Mini Pumpkin or Apple Place Card Holders

SUPPLIES:

Paperclips
Mini pumpkins or apples
Paper leaves

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Bend the paper clip to make a long stake.
- 2 Poke paperclip into pumpkin or apple.
- 3 Label leaves with the guests' names.
- 4 Adhere labeled leaves to the mini pumpkins or apples and arrange on table.

Wooden Snowman Tutorial

SUPPLIES:

4×6 cut to 6 inches long
4×6 cut to 8.5 inches long
White paint
Paint brush
Black marker

Liquid glue
Glitter
Sandpaper
Fabric for scarves

DIRECTIONS:

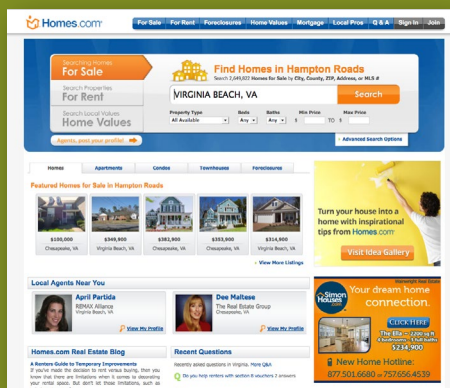
- 1 Sand the edges of the wood.
- 2 Paint the wood white. **[TIP: Spray paint or craft paint works great.]**
- 3 When the paint is dry, draw on two eyes with the marker. **[TIP: Temporarily tie the scarf where you want to use it as a reference for eye placement.]**
- 4 Apply a thick coat of liquid glue to all sides [except the bottom] with the paint brush.
- 5 While the glue is still wet, sprinkle on glitter. **[TIP: Do this inside of a box or on a cookie sheet to catch the excess glitter. Brush off any glitter that falls onto the eyes.]**
- 6 Tie on the fabric scarf and you're done!



Source: CraftaholicsAnonymous.net

We hope we've given you a little inspiration to make this holiday season the best yet. Homes.com and ForRent.com hope to be more than your partner when searching for a **new home**; we strive to be a resource in every part of the home locating and living experience.

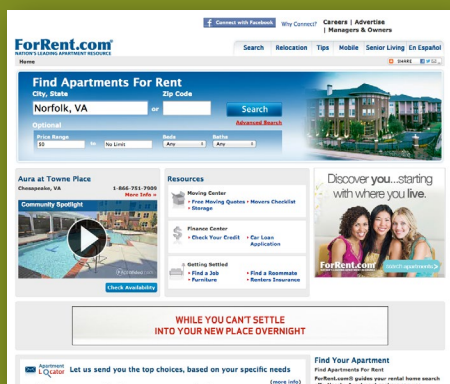
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