

The  Current

HOLIDAY

Guide 2017

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Hardzog Carpet & Gifts

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Join us for Hardzog's Annual Christmas Open House!

Friday, November 17th
10am - 6pm

Saturday, November 18th
10am - 4pm

Sunday, November 19th
12pm - 4pm



HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Christmas parades:

Lawton – Holiday in the Park “Christmas Toy” Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony, 7 p.m. Nov. 18, Elmer Thomas Park.

Walters – 6 p.m. Dec. 2. Decorate floats for the theme “Enchanted Christmas.” To be eligible for first-, second- and third-place cash prizes, parade participants must fill out a form available at Walters Bank & Trust.

Duncan – Theme is “A Charlie Brown Christmas.” 3 p.m. Dec. 2.

Comanche – Floats line up at 6 p.m. at Comanche High School, parade begins at 7 p.m. Dec. 2.

Marlow – 10 a.m. Dec. 2. Interested entries are asked to contact the Marlow Chamber of Commerce office, 580-658-2212, for exact lineup locations and times.

Fletcher – 6 p.m. Dec. 9, beginning at the community center.

Cache – 5:30 p.m. Dec. 9. Caroling, pictures with Santa, hot chocolate and more following the parade in Cache City Park.

Medicine Park – 2 p.m. Dec. 23. Lineup is at 1 p.m. at the water plant. Activities include a carnival at Main Stage and refreshments in some businesses.

Holiday Events:

Chickasha Festival of Light shines for the 25th year from 6 to 10 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and until 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays in Shannon Springs Park beginning Nov. 18.

This nationally recognized symbol of community spirit draws more than 250,000 visitors annually. It has won numerous awards as a top attraction since its beginning in 1993. More than just a light show, the experience includes horse-drawn carriage rides, photo opportunities with Santa.

Kick off the holiday season at the annual *Main Street Duncan Holiday Stroll* from 5-8 p.m. Nov. 18. Enjoy live holiday music as the smell of hot cocoa wafts through the air. Santa will be on hand to go over wish lists, and merchants will offer free refreshments and gift wrapping.

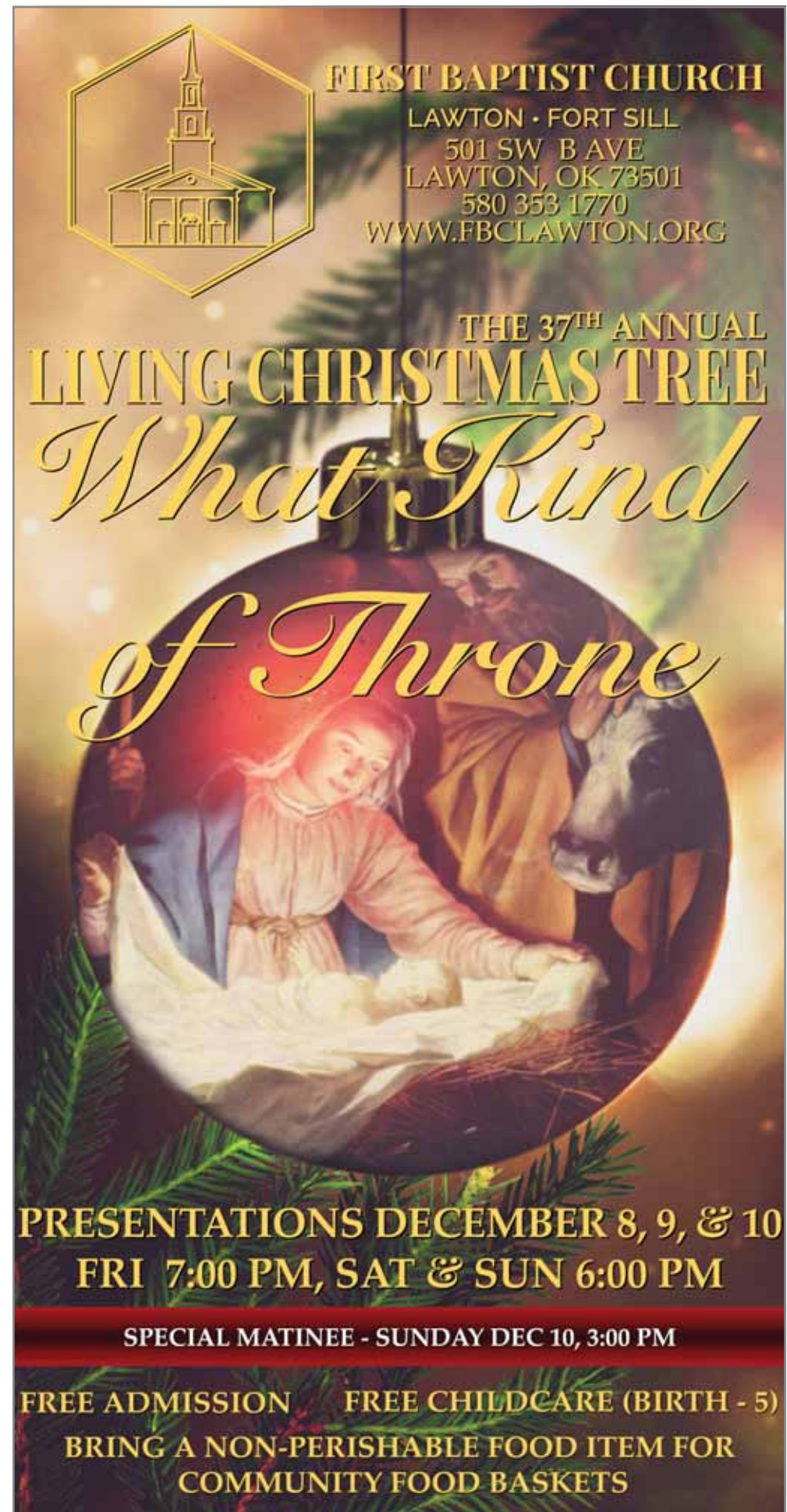
Enjoy an evening of Christmas cheer and festivities at the 905 *Christmas in the Park* beginning 6:15 p.m. Nov. 30 in Fuqua Park in Duncan. Munch on cookies, sip hot chocolate and take in the decorations and nostalgia while listening to carolers. Drop by the caboose and the Stephens County Museum to visit with Santa. At 7 p.m. sharp, the 905’s bell will ring and the locomotive will light up.

Tree-lighting festivities are scheduled for 6-8 p.m. on Nov. 28 at CU-Duncan and on Nov. 30 at Cameron University in Lawton. The come-and-go events will include horse-drawn carriage rides, cookie-decorating stations for kids of all ages and the lighting of a fully decorated tree. Refreshments will be served.

A performance of *Handel’s “Messiah”* begins at 8 p.m. Dec. 9 in McMahon Memorial Auditorium. This is a free concert sponsored by the Lawton Schubert Music Club, Fort Sill’s New Post Chapel and the CU Department of Music. For information, call the Cameron University Department of Music at 580-581-2440.

Chisholm Trail Kiwanis Club of Duncan *Christmas tree and stand sales* begin Nov. 24 in Kiddieland in Fuqua Park. Trees range from \$10 to \$100. Hours are 2 to 8 p.m. Mondays through Fridays; 10 to 7 p.m. Saturdays; and 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays.

Stephens County Community Christmas Dinner 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 25. Stephens County fairgrounds. Call 580-255-3231 to arrange delivery.



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THE 37TH ANNUAL
LIVING CHRISTMAS TREE
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PRESENTATIONS DECEMBER 8, 9, & 10
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SPECIAL MATINEE - SUNDAY DEC 10, 3:00 PM

FREE ADMISSION FREE CHILDCARE (BIRTH - 5)
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Light up the holiday season *safely.*

Before hanging holiday lights outside, look out for overhead power lines. Never throw light strands into trees near power lines.

Inspect all the lights you plan on using. Make sure the wires are in good condition – not cracked, brittle or frayed. The sockets should not be damaged and no light bulbs should be missing.

Check that all light strands are certified and rated for the conditions in which they'll be used.

Never string more than three strands of lights together unless the packaging says it is safe to do so. Overloaded cords or outlets could start a fire.

Never tack or nail through a strand of lights. Do not place cords under rugs or in high traffic areas.

Lighted and electrical outdoor decorations should be plugged into ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected outlets.

Turn holiday lights off before going to sleep or leaving the house. A timer can help you do this.

Get more safety tips at


and

 **COTTON**
ELECTRIC CO-OP
www.CottonElectric.com

Hang your sockets with care

Cherished family memories often involve the twinkling lights of the tree and decorations inside and outside the home. Keep your holidays free from electrical mishaps as you prepare for the holidays.

Safe Electricity offers these tips for keeping holidays safe and bright:

- Before decorating, look for signs of wear on cords, sockets and plugs. Verify that no bulbs are broken, and that your wires are not cracked or frayed. Repair or replace any damaged items.
- Make sure all holiday lights have been tested by a certified laboratory and labeled with a quality marker, such as "UL." Such a mark signifies that the product is verified as safe for use.

• Don't place cords over points of entry or exit to prevent tripping hazards and damage to cords.

• If you need to reach overhead, do not stand on a chair or desk; use a step stool or ladder. Use one with a study base and place it on a stable surface. After mounting the ladder, always climb facing towards the rungs.

• If using nails or tacks to hang your bulbs, don't pierce the cords, rather rest the cords on them. Use plastic clips instead to avoid problems.

• When decorating outside, be aware of overhead power lines, including the service connection to your home.

• If you need to use extension cords for outdoor decorating,

use only heavy-duty cords designated for outdoor use.

• Keep live trees from drying out. Use a sturdy stand where water can be refilled at least once a day. Keep your tree and away from heat sources, especially fireplaces and space heaters, as well as drapes or curtains. Know the location of your fire extinguisher. Although artificial trees are less flammable than real trees, purchase a flame-resistant model.

• When going to bed or leaving the house, make sure your lights are turned off. Leaving your lights on continually presents the risk of lights shorting out and resulting in an electrical fire.

To learn more about safe holiday decorating and entertaining, visit SafeElectricity.org.



1/3 of Christmas Tree fires are caused by electrical malfunctions.

Information collected from The National Fire Protection Association.

44th Annual Craft Harvest Craft Show "THE BIG ONE"

Friday, Nov 17, Noon - 8 P.m.

Saturday, Nov 18, 10 a.m. - 6 P.m.

Sunday, Nov 19, Noon - 5 P.m.

CALL 580-585-2447 for Craft Booth Information

Over 200 Craft Booths

Expo Building

Comanche County Fairgrounds

920 S. Sheridan Rd, Lawton, Ok

Lawton Crafts, Arts & Hobby Association

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ATM

MORE SAVINGS, MORE MEMORIES.



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'Tis the season to make sure your Co-op Connections Card - or the app - is always nearby

As we all know, Santa and his elves are always up-to-date with the latest gadgets. Santa's had a smart phone since they came into vogue and his favorite app can be found at Connections.Coop.

That's right, The Big Guy went to Connections.Coop and downloaded the Co-op Connections mobile app. With it, he can check for money-saving deals in Walters, Lawton, Duncan or wherever he may be shopping.

The Man in Red travels a lot, and he always uses the app to look for the best deals in lodging, sleigh or car rentals and restaurants.

When he's shopping online, the Jolly Old Elf goes to Connections.Coop first. He signed up for the Cash Back Mall plan and uses that portal to enter websites for national retailers such as Bass Pro Shops, Macy's, Target and Walmart. He piles up plenty of cash rewards that

way and, when he hits \$25, he gets a check!

He takes advantage of other Partner Deals, too. Coupons.com lets him know about discounts on top brands and Simply Rewards helps with holiday travel expenses.

Cotton Electric members can save a bundle during the holiday shopping season with Co-op Connections Cards, too. There are many local businesses offering discounts in the Cotton Electric service area.

There are hundreds of offers available across the nation. Using the keyword "gift" at www.connections.coop brings up countless deals! The retail category ranges from flowers to electronics to jewelry to toys and beyond.

Co-op Connections is just another benefit to being a member of your local electric cooperative.



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November 10th, 2017

December 8th, 2017

Laser days

November 10th, 2017

December 8th, 2017

November 28th

5:30pm -6:30Pm

*event specials

*Door prizes

*Live demos

*hors d'oeuvres

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Stay aware while out shopping

Busy malls and retail centers can make it easy for shoppers to overlook safety and security. Thieves and other criminals recognize that and often prey on unsuspecting victims during the holiday season. For example, the Better Business Bureau notes that thieves can easily commit identity theft at malls, where shoppers preoccupied with shopping bags and looking after their children in crowded stores may be less likely to conceal their credit cards or PIN numbers at checkout counters.

In addition to safeguarding their financial information when checking out, shoppers can take the following steps to stay safe while shopping.

- Prioritize parking in well-lit areas. Mall parking lots can try shoppers' patience during the holiday season. But shoppers should resist any urges to park in faraway spaces or areas that are poorly lit. Criminals may be lurking in less traveled areas of city or mall parking lots, recognizing that they can quickly strike and abscond with stolen items. Shoppers should even be mindful of dark parking garages, only parking in such areas when accompanied by friends or family members.

- Keep a watchful eye on smartphones. Unlike the flip phones that came before them, today's smartphones are essentially mini computers that can store substantial amounts of data, including users' credit card numbers. Many people have even linked their smartphones directly to their bank accounts in an effort to make shopping simpler. Lost or stolen phones can be expensive to replace, and savvy thieves can gain access to their victims' personal information, including financial and personal data.

- Shop using plastic instead of cash. Fraudulent purchases made with a credit card are protected by the credit card company. Stolen cash, however, is likely lost for good. While shopping with credit may encourage some to overspend, shoppers must recognize that shopping with cash makes them vulnerable to thieves.

- Periodically take packages out to your vehicle. Shoppers walking around the mall with multiple bags may be targeted by thieves and other criminals. Defending oneself against criminals with many shopping bags in hand can be difficult, and criminals can prey on that vulnerability while recognizing that people with multiple shopping bags are likely carrying many valuable items. Periodically take packages out to your vehicle to make shopping easier and to deter criminals.

Millions of people will visit malls and other retail centers to do their holiday shopping this year. Safeguarding personal safety and security should be foremost on the minds of shoppers throughout the holiday season and into the new year.



Keep safe this holiday season and avoid medical mishaps

The holiday season might not be the most hazardous time of the year, but there is an uptick in safety concerns during this season of festivity and fun.

Components of the holiday season such as decorating, shopping, celebrating, and traveling, carry some risk. The National Fire Protection Association says 30 percent of all home fires occur during the months of December, January and February. Christmas trees and decorative holiday lighting displays contribute to the uptick in fires and other accidents between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

But fire is not the only concern during the holiday season. Revelers who celebrate a bit too much can pose a threat, as can road weary travelers or overnight guests who unknowingly put loved ones in harm's way during their stays.

Thankfully, many accidents that occur during the holiday season are avoidable if holiday celebrants focus on safe ways to celebrate.

- **Choking:** All of that entertaining and partying means more food is consumed. To keep up with the hustle and bustle of the season, many people must eat on the go. The National Safety Council says nearly 3,000 people in the United States die each year from choking. Taking small bites and chewing completely,

while also avoiding talking while chewing, can help. Children should be kept away from small decorations, as even pine needles can be a choking hazard.

- **Toxic plants:** Some plants, including mistletoe and holly, can be toxic to pets and young children whose smaller bodies may be more vulnerable than adults'. When decorating, consider decorating with artificial plants instead of live, potentially poisonous plants.

- **Alcohol-related incidents:** Holiday fun frequently involves alcoholic beverages. Law enforcement officials point out that the rate of driving while intoxicated tends to increase during the holidays. Implementing strict "designated driver" rules and making contact information for taxi or ride sharing services readily available to holiday guests can prevent tragedies.

- **Medicine mishaps:** Relatives visiting for Christmas may bring their prescription medications along when staying overnight. Curious children may encounter the drugs and think they're candy, so encourage guests to place their medications in childproof bottles or containers.

Staying safe during the holidays involves diligence and keeping an eye out for potential dangers.



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Santa is Coming



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Add artistry with holiday gift-wrapping tips and tricks

After all the holiday presents have been purchased, the task of wrapping can begin. Although some people find wrapping is relaxing and provides a chance to embrace one's artistic flair, many others find wrapping gift after gift becomes tedious quite fast.

While there are no statistics on just how many gifts the average person purchases over the course of the holiday season, the National Retail Federation says the average consumer will spend around \$800 on all things holiday. That means there will be a lot of gifts to wrap before the big exchange. Those who want to make gift-wrapping less tedious this holiday season can consider these ideas to streamline the process.

Gather all supplies

When the time comes to wrap gifts, there's nothing more frustrating than hunting for wrapping supplies. Have paper, bows, bags, tissue, pens, tape (double-sided tape streamlines the process), scissors, ribbon, and any other wrapping accoutrements at the ready. Set up a folding snack table near your wrapping area to hold the supplies so they don't get in the way.

Choose the right location

Always wrap on a large, flat and sturdy surface. Avoid wrapping on a carpet, which will give gift wrap a wrinkled look and increase the amount of time needed to wrap.

Square it up

If you are a master at wrapping rectangular or square gifts but fail when presents are oddly shaped, place misshapen

gifts into boxes and then wrap the boxes. Gift bags also can be used for such gifts, but wrapped boxes may look more appealing under the tree.

Fabric over paper

If you think gift wrap is wasteful, think about repurposing fabric into beautiful wrapping for presents. A square of left-over fabric, a piece of a t-shirt or even a portion of a sweater that has seen better days can be transformed into an innovative package for gift-giving. Tie the gathered ends into a bow and skip the tape as well. Dress up with ribbon and a tag for extra flair. Fabric bends and moves, making it more forgiving for oddly shaped gifts as well.

Stock up on paper shopping bags

On your next trip to Trader Joes or Whole Foods, bring home more than organic produce. Walk away with paper bags and free gift wrap. Craft a DIY stamp roller or handmade stamps to dress up plain brown bags. Or wrap the gift in twine and add a sprig of evergreen for a rustic look. Children can even use markers or crayons to create their own designs on gifts, personalizing even further.

Diversify gifts

Identify each recipient's gifts by wrapping in a different color or style. Just jot down the key to decoding the wrapping, and you'll save time on individual gift tags.

Wrapping presents doesn't have to be a chore. With some time-saving tips and tricks, the work can be a breeze.



Brown paper bags make for sturdy and versatile wrapping materials.



Merry Christmas



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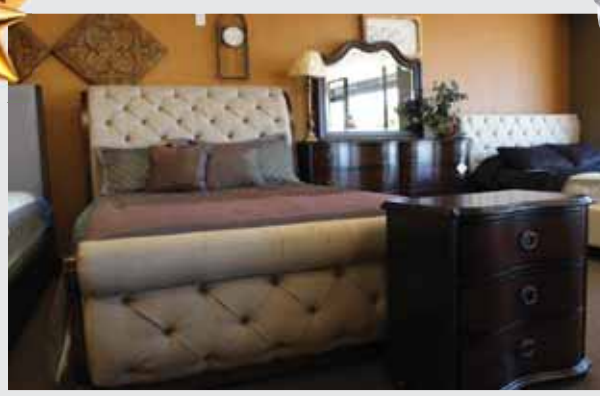


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See store for details. *Pictures for illustration purpose only



Keep your holidays merry and bright

(Family Features) Nothing captures the spirit of the holidays quite like the glow of bright, colorful lights. Few things, however, can put a damper on holiday decorating quite like seeing a section of those freshly hung lights go dark.

“It’s a shame when you go through the hassle to get your light sets and pre-lit decor, such as your pre-lit tree, wreath or lawn ornaments, out of storage only to find some sets only partially work or don’t work at all,” said John DeCosmo, CEO of Ultra-Lit Tree Company, the maker of the LightKeeper Pro, a tool that fixes light sets by illuminating working bulbs so the user can see the bad ones. “When light sets go out, it’s as if a bit of your Christmas spirit did, too.”

“We understand the frustration of light set repair, and hope our customer service and light set repair tools make the holidays a bit brighter for all each year.”

With these pro tips, you can keep your holiday lights bright and spirits merry:

- **Measure:** When planning the number of lights you will need for your tree, estimate using at least 100 lights for every foot of tree height.

- **Decide Between LED vs. Incandescent:** LEDs are more expensive than incandescent lights, but typically last longer. When it comes to energy usage, a tree with 1,000 incandescent lights can cost \$10 over an average holiday season while the same tree using LEDs costs around \$1.50.

- **Consider Indoor vs. Outdoor:** Commercial-grade light sets are more reliable for outdoor use because of their durability and thicker insulation.

- **Inspect:** Before stringing lights, check for broken bulbs and sockets, frayed cords, burned out lights and loose connections. For sets with bulb outages, use a tool such as the LightKeeper Pro for incandescent lights. Plug the empty bulb socket into the Socket Connector then squeeze the trigger a few times and most light sets will illuminate within seconds. For LED lights, the

LED Keeper can help find and fix the problem.

- **Connect:** For best results when using incandescent lights, connect no more than three strands of mini-string sets together. LED light sets can handle connecting more than 30 strands together.

- **String:** When stringing lights on a tree, begin at the top of the tree with the light set plugged in. If a light set blinks during stringing the tree, you may have a loose bulb.

- **Replace and repair:** Occasionally check for any bulbs that aren’t working and replace them as soon as possible to get the most of your light sets. Two burned out bulbs can decrease the lifespan of the light set by 39 percent; four burned out bulbs by 67 percent.

Should your lights go dark this holiday season, the pros at Ultra-Lit are available to answer questions seven days a week between Thanksgiving and Christmas, and year-round, at 888-858-2548 or UltraLit.com.

18 ideas for making holiday memories

Counting down to Christmas Day means many different things to people across the globe. Although families likely have several different traditions they anticipate each year, it can be fun to incorporate some new merrymakers into the festivities. Here are some festive ideas to include in the days leading up to Christmas for a special family calendar of fun finds.

1. **Annual memento:** Have the kids or adults make one new handmade ornament each year. This way the tree is always evolving, and everyone can track milestones.



2. **Cookie day:** Devote one day to making Christmas cookies. Invite friends or family members over. Distribute some cookies to elderly neighbors.

3. **Holiday classic:** Spend a night in and watch a classic Christmas flick you've never seen before. Streaming movie services often put classics and obscure titles into rotation during the holiday season.

4. **Christmas concert:** Host a gathering of children where they can sing or perform their favorite tunes for an audience. Take it on the road to a nearby nursing home.



5. **Hand out hot chocolate:** Make a big thermos of hot chocolate and give it out to shoppers or workers who have been out in the cold.

6. **Adopt a child/family:** Volunteer with a charitable organization that provides for less fortunate families. Answer the Christmas desires of a needy child or family by purchasing an item on their wish lists.

7. **See the sights:** Pack the children into the family car to tour nearby areas and look at Christmas lights displays. Bring along cookies and hot chocolate.

8. **Trim a tree:** Get together with adult friends at a tree-trimming party. Rotate the hosting house each year.

9. **Play dress-up:** A gentleman can dress up as the man in red and pop into a friend's holiday gathering.

10. **Wilderness walk:** Enjoy the crisp air and snow and see a local park from a winter perspective.

11. **Acts of kindness:** Choose any act of kindness and make it happen this Christmas. It can include feeding the hungry or helping a disabled person shop for the season.

12. **Family portrait:** Wear your holiday finery and pose for a portrait that actually will be printed and framed.

13. **Dine out:** Take a break from cooking, shopping and hosting and stop into a restaurant you've been meaning to try. Keep it local to support nearby businesses.

14. **Read religious stories:** Understand the true meaning of the season by reading Biblical passages.

15. **Camp-in:** The first night the tree is decorated, allow the kids to sleep beside it under the glow of Christmas lights.

16. **Scavenger hunt:** Plan holiday-themed trivia questions and hide small trinkets for children to find.

17. **Surprise box:** Put a gender and age nonspecific gift into a box. On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, the person who finds a hidden gift tag under their chair at dinner gets to open the box.

18. **Kids' Secret Santa:** Spread the joy of giving by having the kids choose a sibling or friend's name from a hat and purchasing or making a gift for that person.





LEGO Boost takes advantage of the STEM trend by enabling children to build and code any of the five models of building sets, such as this robot.

Hot toys for

Christmas and Chanukah may be celebrated toward the end of the year, but at the annual New York Toy Fair, the season for thinking about toys begins in February. This popular convention unveils the industry's hottest trends and toys, attracting more than 1,000 exhibitors.

The Toy Fair, and recommendations by toy and game industry experts around the world, like Dr. Toy and The Toy Insider, help cement which toys are likely to end up on kids' holiday wish lists. For those shoppers who fell behind the curve and missed out on last year's break out "Hatchimal" hit, the following figure to be the most coveted items for this year of giving.

- LEGO Boost: LEGO continues to rein-

vent itself, offering add-ons to its popular building brick model. LEGO Boost takes advantage of the STEM trend by enabling children to build and code any of the five models of building sets. These include a cat, robot, guitar, rover, and building machine. Or, they can use the pieces to create their own designs. The models work with an app and can be coded to make different motions and sounds.

- Melissa & Doug Scientist Role Play Costume Set: Melissa & Doug is widely recognized for its high-quality wooden games sets and puzzles, but the company also delves into imaginative play costumes. This scientist role-play costume includes a beaker, a test tube, a lab coat,

Chisholm Trail Heritage Center

Chisholm Trail Heritage Center - 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway - Duncan (580) 252-6692 www.onthechisholmtrail.com

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cool giving

experiment cards, and other ingredients necessary to fuel interest in the sciences. It can be a welcome addition to any dress-up collection.

- Nerf N-Strike Elite: Nerf brand has been popular for decades, and the company continues to churn out popular items for boys and girls. The N-Strike Elite series has a number of incarnations to tempt sharpshooters. Nerf's new AccuStrike line is designed to improve accuracy with specially crafted darts that sail straighter than the original darts.

- ColLEGGtibles: Building upon the Hatchimal craze of last Christmas and early this year, Spin Master offers an addition to the very popular collectible toy niche. ColLEGGtibles are much smaller

than Hatchimals, but are equally fun. Smaller eggs hatch to reveal various colorful critters inside. Kids are apt to want to collect them all.

- Pie Face Sky High: Hasbro keeps re-inventing the Pie Face game, their runaway hit from 2016, which was awarded "Game of the Year" by the Toy Industry Association. In the Sky High version, one player hits a lever with a mallet, hoping to deliver their opponent a face full of pie cream.

These are just a handful of the industry favorites that could be the hot picks among children for holiday gifting this year. Also, keep an eye out for Fisher-Price Movi, anything Star Wars, FurReal friends, Shopkins, and much more.

We want to help you "Deck The Halls" this Christmas!

Have an eye exam or find the perfect pair of frames November 1st -30th to earn a chance to win a Christmas Tree.

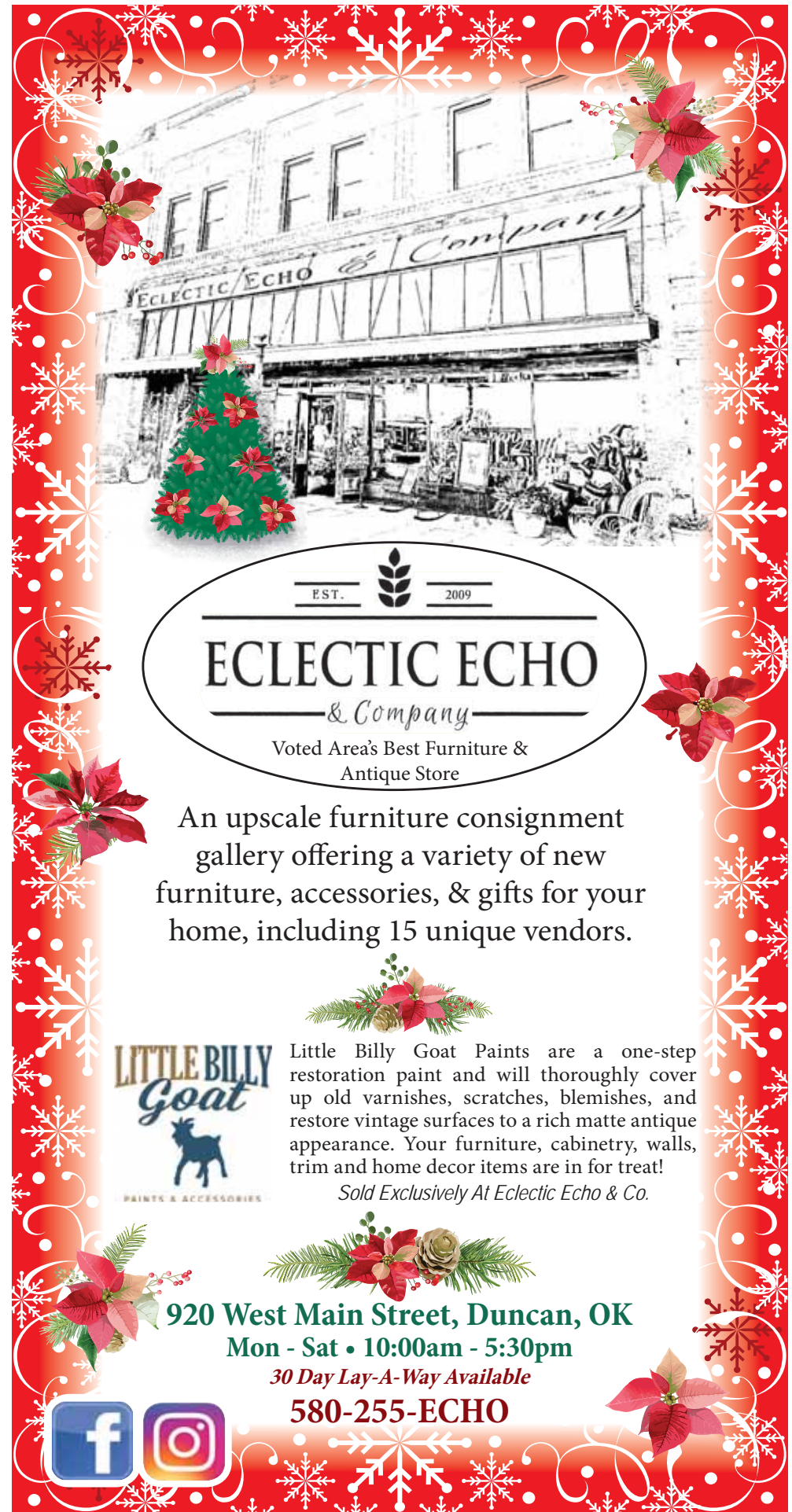
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(Family Features) Cooks today crave new food inspiration, creative recipes and flavorful dishes, all at a great price. Whether you're trying one of the hottest cooking trends or serving up a spread for a holiday celebration, pork offers an affordable variety of cuts and flavor profiles to help inspire every occasion.

This season, the National Pork Board is teaming up with leading chefs from across the country to discover their favorite pork dishes, the techniques behind them and how pork inspires their creativity in the kitchen.

Chef Jose Mendin is a five-time James Beard semi-finalist and founding partner and chef at Pubblely Noodle Bar, an Asian-inspired gastropub in Miami. In his Honey Balsamic-Glazed Ham recipe, pineapple combines with honey and balsamic vinegar for a flavorful centerpiece easily paired with smashed potatoes.

Visit PorkBeInspired.com for more cooking inspiration this holiday season.

Honey Balsamic-Glazed Ham with Smashed Potatoes

Recipe courtesy of Jose Mendin, Pubblely Noodle Bar, on behalf of the National Pork Board

Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 1 hour, 20 minutes
Servings: 8

- 1 3-pound boneless ham, netting removed and casing trimmed off
- 1/2 cup water

Make the Honey Balsamic Glaze: In a small heavy saucepan, bring ingredients to a boil over high heat, stirring often. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring often, until the liquid is reduced by about half, 7-10 minutes. Transfer to small bowl and let cool to room temperature.

Preheat oven to 350 F. Using a sharp knife, score ham in a crosshatch pattern. Place ham in roasting pan and add 1/2 cup water. Cover tightly with aluminum foil. Bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and spread half of the glaze over the ham, forcing it into the scored cuts. Bake for 15 minutes. Repeat with remaining glaze and bake until a meat thermometer inserted into the center of the ham reads 140 F, about 15 minutes more. If necessary, to keep glaze from scorching, tent ham with aluminum foil. Let stand at room temperature for 10 minutes before slicing.

Honey Balsamic Glaze:

- 1 can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple (2/3 cup pineapple, 1/3 cup juice)
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh thyme (or 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme)
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Smashed Potatoes:

- 3 pounds small red potatoes, scrubbed but unpeeled
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley (or 1 1/2 teaspoons dried parsley)

Make the Smashed Potatoes: After about 30 minutes of baking the ham, place potatoes in large saucepan and add enough cold, salted water to cover by 2 inches. Cover saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Uncover and reduce heat to medium. Cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain well and return potatoes to saucepan. Add butter, oil, salt and pepper, and crush with a large fork then stir in the parsley. Partially cover with the lid to keep warm.

Slice the ham crosswise and serve with the smashed potatoes.




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Shortcuts take stress out of holiday baking

'Tis the season for baking cookies, cakes and other treats. However, during the holiday rush, it's easy to get sidetracked or tired, and perhaps even a little bit overwhelmed by all the things to do in such a short period of time. Holiday baking doesn't have to add to seasonal stress. With these tips and shortcuts, there will be plenty of sweet treats for the family.

Stick with tested recipes

Although holiday bakers may want to branch out a bit with their culinary creativity, recipes that have previously been prepared with great success can take some of the work out of holiday baking. Preparing recipes you recall preparing in the past is much easier than trying something new. If you'd like, add sparkle to old

standards, such as decorating oatmeal or chocolate chip cookies with colored sprinkles.

Cookies are fast-baking

Did you know that cookies were originally made to test oven temperatures? Culinary historians say that cookies were first made to test if an oven was hot enough to bake other goods. Today, cookies can be whipped up in mere minutes. Make a batch of dough and then freeze or refrigerate it, thawing it when the time comes to bake. Also, think about baking one day and decorating the next if pressed for time.

Embrace colored candy melts

Icing can be tricky to master. Simply heating colored candy melts and pour-

ing over cakes or painting onto cookies can add festive appeal to desserts. Candy melts even come in many different colors and can be combined to achieve the tint desired.

Keep ingredients in top form

Don't let poorly performing ingredients or a lack of supplies be your undoing. Butter can be softened quickly in the microwave when needed for recipes. Eggs can be brought to room temperature by allowing them to sit in a bowl of warm water. Ensure that brown sugar stays soft by putting a piece of sliced bread in the container. Don't forget to stock up on other baking staples, such as vanilla and almond extracts, baking powder/soda, molasses, and confectioner's sugar.

Don't bake from scratch

Not all recipes need to be made from scratch. Boxed cake mixes can be embellished and turned into delicious desserts without much fuss. Substitute melted butter for oil, buttermilk for water, and add an extra egg for a rich cake. Mix in chocolate chips or nuts or experiment with garnishes for a festive look.

Parchment paper is key

Line cookie sheets or cake pans with parchment paper for easy dessert release and quick cleanup. Parchment paper and even foil can help lift cakes or cookie bars out of pans so they look neat and do not stick.

Holiday baking can be made much easier by employing a few tricks of the trade.



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Bake up sweet treats for family and friends



Mini Marbled Cherry Cheesecakes

- 18 chocolate cookies with white filling
- 2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 can (21 ounces) Lucky Leaf Premium Cherry Fruit Filling, divided

Heat oven to 350 F. Line muffin tins with 18 paper liners.

Place one chocolate cookie in bottom of each paper liner.

In mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar, eggs and vanilla until light and fluffy. Fold in half of fruit filling. Fill each muffin liner about three-fourths full with mixture.

Bake 20-25 minutes, or until done. Cool. Top each cheesecake with spoonful of remaining fruit filling.

(Family Features) A holiday season filled with gatherings calls for simple recipes that make baking for family and friends easy and enjoyable.

Traditions are often enjoyed more around the holidays and some classic flavors are must-haves for seasonal parties and dinners. Individually portioned desserts are ideal for entertaining, and these smooth, creamy cheesecakes with vivid holiday color are a perfect single serving sure to brighten any dessert table. Or put

a festive twist on apple pie with a cinnamon roll-inspired crust.

Each of these desserts features quick and easy preparation, and the delicious flavors of Lucky Leaf Fruit Fillings, which use high-quality fruit and contain no high-fructose corn syrup. Popular flavors like apple, blueberry, cherry and strawberry make it possible to prepare your favorite holiday desserts in minutes.

Find more inspiration for this season's holiday baking at luckyleaf.com.



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Cinnamon Apple Pie



- 1 refrigerated pie crust
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 2 cans (21 ounces each) Lucky Leaf Premium Apple Fruit Filling
- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) butter, softened
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar, plus additional (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons milk, plus additional (optional)

Heat oven to 400 F.

On lightly floured surface, unroll pie crust. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle evenly with cinnamon. Roll up tightly and slice into 1/2-inch rounds, like miniature cinnamon rolls.

Press miniature cinnamon rolls evenly into bottom and sides of 9-inch pie plate, making sure there are no spaces between rolls. Pour fruit filling on top of crust.

In large bowl, using pastry blender, combine stick of butter, flour and brown

sugar, until crumbly. Sprinkle over apple filling.

Bake pie until top and crust are golden brown and filling is bubbling, about 40-45 minutes (cover top and crust with foil, if necessary, to prevent from getting too dark). Remove from oven and allow to cool.

In small bowl, whisk together powdered sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and milk to form icing. Add more sugar or milk, if necessary, to reach desired consistency.

Drizzle icing over cooled pie.

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A Festive Meal



to Remember

FAMILY FEATURES

Make your perfect holiday story complete by serving one of the best holiday dinners you've ever enjoyed. A prime rib roast paired with savory toppings is guaranteed to earn rave reviews from the whole family. Add easy gourmet sides and a holiday dessert to create a memorable

meal that may well become a new holiday tradition. Best of all, it's even easier than you may expect.

Upscale side dishes can make the meal complete. If you're short on time or want to eliminate some of the fuss, you can take almost all the work out of a holiday dinner by using prepared side dishes from Omaha Steaks. Options like Brussels Sprouts with Bacon and Shallots, Roasted Root Vegetables

or Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes can lend a special touch to your holiday feast.

No festive feast is complete without dessert, and individual-sized Sticky Toffee Pudding Cakes are a perfect solution. They're made with real, premium ingredients, so all you need to do is pop them in the microwave straight from the freezer.

Find more recipes for a holiday dinner to remember at OmahaSteaks.com.



Reverse-Seared Prime Rib Roast

Active time: 30 minutes

Total time: 4 days

- 4 pound Omaha Steaks Bone-In Frenched Prime Rib Roast**
any variety Omaha Steaks Rub

Thaw roast completely in refrigerator before cooking; allow 48-72 hours. Season roast with rub 12-18 hours before cooking and leave uncovered in refrigerator overnight.

When ready to cook, heat oven to 225 F. Place roast on elevated rack in roasting pan. Roast 3 hours and 15 minutes, or to internal temperature of 120-125 F. Let roast rest 30-45 minutes.

Broil on high 2 inches from broiler, 4 minutes on one side, 2 minutes on other side, or until brown crust uniformly covers roast.

Tip: For easier carving, trim roast from bones prior to cooking. Stand rib roast on end so ribs are pointed up. Using sharp knife, cut along bone, being careful not to cut into roast. Tie roast up with butcher's twine to hold it together while cooking.

Reverse-Seared Chateaubriand

Active time: 30 minutes

Total time: 4 days

- 2 pound Omaha Steaks Chateaubriand Roast**
any variety Omaha Steaks Rub

Thaw roast completely in refrigerator before cooking; allow 48-72 hours. Season roast with rub 12-18 hours before cooking and leave uncovered in refrigerator overnight.

When ready to cook, heat oven to 225 F. Place roast on elevated rack in roasting pan. Roast 2 hours, or to internal temperature of 120-125 F. Let roast rest 30-45 minutes.

Broil on high 2 inches from broiler, 4 minutes on one side, 2 minutes on other side, or until brown crust uniformly covers roast.

Horseradish Cream

Active time: 30 minutes

Total time: 30 minutes

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons prepared horseradish
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar, plus 1 teaspoon
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1/8 teaspoon black pepper

1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

In medium mixing bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, horseradish, vinegar, salt, cayenne and black pepper. Whip cream to soft peaks using stand mixer. Gently fold into mayonnaise mixture. Chill until ready to serve.



Figgie Onion Jam

Active time: 30 minutes

Total time: 1 hour

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium red onion, peeled and diced into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1 cup dried black Mission figs, stems removed
- 1 cup water, divided
- 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar, divided
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

In 4-cup sauce pot, melt butter over low heat. Add onions. Cover and cook on low 15 minutes until onions have softened. Add figs, 1/4 cup water, 1/4 cup vinegar, sugar and salt. Cover and cook on low another 15 minutes until figs have softened.

Remove pot from heat and add black pepper and vanilla extract. Pour into blender or use immersion blender to process until smooth. Add remaining water and vinegar to blender for smoother jam or leave as-is for a more chunky texture.

Reverse-Seared Roasting

The reverse searing method can lead to a well-browned holiday roast with an evenly cooked interior that's tender and flavorful.

1. A day before cooking, dry brine or season roast and leave it uncovered in the refrigerator to develop crust and flavor. This dries the outside of the roast and forms a layer that allows even browning while locking in moisture.
2. Place roast in the oven at a low temperature to cook evenly from edge to edge. Take it out at an interior temperature of 5-10 degrees below desired finished temperature; it will cook a little more while resting and during searing.
3. Remove from oven and sear roast in a broiler, grill or hot pan to create the crust.



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