

Tips for an Organized and Jolly Christmas

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The holiday season is usually very busy and eventful but it doesn't have to be a frantic time for you or your family. Avoid rushing around doing last minute gift buying, decorating, meal planning, and gift wrapping by following these simple survival tips:

Tip #1: Shop Online and Keep Track of Receipts

The average family spends nine hours shopping for Christmas gifts (Consumer Reports). Eliminate long lines by doing much of your shopping online this year. Following are some tips to remember:

- Amazon.com, Overstock.com, and Barnesandnoble.com are just a few helpful online sites for buying gifts.
- When shopping online, have gifts wrapped and sent directly to the recipient to avoid long lines at the Post Office.
- Keep gift receipts handy in a special envelope to make gift exchanges more convenient.

Tip #2: Create a Gift Wrapping Station and Wrap As You Go

The average family spends three hours wrapping Christmas gifts (Consumer Reports). Simplify this task by wrapping gifts as you buy them to prevent late night wrapping on Christmas Eve. Keep the following wrapping supplies together in one location for convenient access:

- Scissors
- Tape
- Ribbon
- Bows
- Gift bags
- Gift tags
- Tissue paper
- Pens and markers

Tip #3: Send Holiday eCards

Each year our nation sends out two billion Christmas cards (Hallmark). You can simplify card giving by sending them electronically. This avoids long lines at the Post Office and ensures your holiday greetings will arrive almost instantly. If you prefer to send greetings by mail, create an electronic file for all of your contacts; print these out onto labels to simplify addressing envelopes.

Tip #4: Avoid Airline Delays

If you're traveling by air, arrive early to avoid extra stress. Keep a list of airline phone numbers handy in case your flight is cancelled. If your flight is cancelled, immediately call the airline directly. This is one way to "cut in line" to expedite the rebooking process.

Tip #5: Give Clutter-Free Gifts

Avoid contributing to someone else's clutter by giving them clutter-free gifts. For a list of clutter-free gift ideas, visit www.simplyinorder.com

Tip #6: Organize Now For Next Year

Get a head start for next years decorating by downsizing items you no longer use. Before putting away decorations, take photographs of each display so you remember where everything goes. Try grouping decorations by display categories and include its corresponding photograph.

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