

## Preparing for the Holidays

Fall is here. Fall signifies the time to celebrate the harvest and give thanks for the earth's bounty and for each other. As we wind up into the Holiday Season, we celebrate the year gone by and renew our sense of purpose for the year to come.

That all sounds good, doesn't it. And then there's holiday dinners to plan, people to invite, your house to tidy and clean, cards to send, gifts to buy, as well as finish all those projects you promised you would by the end of the year.

Enjoying this time of the year has as much to do with time management and planning as it does connecting with family and friends. After all, if you don't send out those invitations in time, guests may make other plans, or worse, if you don't get that turkey in time, perhaps you'll be eating sausages!

Here are 5 tips that will help you enjoy your Holiday Season while you celebrate.

### **Tip #1. Calendar everything and spread it out**

- Sending cards (start sending them after Thanksgiving) and send in batches
- Buying gifts. Do your gift shopping in rotations - Mom and child 1, Dad and child 2, by your self(!), Mom and child 2, and so on, over several shopping expeditions. You'll get more of an idea about what you each would like and get a chance to buy it when the other isn't around so they get a surprise when they open the gift
- Internet shopping days to make sure you have enough time for shipping
- Pre-prepare some of your menu items for your feasts (and if you don't have some things that you can prepare ahead of time, consider changing your menu)
- Big grocery shopping days once a few days before and the day before or morning of if you have a nearby store open for the items that need to be fresh

### **Tip #2. Make lists**

- Start making lists for gift options now and give yourself some time to do some comparison shopping to check different stores prices and quality of items
- Make menus and grocery shopping lists from the menus

### **Tip #3. Plan Financially**

- Make a budget
- Put a note with the amount you can spend for gifts in your wallet. Each time you make a purchase, subtract it from the total. This way you have a running total and know when to stop buying gifts.

### **Tip #4. Be kind to the environment**

- Try to minimize the amount of waste you generate over the Holiday Season:
- Buy gifts with minimal packaging
- Buy edible gifts
- Make your gift out of items you already have
- Consider charity donations in lieu of physical items

### **Tip #5 Remember to enjoy yourself**

- What ever you manage to accomplish in the Holiday Season, give your self a pat on the back
- Take time to enjoy your friends and relatives