



5 STEPS TO SIMPLIFY YOUR HOLIDAYS



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Step One: Get Organized

The holidays are full of holiday hoopla and chaos. No matter how much you plan the unexpected will happen. Plans will need to be changed to coordinate with evolving circumstances. However, the more organized you can be to start the holidays – the happier they will be because it does reduce controllable chaos. Then you can spend more energy and time enjoying the holidays.

Get a big calendar to write down everyone’s schedule in a different marker color. However, there are also many family planning apps that may work better for your family. You might even use both. Plan a family meeting – or conference call if some of the people you plan around live out of town -- to organize schedules.

Ask everyone to put on the master December calendar their:

- Events
- Parties
- Lunches & Dinners
- Family Plans
- Travel Dates
- Appointments

If you haven’t made plans yet, start thinking about them for:

Holiday	How I Want to Spend It
Hanukkah	_____
Christmas Eve	_____
Christmas	_____
Boxing Day	_____
New Year’s Eve	_____
New Year’s Day	_____
Other Holiday You Celebrate	_____

Appointments to Schedule:

- ☐ Hair
- ☐ Nails
- ☐ Year-End Doctor Appointments
- ☐ Kid Care
- ☐ Pet Groomers
- ☐ Pet Care for Known Travel
- ☐ Housekeeping
- ☐ Holiday Outdoor Lights
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____





Holiday Decorating

Schedule time for holiday decorating. Some people need a few hours, others need days. Then schedule time to take down the decorations.

Travel & Event Planning

Do you need to make travel plans for the holidays? If so, start shopping for tickets or hotel accomodations.

Do you want to attend holiday plays, musicals, ballets or go to amusement parks. Get your tickets now and check places like Groupon or your local grocery store for discounts.

Does your religious home have events or activities you plan to attend? Do you need tickets?

Step 2: Gifts & Shopping

We probably shop for more people than we think we do – that’s why *one in five Americans dread holiday gift shopping*. However, if you can make a detailed list it helps know who you plan to give gifts to and set a budget. Gifts don’t have to be expensive or even bought. Some can be handmade or food.

Family Members	Possible Items	Budget

Coworkers, Bosses & Customers	Possible Items	Budget





Friends

Possible Items

Budget

Neighbors

Possible Items

Budget

Stocking Stuffers

Possible Items

Budget

Pets

Possible Items

Budget





People Who Make Your Life Happier

Teachers	Possible Items	Budget
Babysitters	Possible Items	Budget
Mail Person	Possible Items	Budget
Housekeeper	Possible Items	Budget
Caregivers	Possible Items	Budget
Newspaper Delivery	Possible Items	Budget
Doorman	Possible Items	Budget
Hairdresser	Possible Items	Budget
Others	Possible Items	Budget



Step 3: The Actual Holidays

Decorations make the holidays pretty, but let’s be honest, we remember the food.

No matter which holidays you celebrate, when you celebrate, or with whom you celebrate the planning is pretty much the same.

First, if you aren’t cooking and need to make reservations at your favorite restaurant or order from a caterer -- **do it now**.

If you’re going to be a guest at someone’s family event and you’re bringing something you haven’t cooked before – **test the recipe** before the big event. Also, figure out any hostess gifts you’ll want to bring and add it to the "Other" category on your shopping list.

If you’re hosting the celebration here’s a checklist.

Holiday _____

Fill in the blank for Hanukkah, Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Year's or any other celebration or party.

Menu	Who's Bringing It
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Do you need any specific cookware or serving pieces?

Decorations needed like floral arrangements, candles, placemats?

Paper good needs?





Step 4: Holiday Greetings

Although the traditional greeting card is sent less and less you still may want to send a holiday greeting.

When planning your holiday greetings consider:

Are you sending any traditional or photo cards? If so:

- ◆ Make sure you have everyone's mailing addresses and request the ones that you need.
- ◆ Pick out or make your cards.
- ◆ Schedule your photo shoot or pick out pictures then order your photo card.
- ◆ Get holiday stamps – make sure they are the forever stamps so you can use them next year if you have extras.
- ◆ Start addressing a few envelopes each day.

Do you want to write a letter, email or make a video that you send everyone?

- ◆ Plan to write more than one draft.
- ◆ Consider hiring an editor so your grammar police friends and family can enjoy what you wrote.
- ◆ Consider hiring a ghost writer, if writing isn't your forte, so you sound even better or funnier.
- ◆ If you do a video involve your family and consider getting help to edit it.

Step 5: Gift Wrapping

- ◆ If you are a master gift wrapper – the kind of person who wraps gifts too pretty to open – get your supplies now.
- ◆ If you need quick wrapping supplies get your boxes and gift bags early -- when they are in stock and on sale. Places like Dollar Stores, Costco and Sam's have the best deals on these supplies *if you shop early*.
- ◆ Ideally, schedule a time to put on some holiday tunes or movies, drink some wine, or hot chocolate or eggnog and start wrapping.
- ◆ If you don't like wrapping so much consider wrapping a few gifts at a time.
- ◆ If you've bought gifts and you aren't sure who's getting them, you can still wrap them by putting a sticky note on the bottom of the box or bag with what's in the box.

Simplify Your Holidays Priority

The most important part of the holidays are the memories you make with your family and friends.

The hoopla makes things look festive, but that's not what people will remember in the years ahead. So don't exhaust yourself trying to create the perfect holiday – all that's required for the perfect holiday is to show up and share your happy holiday self.

