Holiday Gift Guide

A Special Supplement to:

Lockport Union-Sun & Journal
Niagara Gazette
Niagara County’s Hometown Newspapers

HOMETOWN EXTRA
4 Five ways to support small businesses this holiday season
5 Green Monday Madness
6 How to make the most of Small Business Saturday
7 Major benefits to early holiday shopping
8 How to make shopping more comfortable for customers
9 The benefits of in-person holiday shopping
10 Why small businesses should participate in holiday events
11 The most popular gift — 25 years ago
12 Beat the holiday hustle with these shopping strategies
13 Five great gifts for tweens and teens this holiday season
14 Ten gift ideas for people who love to cook
15 Great homemade food gifts
16 Post-pandemic gifts for friends and family
17 Great holiday gifts for retirees who can’t wait to travel
18 A guide to picking the perfect fresh Christmas tree
19 How to care for fresh holiday wreaths
20 Tips to keep your tree fresh this holiday season
21 Deck the halls with DIY decor
22 Three holiday crafts families can make together
23 Decorative holiday symbols add to seasonal celebrations
24 How to approach hosting the holidays this year
25 Toast the season with a literary-inspired cocktail
26 Treat guests to a beloved holiday staple
27 Toast to good health with traditional wassail
28 Make-ahead meals for tasty holiday dinners
29 This Italian cheesecake makes for a great dessert
30 ‘Tis the season for gingerbread cookies
Holiday Gems


MillsJewelers.com • 716-433-6456 • 51 Main St, Lockport, NY 14094
5 ways to support small businesses this holiday season

Small businesses long have been the heart and soul of local communities. There is something to be said about being on a first-name basis with a local restaurateur or another small business owner, as such familiarity often translates into exemplary service.

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses account for 99.9 percent of companies in the country, due in large part to the broad definition of small businesses (those with fewer than 500 employees). However, the vast majority of businesses in the United States have a staff that’s smaller than 20 workers, according to the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council. These firms employ nearly 60 million workers, says the SBA.

Despite the prevalence of small businesses, fewer than 80 percent of entrepreneurial small business ventures make it beyond their first year, and only around half make it beyond five years.

Consumers who want to help their favorite small businesses survive can use the holiday season and beyond to set the course for success. Consumers can make a concerted effort to fuel this important cog in their local economic engines.

• **Shop local.** The concept is simple but effective. Opting to shop in local stores over larger conglomerates and franchises can help small businesses take root. Before making holiday shopping lists, visit local stores and base gift ideas on items they have in stock. Chances are those gifts will be one-of-a-kind.

• **Purchase gift cards/certificates.** All businesses have slow periods, and post-holidays is often a time when sales stagnate. Gift cards may bring new customers into local businesses who might otherwise not have patronized them, potentially creating new repeat customers.

• **Cater holiday meals and gatherings.** The holiday season is chock-full of entertainment opportunities. Individuals can rely on nearby restaurants and other food and beverage businesses to cater holiday parties. Some businesses also may be willing to discount or donate food for nonprofit group activities, such as church holiday bazaars, school holiday concerts or fundraising fairs.

• **Mention small businesses on social media.** The holiday season breeds excitement. Therefore, when shoppers are in local stores, they can snap pictures of products and overflowing shopping bags and post them online while praising local businesses.

• **Think about subscription gifts.** Enrollment in a health club or a massage therapy service are gifts that keep on giving for the recipient, but also help ensure consistent incoming cash for the business providing the service.

When shopping this holiday season, consumers can look to the small, local businesses in their communities that help make towns and cities unique.

Black Friday was once the biggest day of the holiday shopping season for shoppers and retailers alike. However, in recent decades, retail holidays like Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday have become popular in their own right. And even more recently, Green Monday has thrown its hat into the ring.

**What is Green Monday?**
Green Monday is so called because it is one of the most profitable days of the year for retailers. The origins of the name “Green Monday” are debated, as both eBay and Shopping.com have been credited with creating the moniker.

**When is Green Monday?**
Green Monday is the second Monday in December and will take place on December 13 in 2021.

**Where does Green Monday rank for retailers?**
Retail holidays like Black Friday and Cyber Monday still generate more sales for retailers than Green Monday. A 2016 report from Statista.com noted that Green Monday sales figures totaled around $1.6 billion in 2016, while Adobe Analytics figures indicate Black Friday spending, including in store and online purchases, totaled $9 billion in 2020. However, Green Monday sales grew by 31 percent between 2018 and 2019. That suggests consumers are increasingly looking to Green Monday as a day to score deals on products that will still arrive in time for Christmas. Industry experts predict that retailers will acknowledge that growing popularity by offering more and more Green Monday sales in the years to come.

**What kind of deals can be found on Green Monday?**
An analyst with DealNews.com noted that, in 2019, Home Depot offered up to 60 percent off with a coupon code for an extra 10 percent off as part of its Green Monday promotions. Discounts with other retailers ranged from 20 percent to 50 percent off, and popular online retailers, including Amazon, have offered their own Green Monday deals. So as the day becomes more popular, shoppers can expect more deals.

Green Monday is the latest retail holiday to take place in December. Patient and last-minute shoppers may find great deals this December 13.
Gifts and gatherings take center stage come the holiday season. The holiday season begins on Thanksgiving and continues until New Year’s Day. During that time, families gather to exchange gifts, break bread, celebrate their faith, and toast the year to come.

The good times and gatherings that are such a big part of the holiday season were absent from many celebrations in 2020. Though the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, the successful rollout of various vaccines should make the coming holiday season feel more normal. That means gift exchanges and gatherings are back in play. Savvy celebrants recognize the benefits of shopping early, and Small Business Saturday is a great chance to get back in the holiday swing of things while supporting the local businesses that make communities so unique.

- **Plan ahead.** Small Business Saturday takes place each year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving in the United States. Since its inception in 2010, Small Business Saturday has grown in popularity. American Express estimates that 110 million people participated in Small Business Saturday in 2019, which underscores how shoppers can benefit from planning ahead. Research sales and inventories of local businesses you want to support so you’re ready to go come Saturday morning. Doing your homework can make it easier to navigate the crowds.

- **Reserve a table at your favorite restaurant.** A great meal with friends and family can be an ideal way to cap off a day of shopping, and it’s a great way to support a local restaurant. It’s worth noting that a National Today survey of 1,000 shoppers that focused on Small Business Saturday shopping habits found that food and groceries were the most popular things to buy local. Saturday is traditionally a popular night to dine out, and that popularity is even greater on Small Business Saturday. Shoppers can ensure they aren’t waiting for a table by booking a reservation in advance.

- **Check your social media feeds.** Many small businesses have recognized the value of communicating directly with consumers through their social media feeds. Throughout the day, shoppers can keep an eye on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to learn about special sales or events. In addition, shoppers can share their shopping experiences via their own feeds. Many small businesses rely on word-of-mouth from existing customers, so this can be another way to show your support for the establishments that call your community home.

Small Business Saturday is a great way to begin the holiday shopping season on the right foot.
Some people begin their holiday countdowns the day after the festivities have come and gone. With 365 days until the next celebration, it may seem like one has all the time in the world to complete holiday tasks. But before long, holiday crunch time arrives and some people find themselves rushing around to buy gifts and other essentials.

A 2020 Gallup poll found the average holiday shopper planned to spend $942 on gifts in 2019. The personal finance site Mint.com from Intuit reported roughly $729 billion was spent during the holidays in 2019 — making it the biggest holiday season to date.

Though the pandemic changed the holiday shopping landscape in 2020, a return to normalcy appears to be on the horizon for the 2021 holiday shopping season. In fact, the adage of “the early bird catches the worm” could help shoppers scoop up gifts and bargains before the holiday shopping rush begins. Individuals who start their holiday shopping early this year may discover there are many benefits to such an approach.

Spread out spending
Those who begin shopping well before the holiday season arrives can spread their spending over several months rather than a short period of time. This can make shopping more affordable for those who may have limited financial leeway. It may be easier to swallow spending an extra $100 per month throughout the year as opposed to having a $1,000 bill at year’s end.

Shop sales
A Coresight Research survey found that more than 25 percent of shoppers expected to start holiday shopping earlier than usual in 2020, when retailers offered their promotions earlier than normal to compensate for a decline in brick-and-mortar shopping. While it remains to be seen what retailers will do this year, shopping early means people are not beholden only to holiday sales promotions; they can take advantage of major sales throughout the year, including Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, back to school season, tax-free weekends (often offered in August), and even retailer-specific sales like Prime Day.

Avoid delays
Continued pressure on shipping companies as online shopping has become so prevalent inadvertently leads to delays. Couple this with supply chain disruptions due to the pandemic, and certain items may be out of stock or on back order.

“With potential product shortages continuing, if you see something you know you want, go ahead and buy it,” said Karl Haller, retail industry expert at IBM Global Business Services.

Shopping early also assists those who have to ship gifts domestically or internationally. Shopping early ensures those presents get to their recipients on time.

Getting a head start on holiday shopping is advantageous to shoppers who want to budget, save and ensure items are available.
The holiday shopping season begins around Thanksgiving and continues at a frenzied pace for about a month. Across the country, billions of dollars will be spent on gifts, entertaining and decor. Various businesses can increase their profits if they make an effort to make shopping more consumer-friendly.

According to a survey from LivePerson, a global leader in conversational AI, two out of three consumers were planning to do most of their 2020 holiday shopping online due to the pandemic. Welcoming those shoppers back to stores may mean making some changes designed to make shopping more comfortable and convenient.

- Offer special shopping hours. The pandemic opened retailers’ eyes to the needs of certain shopping demographics, including the elderly. Navigating packed stores can be stressful for people with mobility issues or special needs. Over the last several years, select Target stores have opened their doors a little earlier on certain days for individuals with autism, and also dimmed the lights and music to create a sensory-friendly environment. Other stores may want to follow suit, offering key shopping hours or days for those who can benefit from smaller crowds.
- Offer in-store and online capabilities. Though many consumers now feel better about shopping safely in stores, there are some who still may prefer the perks of curbside pickup or delivery capabilities. LivePerson’s survey shed light on some common consumer concerns when shopping online, which included asking questions about products, finding products and services, and finding relevant promotions. Businesses can utilize conversational commerce experiences, including chat options, to enable customers to interact online with greater efficiency and convenience.
- Run a holiday giveaway. Attract customers and make the shopping experience more fun by using a social media platform to advertise a holiday giveaway. Customers who are spending a lot of money will appreciate getting something for free.
- Create a welcoming atmosphere. Here is where small businesses can really shine over larger corporations. The sights and the smells of the holidays are often magnified in cozy environments. Offer coffee or hot chocolate and gingerbread cookies to customers when they enter the store. Set up a soft sofa where shoppers can rest during shopping sprees.
- Offer generous return policies. Some gifts simply will not be the right fit. Ensure that shoppers, whether they purchased online or in person, can return or exchange gifts with ease.
- Offer free gift-wrapping. Time-strapped shoppers will appreciate the efficiency of having gifts wrapped right on the spot. This is an ideal job for a teenager or an older worker looking to make some seasonal cash.

Small businesses can help solidify repeat customers by making the holiday shopping experience convenient, comfortable and friendly.
The benefits of in person holiday shopping

The 2020 holiday season was unlike any other. The COVID-19 pandemic was still affecting daily life across the globe over the final months of 2020, prompting many families and individuals to alter holiday traditions they’d embraced for decades. That included how people shop. Many people avoided in person holiday shopping in 2020. However, the successful rollout of various COVID-19 vaccines has made in person shopping safe again. That’s good news for local businesses and great news for shoppers, who may have forgotten just how much they can benefit from shopping in person.

- **In person shopping is convenient.** Much is made of the convenience of online shopping. And it’s undeniable that the ability to shop at all hours of the day and night is convenient. However, in person shopping, especially when shopping for others, is much more convenient than shoppers may realize. When shopping in person, shoppers can get a feel for an item, size it up and even inspect its quality prior to purchasing it. That can save shoppers from that disappointing feeling of receiving an item in the mail only to realize it’s poorly made or oddly sized and therefore unlikely to fit its eventual recipient.

- **In person shopping isn’t all about shipping.** Shipping speed is a significant factor for online shoppers, and that may affect just which gift they give come the holiday season. According to a Dotcom report titled “How Fast Delivery and Quality Packaging Drives Customer Loyalty,” 87 percent of shoppers surveyed indicated shipping was a key factor when deciding whether to shop with an e-commerce brand again. That’s an important consideration, as shoppers may be more inclined to buy an item from a retailer simply because of their shipping speed capabilities and not because of the quality of the item and whether or not it’s what they want to give to their loved one. Shopping in person removes shipping from the equation, ensuring gift givers will give a gift they truly want to give and not just the one that will arrive on time.

- **In person shopping allows for more accessible browsing.** Within minutes of entering a store and walking around, shoppers may see a handful of gifts that will ultimately be great for various people on their lists, even if they had no idea what to get prior to entering. That ability to browse is more difficult when shopping online, especially when buying from online retailers with massive inventories of a range of products. Such sites often require visitors to pick a category to streamline their searches. That’s not always easy or enjoyable for shoppers who cherish the opportunity to uncover hidden gems or more unique gifts that aren’t available all over the internet.

- **In person shopping gets shoppers out of the house.** Since the onset of the pandemic, people have spent more time than ever within the confines of their homes. The 2021 holiday shopping season provides a great opportunity to get out of the house and disconnect from devices. Shoppers can even do so alongside friends and family members they weren’t able to see last holiday season.

---

**Why small businesses should participate in holiday events**

The holiday season is a busy time of year. From on or about Halloween through New Year’s Day, calendars are filled with social engagements and other obligations. Local bazaars, craft fairs and gift auctions are a hallmark of the holiday season. Participating in bazaars, fair and shows can help generate revenue for local businesses and provides a host of additional benefits as well.

**Introduce your brand**

Holiday vendor events provide opportunities to introduce people to your products and services. These events tend to have rotating, captive audiences, and you can enjoy exposure to many different demographics all under one roof for a set period of time. Unlike in a retail situation, holiday bazaars may give you the chance to demonstrate your product or service and speak at length about its benefits.

**Encourage customer feedback**

Business owners can connect directly with customers and gauge in real time how consumers feel about their products. Chances are business owners will encounter repeat customers who can offer recommendations or provide some useful insights into their experiences. This valuable information can strengthen a business by allowing owners to fine-tune their offerings and enhance the customer experience.

**Explore possible opportunities**

Participating in holiday vendor nights gives you the chance to check out the competition. While many bazaars and fairs try to limit similar businesses to one or two per event, you can still get a sense of which products move more readily. Also, if you have been pondering changing the scope of your business, a holiday bazaar can be a great place to conduct some free market research.

**Network with others in the industry**

Business owners can reap the rewards of working alongside one another in an intimate setting by sharing tips for success with one another. Holiday fairs put you in close company with other entrepreneurs. During lag times, walk around and see their set-ups and sales tactics so you can learn how to boost your own sales. You also can offer advice to others about what works for you.

**Contribute to community pride**

Businesses who participate in holiday bazaars are doing their part to build a community and may help foster a sense of pride within a community. These events also tend to celebrate things that make the town or city special and evoke good feelings, such as hometown foods or heritage crafts. Local customers may feel more inclined to interact with businesses that are contributing to the hometown feel.

Businesses can benefit in myriad ways from their involvement in holiday fairs and other seasonal, community-based events.
The Perfect Gift for Anyone on Your List!

ALL NEW Fall & Holiday Flavors In-Stock!
Featuring...
• Raspberry Cranberry Balsamic • Maple Balsamic
• Parmesan, Garlic & Rosemary Olive Oil • White Cranberry Pear Balsamic
• Blood Orange Olive Oil • Fresh Garlic Olive Oil
• Organic Herbs • Teas • Spices • Gourmet Olive Oils and Vinegars
• Tasting Station • Essential Oils & Accessories • Himalayan Salt Products
• Himalayan Salt Room • Far Infrared Saunas • Reflexology • Nutritional Therapy

Bonnie Heck
Owner
415 Main St., Medina • 585-798-5800
Fall Hours: Tues. - Fri. 10am-6pm, Sat 10am-4pm
(Open ‘til 7 pm Tues. & Thurs. for Salt Room/Sauna appts. only)
See Website for Extended Hours in December!

The most popular gift
25 YEARS AGO

It’s easy for adults to experience a little nostalgia when holiday shopping for their children. The holiday season has long been considered a special time of year, and much of that magic can be traced to the joy kids feel when unwrapping gifts from mom, dad and, of course, Santa Claus. Many parents who now have youngsters at home grew up in the 1990s. When such moms and dads are shopping for holiday gifts this season, they might wonder what was the must-have item for them back when they anxiously awaited the arrival of Christmas morning? According to Insider.com, who worked in conjunction with the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, 1996 was the year of “Tickle Me Elmo.” This ticklish toy was the most sought-after item of the 1996 holiday season, and it was so popular that retailers experienced shortages. Those shortages led to some surprising sales on the secondary market, with figures that will undoubtedly drop some jaws even now, a quarter century after the Tickle Me Elmo craze erupted. Though the Tickle Me Elmo doll retailed for around $30 in 1996, some parents intent on getting their youngsters the most in-demand gift that year reportedly spent more than $1,000 on a single doll. To put that latter figure into perspective, data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis indicates that the average price of a new car in 1996 was $18,525. And according to Yahoo! Finance, drivers in the market for a used car in 1996 could have purchased a 1986 four-door Oldsmobile for just over $2,600.

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE
November-December 2021
Beat the holiday hustle with these shopping strategies

It’s beginning to look a lot like the holiday shopping season. The four- to five-week period between Thanksgiv- ing and Christmas is one of the most frenzied times of year, especially for shoppers.

According to recent research from Needle, an advocate-powered e-commerce company, shoppers report feeling more stress from holiday shopping than they do from family obligations and holiday travel. Eighty-four percent of consumer respondents in Needle’s survey stated that gift-giving caused them stress. Finding the right gifts for everyone can be particularly challenging.

While it may not be possible to remove all of the stressors surrounding holiday shopping, these tips may help make the job more manageable.

- **Outline everyone on your list.** Santa has it right by making a list and checking it twice. Only by writing a list will you be able to ensure you do not forget anyone. Savings expert Lauren Greutman from Flipp, a Canadian savings app, suggests including teachers, coworkers and service people in addition to family and friends on the list.

- **Track deals and coupons.** Sticking to a budget is easier when you utilize tools that help you save even more. Resources like Honey and Retail Me Not will automatically apply coupon codes at checkout to make sure you are getting the lowest prices possible online. Social media, retailer websites and third-party apps also can be great places to find bargains.

- **Protect personal information.** The Federal Trade Commission says to protect yourself financially by shopping only on secure websites with an “https” address. Stick with retailers that tell you what they do with your data and how they keep it secure. Consider creating a separate email address and/or account password for shopping retailers to reduce identity theft and other fraud.

- **Shop early.** Bank of America says one of the easiest ways to overspend is waiting until the last minute to shop and then having to settle for what’s available, regardless of prices. Spread out purchases and begin holiday shopping before prices increase.

- **Be wary of fake coupons.** The internet has made shopping and researching easier but also more complicated at the same time. A deal that seems too good to be true may be just that. Counterfeit coupons are phishing scams that can end up compromising personal information when you click on them.

- **Take advantage of warehouse stores.** Make the most of that membership fee by buying the bulk of your gifts at a warehouse store to save time and money. These retailers carry everything from jewelry to electronics to clothing. Also, they sell gift baskets or boxes around the holidays that can be divided into multiple gifts, saving you even more.

There are many ways to make holiday shopping easier and more affordable.

5 great gifts for tweens and teens this holiday season

Children often marvel at the world around them. They’re delighted to receive just about any toy, and play with items that others may not see as fun — including everything from mixing bowls to cardboard boxes. Slowly that cherubic toddler turns into a school-aged wonder, and later into a young adult trying to find his or her place in the world. With each passing year, the task of finding gifts for tweens and teenagers becomes that much more challenging.

While most parents and other relatives may never seem “cool” in the eyes of their teens, they can gift the tweens and teens they love with presents that will earn them a few extra brownie points.

The following are five gift ideas that are tailor-made for tweens and teens.

1. **LED strip lights**
   Both girls and boys may enjoy customizing their rooms as they see fit. Teens can utilize LED strip lights to create a unique ambiance that reflects their style. These often self-sticking ribbons of lights adhere right to walls. They come in a variety of lengths so they can be used to frame the perimeter of the room, if desired. Complete with multicolored options and a remote control, teens can set their room colors as their mood dictates.

2. **Gift cards**
   Teens try to keep up with the latest styles. A gift card or clothing gift from one of their favorite retailers can help them build their ensembles that much quicker. Aeropostale, Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister, Forever 21, Zumiez, American Eagle, and Tilly’s are just some of the stores popular among today’s tweens and teens.

3. **Wireless earbuds or headphones**
   Wireless headphones are used on a daily basis by tweens and teens. They rely on them for listening to music, watching movies on their devices and even during remote learning sessions. There are many brands to choose from, and Beats by Dre and Apple AirPods are among the most popular.

4. **Sneakers and shoes**
   Sneakers have long been popular gifts for teenagers, but they tend to be costly, especially for trending styles and brands. Vans Slip-On Core Classics, Converse Chuck Taylor All Star High Top Sneakers, Reebok Club C 85 Vintage, Nike Air Force One, and Adidas Sobakov are popular among today’s tweens and teens. In addition, thanks to the resurgence of 1990s style, Dr. Martens boots are once again in demand.

5. **Video game consoles**
   Each gamer has his or her preferred platform for gaming. From the Nintendo Switch to the Xbox Series X to the Sony PlayStation 5, these systems are in high demand. Due to that demand, these products may be harder to find the closer you get to Christmas Day. Grab them while you can and soak in the smile on your favorite tween’s or teen’s face.

   Teens and tweens are notoriously challenging to shop for. However, with some knowledge, loved ones can find gifts tweens and teens are more likely to use and enjoy.
The Finest Meats & More for Your Holiday Table

Thanksgiving
Smoked Whole Turkeys
Order Your Holiday Baked Goods by Saturday, Nov. 20th!

Christmas
Double Smoked Hams
Order Your Holiday Baked Goods by Saturday, Dec. 18th!

Weekly Deli Specials • Fresh Meat Thurs., Fri. & Sat.
• Freshly Baked Goods Fri. & Sat.
• Cheese • Spices • Flours • Nuts • Candies
• Homemade Jams & Jellies
10858 Ridge Road, Medina, NY 14103
(585)798-9700
Hours: Mon. - Sat. 8am - 5pm

The English Rose Tea Shoppe
Everything You Need to Make a Great Cup of Tea!
We Carry a Wide Variety of Loose & Bagged Tea, Teapots, Infusers, Travel Mugs and other Gift Items!

Plus • Gift Certificates

20% OFF One Regular Priced Item
Expires 12/24/21
Must present coupon. Limit 1 coupon per customer.

527 Main Street, Medina, NY 14103 • 585-798-4410
Hours: Mon.-Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-4
Check us out at https://www.facebook.com/The-English-Rose-Tea-Shoppe-264474430255886/

Click Here for More Info!
Many people know someone who loves spending lots of time in the kitchen. Certain home cooks may enjoy whipping up favorite recipes, while others might get excited about experimenting with new flavors and ingredients.

A love of cooking paves the way for many different gifting opportunities. Food-related gifts also come in a wide variety of price points, making it easy for shoppers to spend as little or as much as they want. Check out these 10 gift ideas for the foodie on your holiday shopping list.

1. **Sheet pans:** They may not seem like the most sexy or high-tech tools of the kitchen, but sheet pans are among the most versatile. They can be used for cookies, sheet pan cakes, oven-frying cutlets or fries, or even serving as the perfect bases for candy brittles.

2. **Air fryer tool set:** By now many people have hopped on the air fryer bandwagon, but they may not have all of the accessories to take air frying to the next level. From spatulas to tongs to silicone brushes, an air fryer tool set can make meals even more delicious.

3. **Dutch oven:** You’d be hard-pressed to find a more hard-working tool in the kitchen than a Dutch oven. These heavy, often enameled cast iron vessels come in various quart sizes. They can be used to cook stews, breads, cakes, and much more.

4. **Kitchen compost bin:** Home cooks who want to cut down on waste will appreciate a countertop compost bin to gather food scraps.

5. **Serving board:** The rise in cheese and charcuterie boards means cooks will need something attractive to serve their spreads. Wooden and stone boards are attractive when serving sliced cheeses, crackers, chutneys, and other appetizer.

6. **Electric wine opener:** Wine is the perfect complement to many dishes, and what easier way to open bottles than with an electric wine opener? Many are compatible with almost any bottleneck and can open several bottles on a single charge.

7. **Spiralizer:** The trend for pasta alternatives continues, and having a spiralizer that can turn vegetables like zucchini intospiraled “noodles” will be handy in most kitchens.

8. **Apron and accessories:** Home cooks need to protect their clothing in the kitchen. A fashionable apron and matching oven mitts can make a statement and keep clothes clean.

9. **Meat delivery:** The number of direct-to-home meat shipping providers continues to grow. Have quality cuts of meat delivered right to a home cook’s house so that he or she can cut back on trips to the store.

10. **New blender:** Today’s blenders can crush ice, process foods, puree, and chop foods. These versatile appliances make a welcome addition to any kitchen.

Stock up on food-related gifts now for those people on your holiday shopping list who love to cook.
Great homemade food gifts

Gifts from the heart are among the most coveted and appreciated come the holiday season. Hobbyists from all walks of life can turn their passions into handmade gifts, but few gifts may be as welcomed as those that can be eaten.

Cooking and baking ramps up during the holiday season. People can turn extra time in the kitchen into opportunities to create festive treats that are ideal for gifting. But which items are the best of the best? Even though tastes are singular, these items will appeal to most foodies and others on your gift list.

- **Jams and preserves**: Fruit jams and preserves are versatile foods. They are as at home on toast and biscuits as they are as fillings in cookies and tarts. Jams and preserves can be made with relatively few ingredients and work well with seasonal fruits.
- **Cinnamon rolls**: Warm, sticky and full of aromatic spice, cinnamon rolls are the perfect comfort foods. These rolls do not typically have a long shelf life, so be sure to present them promptly before they get stale.
- **Pancakes (or cookies) in a jar**: If you have a fantastic recipe that you can’t resist sharing, try turning it into a gift. Measure and package the ingredients into mason jars, tie with ribbons and include directions for preparation and cooking.
- **Mini bundt cakes**: Fruit cakes may be a holiday standard, but bundt cakes make for great and traditional offerings as well. Miniature bundts filled with chocolate chips, dried fruits or even those soaked in a favorite boozy-butter glaze can be moist and delicious.
- **Chocolate barks or fudges**: Seasonal flavors can come to life in chocolate treats. White chocolate filled with peppermint pieces or dark chocolate and cherry chunks are tasty pairings. Break apart portions of the bark or cut the fudge with cookie cutters and gift inside cello bags tied with ribbons or in cardboard candy boxes.
- **Shortbread cookie ornaments**: Circular shortbread cookies can be decorated with royal icing to look like Christmas ornaments. They can be eaten or even placed on trees to complete holiday decor.
- **Festive cookie pops**: Cookie pops can be made by mixing homemade or prepurchased crumbled cake with frosting or softened cream cheese and formed into balls. Insert a lollipop stick and dip the balls into melted chocolate or candy melts. Sprinkles, nonpareils or luster dust can be used to enhance the covered pops.
Post-pandemic gifts for friends and family

Families, businesses, schools, and just about everyone had to modify daily life in dramatic ways due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the most significant effects of COVID-19 — beyond the health implications — have been the changes in outings and gatherings and the ways holidays were celebrated.

The 2021 holiday season figures to be especially jovial as the world continues to emerge from the pandemic. As shoppers hit the holiday shopping trail once more, they can look to the pandemic for gift-buying inspiration.

Travel-related gifts
Travel restrictions greatly limited where people could go, so millions embraced staycations as a means to taking breaks from school and work. Travel restrictions have now been lifted in many parts of the world, and vaccinated individuals may feel more comfortable traveling again. Consider gifts that include travel essentials, such as luggage, plane tickets, toiletries, hotel vouchers.

Home improvement supplies
In the wake of canceled vacation plans, homeowners channeled their vacation dollars into home improvements. Those who still have plans to redo and renovate will appreciate gifts that may include gift cards to popular home improvement and design retailers. In addition, as certain home improvement materials like lumber have gotten more expensive, a cash gift to offset the cost of materials can help people see projects through to completion.

Dining out vouchers
Even though many restaurants pivoted to takeout service or established outdoor seating to meet safety requirements, dining establishments still felt the pain of the pandemic. More people have now returned to traditional dining, and restrictions on indoor dining have gradually been loosened. Therefore, gifts that focus on dining out, such as certificates for favorite restaurants or wine bottle caddies for BYOB establishments, can make for great gifts.

Support new hobbies
Many people took on new hobbies and explored new activities to pass the time during the pandemic. Encourage these hobbies by gifting tools and supplies. If a person adopted a new pet, try pet-toy subscriptions or even purchase pet health insurance.

Though the pandemic is something many people would love to forget, holiday shoppers can look to it for inspiration when buying gifts for loved ones this year.

Great holiday gifts for retirees who can’t wait to travel

Retirement provides a chance for adults who have worked throughout their lives to take a step back, relax and enjoy the fruits of their labors. Though the most indelible image associated with retirement might once have been a rocking chair, modern retirees like to get up and go, and holiday shoppers can take that joie de vivre into consideration as they look for the perfect gift for retirees who can’t wait to fly the friendly skies or hit the open road.

• Maps: It might seem simple, but roadmaps can be an ideal gift for retirees. A recent poll from RBC Wealth Management found that 63 percent of Americans age 50 and older say travel is an important retirement goal. Roadmaps of their own country or a foreign country can help seniors plan their dream vacations. Seniors can study maps and create their own routes as they visit popular tourist attractions and find lesser known locales along the way.

• Vouchers/gift cards: Airline vouchers can inspire retirees to take to the skies and visit locales that have long taken up real estate on their bucket lists. If seniors prefer to take to the open road, hotel vouchers or Visa gift cards that can be spent anywhere that accepts credit cards can help pay for gas, meals or entry to popular parks and tourist attractions.

• Projector and portable screen: Retirees may want to get away from it all, but that doesn't mean they have to leave everything behind. A projector and portable screen can let on-the-go seniors enjoy movie night under the stars or watch their favorite teams even when they’re far from home. This can be an especially good gift for retirees who are anxious to gas up their RV and leave home behind for a few weeks.

• Lifetime pass to world-renowned parks: All United States citizens or permanent residents are eligible for the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Senior Pass, which provides access to more than 2,000 recreation sites across the country. Those sites are managed by federal agencies like the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation, among others. A similar system is in place in Canada, where adults age 65 and up can gain unlimited admission for a full year to more than 80 Parks Canada locations across the country.

• Tablet: Of course, retirees may still want to enjoy some of the comforts of home while they’re off in parts unknown. A new tablet can help traveling retirees read the latest bestsellers and stay in touch with family and friends via video conferencing apps like Zoom. Many campgrounds and hotels now provide free WiFi to guests, so a tablet can be just what on-the-go retirees need to stay connected to life back home.

Holiday shoppers can make the season bright for their favorite retirees who can’t wait to spend their newfound free time traveling the world.
Apparel & Gifts for Every Little Elf on Your List!

Blissett's

447-449 Main St., Medina • 585-798-1033
Mon-Fri 10am-5pm & Sat 10am-3pm
Gift Certificates Available!
www.facebook.com/pg/Blissetts

Christmas Cut-Outs $13.99/dozen | Dinner Rolls $5.00/dozen
Sweet Rolls $7.99/dozen | Christmas Cookie Kit $12.00

Last Day to Order Christmas Baked Goods: Tuesday, Dec. 21st

We Have Cookie Trays, Gift Boxes & Holiday Baskets

439 Main St., Medina • (585) 798-1676
Local Delivery/Nationwide Shipping
www.caseniccookies.com
Hours: M-F 10-5 & Sat 10-Noon

HOLIDAY HOURS: Dec. 24th 9am-1pm
Closed Dec. 25th & 26th • Closed Jan. 1st - 15th

Case-Nic Cookies
For All of Your Holiday Baking Needs

Christmas Cut-Outs $13.99/dozen | Dinner Rolls $5.00/dozen
Sweet Rolls $7.99/dozen | Christmas Cookie Kit $12.00

Last Date to Order Christmas Cut-Outs: Friday, Dec. 10th
Last Day to Order Christmas Baked Goods: Tuesday, Dec. 21st

Christmas Decor, Ornaments, Snow Globes, and So Much More!

Christmas Treasure Box

9985 Rochester Rd. (Rt. 31), Middleport • 716-735-7251

Christmas Decor, Ornaments, Snow Globes, and So Much More!

Open: Thurs.-Sun. 9am-5pm • Closed: Mon.-Wed.
Closed Thanksgiving Day - Reopening Fri., 11/26
Closing at 3pm Fri., 12/24
Closed Christmas Day - Reopening Sun., 12/26
Last Day for the Season: Sun., 1/2

Come Peek For The Treasure You Seek!

Please follow CDC Guidelines by wearing a mask and using hand sanitizer. Thank you!

Third Street Liquors and Wines
WE NOW OFFER DELIVERY & CURBSIDE PICKUP
Place your order
www.3rdstreetwines.com
or call 716-285-1252

NEW CUSTOMERS
10% OFF
On Your First Online Order
USE CODE 10FIRST

ORDER NOW
Open 7 Days A Week
Mon-Sat: 9am to Midnight
Sun: Noon til 9pm

May not be combined with other offers. First time orders only. Location Restrictions Apply
Offer Expires 12/31/21
Gifts to excite the family athlete this holiday season

Holiday shoppers know that few things can match the joy of finding the perfect gift for a loved one. Whether that loved one is a tiny tot who can’t wait to unwrap this year’s must-have toy or an adult hoping to find the latest gadget under the tree on Christmas morning, the thrill of giving a great gift is part of what makes the holiday season so enjoyable.

Friends and family members may fall into certain categories, and that can make holiday shopping a little easier. For example, loved ones who can’t wait to sit down with a good book would no doubt appreciate a new e-reader or the latest bestseller. When it comes to giving the family athlete, the following ideas can provide the inspiration shoppers need to put a smile on the face of fitness-minded friends and family members.

- Weighted vest: Weighted vests have gained popularity in recent years. Available from a variety of manufacturers and for athletes of varying skill levels, weighted vests can be ideal for athletes who want to burn more calories and build strength during their workouts. This can be an especially useful gift for endurance athletes who want their training sessions to mimic the challenges posed by nature or difficult competitive terrains.

- Noise-canceling headphones or earbuds: Many athletes relish their workouts not only as opportunities to zero in on their fitness goals, but also as chances to block out distractions and clear their heads for an hour or two each day. Noise-cancelling headphones or earbuds effectively block out external noises, allowing athletes to direct all of their focus on their workouts and training sessions.

- Energy drinks: Though it might not seem like the most exciting gift to unwrap on Christmas morning, energy drinks are vital to many fitness enthusiasts’ athletic endeavors. For example, endurance athletes may appreciate a tube of Osmo Active Hydration Performance Drink Mix, which contains an optimal ratio of sucrose, glucose and electrolytes, helping athletes improve their endurance and power while reducing instances of cramping and fatigue. Energy drinks make for a perfect stocking stuffer.

- Home gym equipment: Pandemic-related gym closures turned athletes into their own personal trainers, and some may not want to return to local fitness facilities even now that they’ve safely reopened. Home gym equipment can help athletes continue to build their own private home gyms, making items like kettle bells, dumbbells, weight benches, and resistance bands great items to put under the tree this holiday season.

It’s never been easier to shop for the family athlete during the holiday season. A heightened focus on fitness ensures there’s something for every type of athlete on your holiday shopping list.

What to get young professionals this holiday season

Holiday shoppers relish the moment when a loved one unwraps a gift and immediately smiles widely. Hitting the nail on the head in regard to a holiday gift is its own reward, and there’s no shame in looking around for some inspiration to find a gift loved ones will truly cherish.

Shopping for young professionals this holiday season could be a little tricky, as changes sparked by the pandemic continue to affect work environments. However, shoppers can still find gifts to make young professionals happy this holiday season.

- Home office essentials: Many businesses have welcomed workers back to the office, but some are taking a hybrid approach to being in the office. Many professionals who once went into the office five days a week are now spending one or two days a week at home. Others may still be working remotely full-time. Holiday shoppers can take this into consideration when shopping for young professionals and look for some basic home office essentials. A comfortable office chair, a monitor that can be paired with a company-issued laptop and even a single-serve coffee pot for young people accustomed to getting their morning coffee on the way into the office can help professionals seamlessly transition from the office to their home office during the work week.

- Messenger bag: Looking the part can boost young professionals’ confidence as they begin their careers. A leather messenger bag is a stylish and sophisticated way for young professionals to carry their laptops and other workday essentials to and from work. Professionals working in especially formal environments may prefer a leather briefcase, which creates a more traditional look for young people who will be entertaining clients or shuffling from one business meeting to another.

- Business card holder: Though they might not be as prevalent as they once were, business cards remain an effective way for young professionals to build their networks. An elegant, monogrammed business card holder can help young professionals make a strong first impression.

- Luggage: Business travel may not be back to its pre-pandemic levels just yet, but many young professionals will undoubtedly still appreciate an upgrade over the luggage they used in college. If designer luggage is a budget buster, look for a sturdy, elegant alternative that young professionals will be proud to tote around on their first official business trip.

Business may still be unusual as the world continues to emerge from the pandemic. But shoppers can look to some old favorites as they search for the perfect gifts for the young professionals on their holiday shopping lists this season.
Great gifts for avid snowbirds

Every winter, millions of people — largely seniors and retirees — pack their bags, load up their RVs or book their flights with warm destinations in mind. This seasonal migration has become the norm for a distinct demographic who prefer to ride out the winter in locales that are free from snow, ice and frigid temperatures. The term “snowbird” was first used in the 1920s to describe seasonal workers who moved south for the winter months, and in 1979 it was used in reference to tourists who headed south each winter. According to Vacations Made Easy, around 10 percent of the snowbirds who head to the southern United States each winter are Canadian. Florida is one of the most popular destinations for snowbirds.

A significant percentage of snowbirds eventually will make their southern residences permanent. In the meantime, shoppers who want to give a fitting gift for the snowbirds who are still traveling each year can consider the following ideas this holiday season.

- **Golf course guide:** Retirees often spend time out on the golf course. Offer a guide to various courses in southern states, and they can plan their trips by making road trips as they visit each course.
- **GPS device:** While many snowbirds have cars already equipped with built-in navigation, those driving older vehicles can benefit from a GPS device they can mount to the dashboard, which will provide directions if they have to divert from their normal routes or when they want to go off the beaten path on their way to sunny skies.
- **Decorative stationery:** Make it easy for snowbirds to communicate with friends and family back home in a traditional way. Decorative note cards, post cards or other stationery can be a nice gift, and these notes can serve as mementos for recipients, particularly grandchildren.
- **Customized T-shirts:** Have T-shirts monogrammed or customized with messages that play to snowbirds’ love of travel and/or sense of humor.
- **Beach essentials:** Put together a gift that makes spending time on the beach more enjoyable. A beach caddy stocked with sunscreen, towels, an umbrella, and flip flops will give beachgoers a head start on gathering seaside essentials.
- **Food and wine carrier:** Keeping items cool is critical in hot climates. A well-insulated food and beverage carrier can make picnics or snacks by the shore comfortable and safe.
- **Lounges:** Whether you offer a zero-gravity lounge to set up on the lenai or a floating beach lounge for relaxing in the waves, a gift that brings relaxation to the next level will be appreciated.

10 gifts for automotive enthusiasts

The roar of the engine and the feeling of the wind in your hair is part of the magic of taking to the open road behind the wheel of a beloved vehicle. Whether a person is the ultimate gear head who needs to have the latest aftermarket accessory or someone who simply appreciates a pristine ride, auto enthusiasts come in all shapes and sizes. Luckily, there are all types of automotive gifts that can make it easy to impress car guys and gals this holiday season.

1. **Dashboard cell phone holder:** Using a mobile phone while driving is not a good idea. However, many people use their phones as GPS devices. Holding a phone while navigating is dangerous, but a phone mount near the dash can keep the phone visible without compromising the safety of drivers and their passengers.
2. **Customized floor mats:** Know an auto fanatic who’s also a sports fan? Offer a gift that mixes the two passions, such as floor mats featuring a favorite sports team's logo.
3. **Cleansing wipes:** When drivers are short on time, a full car wash and wax may not be possible. Drop Wipes are a product made from a neutralizing acid that destabilizes stains or bird droppings for an easy cleaning.
4. **Magazine subscription:** A wide selection of publications are geared to auto enthusiasts. They provide plenty of pertinent information, and some car lovers like to collect and display certain issues. Yearly subscriptions are affordable and can make ideal stocking stuffers.
5. **Racing experience gift certificate:** Research racing car schools and experiences where you live. Chances are you can find an opportunity for an automotive enthusiast to get behind the wheel of a race car with professional drivers offering tips for navigating the course at high speeds.
6. **Car cleaning kit:** Taking care of a ride means making sure it is clean inside and out. A quality car cleaning kit can ensure the job is done effectively and the car or truck always looks its best.
7. **Personalized leather keychain:** Ensure that a person can drive and keep their keys handy in style with leather keychains engraved with a driver’s name or initials.
8. **Racing video games:** A love for the open road may not end when cars pull into the driveway. Modern racing games and consoles produce incredibly realistic graphics and action that mimics real life.
9. **Automotive cufflinks:** As a nod to a love of driving, find quirky cufflinks that are shaped like everything from gear shifters to speedometers to steering wheels.
10. **Roof or car racks:** When a love of driving merges with the call of the great outdoors, drivers may need something to help haul their stuff. Various racks have been designed for toting around bicycles, kayaks, luggage, and more.

When gifting automotive enthusiasts, look no further than their favorite hobby for inspiration.
Come the holiday season, perhaps no tradition evokes the warm and fuzzy “feels” more than a family outing to pick a Christmas tree. Whether it’s a trek to a live Christmas tree farm or a short drive to the nearest pre-cut tree lot, the process of selecting a tree that will serve as the crown jewel of the entire season is a great way to make lasting memories.

Selecting a tree is a yearly ritual and each person has his or her set of criteria for what makes the ideal Christmas tree. These tips can help families find the right tree.

**Choose your species**
Do some homework on the type of tree you want prior to buying the tree. Balsam fir and Fraser fir are popular Christmas tree varieties, but there are many others, such as noble fir and Norway spruce. Balsams are known for having the most fragrant smell, but frasers tend to keep their needles the longest. For those who prefer a Douglas fir, keep in mind that they sometimes drop their needles prematurely due to foliar diseases like needle-cast fungus.

**Space for ornaments**
In addition to aroma and needle longevity, look for trees that have a desirable shape and allow for adequate space between branches, advises the home and garden resource The Spruce. Trees groomed to be lush and full will look beautiful unadorned, but once ornaments are added, full branches may cause those ornaments to hang low or even fall off. Trees with sparse branches allow for ornaments to hang straight.

**Measure your space**
Trees in the field or in a lot may look much smaller than they do when brought into the living room. Don’t make the mistake of selecting a tree that is too large for your home. The agricultural firm Ragan & Masey says to measure the room from floor to ceiling and subtract the height of the tree stand and tree topper. It’s equally important to measure the width of the area where the tree will stand and allow for ample space for foot traffic around the tree.

**Perform a needle check**
Every tree will drop some needles, and most evergreens hold their foliage. Modest needle loss is not an indicator of a poor tree. However, Decker’s Nursery in Greenlawn, NY says if 50 percent of the needles are lost when you swipe your hand down three to five different branches around the tree, the tree likely is not a good choice. In addition, avoid a tree that has glaring defects in the trunk as it can impede water flow through the tree.

**Heavier is better**
A heavy pre-cut tree means it is full of water and has been cut more recently. A healthy, fresh tree is going to require an effort to lift. Older, dried out trees will not be heavy.

Upon arriving home, make a fresh cut off the tree trunk and get it in water as soon as possible — even if that’s a bucket until the tree stand can be set up.

A guide to picking the perfect fresh Christmas tree
How to care for fresh holiday wreaths

Trees may be the focal points of holiday decor, but the humble wreath adorning the front door is the first decoration guests are likely to see when visiting a home. Wreaths may need some care to maintain their beauty all month long. Here are some tips to help holiday wreaths last as long as possible.

Choose a wreath wisely
When shopping for a wreath, choose freshly cut greenery that you assemble yourself; otherwise, look for wreaths made from freshly cut boughs with their foliage intact. Make sure not too many needles or leaves are falling off.

Moisture/water
Access to moisture will help to keep the wreath fresh. While a Christmas tree trunk may sit inside of a stand filled with water, wreaths require a little ingenuity. According to the wreath and garland retailer Club Botanic, if you will not be hanging a freshly purchased wreath right away, keep it in a plastic liner in a cool, dark place to help it retain moisture. Just make sure you don’t seal that liner closed.

Location, location, location
Where you hang the wreath is key to its longevity. Wreaths and garlands hung indoors likely won’t last as long as those hung outside, advises the floral retailer Bouqs.com. Evergreen boughs tend to require a colder climate to thrive, and indoor heat can prematurely zap moisture from the wreath. It’s probably best to hang fresh wreaths outdoors, but avoid direct sunlight, which can dry out the greenery. Slightly shaded spots are best.

Maintain airflow
Another factor that can affect the wreath’s longevity is an ample flow of oxygen. Wreaths tend to last much longer when kept on an outer door, indicates Harbor Farm in Ellsworth, ME. Wreaths sandwiched between a front door and a storm door will probably perish faster due to lack of oxygen.
Christmas trees are often the pièce de résistance of holiday decor. Few things draw the attention of holiday guests quite like an awe-inspiring Christmas tree, especially when that tree maintains its fresh, healthy sheen throughout December.

Many families purchase fresh trees over Thanksgiving weekend or during the first weekend of December. Though the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day may seem like a long time to keep a tree looking great, there are a handful of ways for holiday celebrants to help their trees maintain that undeniable appeal for the long haul.

- **Pick the right tree.** Choosing the right tree is one of the simplest ways to keep a tree looking good throughout the holiday season. A freshly cut tree that buyers choose and cut down themselves or have cut down can reassure them that the tree is likely to stay strong throughout December. Trees purchased from a tree lot may have been cut down long before they made it to the lot, which can make it harder to keep them looking good until Christmas Day.

- **Cut an inch off the base of any tree that is not freshly cut.** MSU Extension at Michigan State University notes that all Christmas trees are conifers, which means they have resin canals in their trunks. Once a tree is cut, the resin can block the pores and make it harder for the tree to take in water. Cutting an inch off the base of a tree that was not freshly cut just before putting it in the stand can help ensure it gets the water it needs to stay healthy and firm. MSU Extension notes that this approach should be taken with any tree that was not cut within six to eight hours of being put in a stand.

- **Replenish the water supply every day.** Fresh tree veterans recognize that Christmas trees can be very thirsty, especially within the first week or so of being cut and brought home. Fill the stand with water each morning and, if necessary, refill it each night before going to bed. The more water a tree gets and drinks, the more likely it is that the tree will look healthy all the way to Christmas Day. MSU Extension notes that many decorative or antique tree stands do not hold much water, so anyone with such a stand may need to replenish the water supply more than once or twice per day.

- **Keep the tree away from a heat source.** For safety’s sake, trees should be kept away from heating vents, fireplaces and space heaters. But keeping trees away from such heat sources, and ensuring they are not spending the daytime in direct sunlight, also decreases the chances they will dry out before Christmas Day.

A handful of simple strategies can help holiday celebrants keep their Christmas trees looking good throughout the month of December.
Home to local Artisan gifts and foods
Dress to A Tea
Designer upcycled threads
Sprout Toys that bring kids Joy!
Melissa & Doug-Klutz
Green Toys & More
Welcome
Queenies Painting Nook
Dixie Belle Elite Shop
Cityview Creations
local & 716 Apparel and gifts
Check out all we have to offer at windsorvillageshops.com
visit us at 43 Stevens St.
Lockport, NY 14094
716-622-8329

Shop Local for the Holidays
Friday, November 26th
Double Discount Day
Gift Certificates
Gift Baskets
With this ad FREE Gift Bag
(While supplies last.)

More information and reservations online or call!
The Winery at Marjim Manor
7171 East Lake Road, Appleton, NY 14008
716-778-7001 • www.marjimmanor.com

Gift Ideas for Everyone on Your List...& Fido, too!
We’ve Got the Big Box Stores beat!
Drive a Little...SAVE A LOT!
Now Carrying Carhartt Work Shoes
5 styles available!
Men’s Full Swing Cryder Jacket
Navy or Gray
Model # S5207
Dickies® Clothing
LaCroise® Boots
Kong® Toys
Red Barn® Treats
Mammuth® Toys
Dog Food
And MORE

ONE HEMP HOLISTICS
WNYS Leader in industrial Hemp
2023 MILITARY RD, NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14304

WHY CHOOSE US
OVER THE COMPETITION?
✓ Master Certified in the Endocannabinoid System
✓ cGMP Certified for Manufacturing and Distribution
✓ Largest Selection & Custom Made Products
✓ Membership Card Holders get Free Product!
✓ We Grow our own Hemp on 45 Acres of Organic land (Seed to Sale)
✓ Family Owned and Operated

Get a $10 Gift Certificate FREE with every $50 GC Purchase!
USE CODE: HOL20
RECEIVE
20% OFF YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE ONLINE
SHOP NOW

VISIT US ONLINE
OneHempHolistics.com
CALL US TODAY 716.362.9499
CBD Products Contain Less Than 0.3% THC
Deck the halls with DIY decor

Decorating is one of the joys of the holiday season. Families often decorate together, and such traditions may include dressing the Christmas tree and hanging holiday lights around the house.

A day spent making homemade ornaments is another great way to decorate and spend quality time together as a family during the holiday season. Though families can let their imaginations run wild when making ornaments at home, the following are some great starting points that can serve as springboards for holiday crafting sessions.

• **Snowmen**: The holiday season simply wouldn’t be the same without snowmen. Homemade snowmen can be made out of ping pong balls, which are the ideal size when making ornaments for the Christmas tree. Those who want to go a little bigger can glue wiffle balls or large polystyrene balls together or create their own papier mâché snowmen to display on mantles or on console tables in a foyer or hallway.

• **Santa Claus**: Another staple of holiday decor, Santa Claus has inspired many a DIY holiday ornament over the years. A paper plate Santa Claus with a cotton ball beard glued on can make for a fun Christmas craft, especially for young children who can’t wait for the big guy to appear on Christmas Eve.

• **Penguins**: Though they might not have a direct link to the holiday season, penguins evoke feelings of cold weather, making them an ideal addition to holiday decor schemes. Make your own penguin family using polystyrene craft balls in assorted sizes and then hang them on the tree or place them around the house.

• **Reindeer**: Santa would not be able to get the job done each Christmas Eve without his trustworthy team of reindeer. Popsicle stick reindeer projects can be fun for kids of all ages and a great way for youngsters to recognize the efforts of Dasher, Dancer, Comet, Cupid, and, of course, Rudolph, among others.

• **Cookie cutters**: Family baking sessions are a holiday tradition for millions of people. Though that often leads to batches upon batches of tasty cookies, it also means families tend to have a surplus of holiday cookie cutters around the house. Surplus cookie cutters tend to be discarded or relegated to the miscellaneous items drawer in kitchens, but a more awe-inspiring fate can await them. A coat of paint, some glitter and a little bit of string or twine is all families need to transform their extra cookie cutters into colorful tree ornaments.

Holiday decorating sessions can be made even more fun when families take time to craft some DIY decorations together.
3 holiday crafts families can make together

Decorative holiday symbols add to seasonal celebrations

Decorating for the holidays can be made even more special when decorations are handmade. Creating holiday traditions and memories is an enjoyable way to pass some time and create lasting holiday traditions and memories. The following are some holiday crafts families can make together.

**Personalized elf**
For families who want to make their own personalized elf dolls, all it takes is a little computer know-how, some clever photo work and a some sewing skills. Find a template for a rag doll sewing pattern or an illustration of an elf online. Superimpose an image of your child’s face on the template in a photo editing program. Print out the entire image onto iron-on fabric transfer paper. Iron it on to a light-colored piece of fabric from the craft store according to the product directions. Cut out the fabric with ironed-on decoi, leaving about a one-inch margin to allow for sewing and eventual stuffing. Duplicate the shape of the doll onto another piece of fabric to make the back of the elf doll. Place the front elf image face down on the back piece of fabric and sew the edges together, leaving a small opening at the end. Using that opening, fill the elf right-side out and stuff with pillow fill material. Sew the small opening closed and enjoy a personalized elf doll for the holidays.

**Holiday candle**
This craft is attractive and also smells good. Gather one bar of fragrant soap (like Irish spring); a small, white washcloth; red and green ribbon; a round of colorful mesh or tulle fabric measuring roughly 12 inches or enough to wrap your bar of soap; craft glue; a piece of yellow felt cut to look like a flame; and one or two sewing pins. Roll the washcloth into a cylinder shape to serve as the “wick” of the candle. Glue the edges together and wrap a piece of ribbon diagonally around the wick and adhere to secure even further. Glue the felt flame to the top of the wick. Place the soap in the center of the round piece of fabric. Attach the wick vertically to the soap using the pins. Then gather the tops of the mesh fabric around the base of the wick and use another piece of ribbon to tie into a bow and secure to the wick base. The soap and pins should now be concealed. Place the “candle” out of direct sunlight and away from heat, preferably on a little dish so the soap will not damage any furniture.

**Growth indicator ornament**
Purchase a large glass or plastic Christmas tree ball. Select an acrylic paint in your color of choice and squirt some into a paper plate. Have a child dip his or her hand into the paint and then transfer the handprint to the ornament. Let dry and then attach a ribbon to hang on the tree. Through the years see how much children have grown from that little handprint.

**Menorah**

**Jewish Chanukah symbol**
Menorahs are seven-armed candelabras used in Jewish religious worship. To mark the Chanukah celebration, a special nine-armed hanukkiah is displayed for eight days and nights. A candle is lit each day to commemorate the miracle of oil lasting in the rededicated Temple after the Maccabees’ successful uprising against the Syrian Greeks. The menorah typically is placed in a highly visible spot, such as the front window of a home or in a high-traffic living space.

**Advent wreath**

**Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran, among others, Christian symbol**
The Advent wreath is used by various Christian denominations and draws attention to the weeks preceding Christmas. A new candle is lit on the wreath each Sunday at mass to prepare the faithful to receive the Lord Jesus.

**Kinara and Mishumaa Samba**

**Kwanzaa cultural symbol**
The Kinara (candle holder) and the Mishumaa Samba (the seven candles) are symbolic of Kwanzaa. The candles and holder represent the Seven Principles, or the minimum set of values by which African people are urged to live.

**Nativity scene**

**Christian Christmas symbol**
It’s customary for nativity scenes to be included in Christmas decor schemes. The nativity depicts the birth of Christ and typically includes a manger, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, various animals, an angel, and the three visiting Magi. The infant Jesus also is included, though some people prefer to wait until the after the stroke of midnight on Christmas Eve to place Jesus in the manger. Live nativity scenes also are commonplace around Christmas. Saint Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first live nativity scene in 1223.

**Baby New Year**

**Secular symbol**
Baby New Year is a popular promotional symbol used to commemorate the dawn of a new year. The baby represents rebirth and may be traced back to the ancient Greeks or Egyptians. Historians say the Greeks believed that their god of wine, Dionysus, was reborn on New Year’s Day as the spirit of fertility. While people may not decorate with Baby New Year figurines, they do participate in “First Baby” competitions, which celebrate those infants born in the opening moments of a new year.
To the relief of many, the upcoming holiday season figures to feel more normal than it did a year ago. The COVID-19 pandemic forced families to celebrate the 2020 holiday season in quarantine. Longtime family traditions like big gatherings might have been shelved in 2020, but the successful rollout of various vaccines has put such celebrations back in play in 2021.

Though it would be great to imagine a 2021 holiday season with COVID-19 well in the rearview mirror, the spread of potentially deadly variants of the virus and the relatively high number of eligible yet unvaccinated adults and children could make hosting the holidays a bit tricky. The following are some strategies hosts can employ to make this holiday season both special and safe.

- **Host small celebrations instead of one large one.** Families accustomed to gathering en masse during the holiday season may benefit by hosting a small gathering or two instead of one big one. This can be especially important if families include a lot of unvaccinated people, like small children.

- **Ask guests to wear a mask if anyone is concerned.** The debate about masks is ongoing. While the vast majority of mask mandates had been lifted in the spring of 2021, concerns about the Delta variant prompted government officials and public health agencies to reconsider their mask guidelines. Families need not wait for government-issued mandates to help relatives ease their anxiety about variants of the virus. Hosts can explain to family members that if anyone on the guest list expresses concerns about the virus, they will ask everyone else to wear masks while celebrating indoors. Anyone unwilling to comply can celebrate outside or stay home and visit after concerned relatives have gone home.

- **Stick to the great outdoors.** Families that gather in mild climates for the holidays can reduce the likelihood of spreading the virus by keeping celebrations outdoors. Public health agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization have noted the virus is considerably less likely to spread outdoors, as researchers have learned fresh air disperses and dilutes the virus. So celebrating outdoors this holiday season can provide a measure of protection for family members who are not vaccinated.

The 2021 holiday season should mark a welcome return to normalcy for many families. However, holiday hosts may still need to implement some safety measures to protect their friends and families.

---

TOAST THE SEASON with a literary-inspired cocktail

Come the holidays, many people engage in various customs and rituals that make the season even more special. One person may bake dozens of cookies to share with friends and family, while another may go caroling with the church choir.

Reading familiar stories and watching classic Christmas movies also are part and parcel of many celebrations. For example, “A Christmas Carol,” a novella by Charles Dickens that was published in 1843, is a must-read and must-see for many people each holiday season. The story is the tale of the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge, who is visited by various ghosts, each of whom teaches Scrooge an important lesson about living life to its fullest. Many local theater companies put on productions of the classic Dickens tale around the holiday season.

Holiday celebrants and fans of “A Christmas Carol” can raise a toast to Charles Dickens by enjoying one of his favorite cocktails, the “Sherry Cobbler,” courtesy of Margaret Kaplan’s “How to Drink Like a Writer: Recipes for the Cocktails and Libations that Inspired 100 Literary Greats” (Apollo Publishing). While Dickens did not mention the Sherry Cobbler in “A Christmas Carol,” the beverage does make an appearance in another of his works, “The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit.”

Charles Dickens’s Sherry Cobbler

Serves 1

2 orange slices
1 tablespoon sugar
4 ounces amontillado sherry
Berries (in season) for garnishing
Maraschino cherries for garnishing
1 lemon wheel for garnishing

Muddle orange slices and sugar at the bottom of a cocktail shaker. Add sherry and ice and shake. Strain ingredients into a Collins glass filled with crushed ice. Garnish with seasonal berries, maraschino cherries and a lemon wheel. Serve with a generosity of spirit.
**Holiday Specials 2021**

Nov. 27th - Dec. 23rd

Join us at the Hofbrahaus Dec. 17th-19th

Receive $125.00 worth of Gift Certificates for $100.00
(can be split up into several certificates)

Every Weekend

Pick a Candy Cane Sale

Discounts between 10% and 50% off 1 item under $50.00
(not good on repairs, custom or gift certificates)

Visit us online for more info

---

**Gleam & Glimmer Stained Glass Studio**

34 Webster Street, North Tonawanda NY
716-213-0472 - www.gleamglimmer.com

---

**WINTER IS COMING**

Will you be ready?

**Durf's**

Tire & Auto Care

- Air conditioning or heat repair
- Batteries
- Brakes repair
- Complete transmission repair
- Comprehensive engine repair
- Cooling system repair
- Electrical system repair
- Exhaust repair and replacement
- Four wheel computer alignment
- Fuel system repairs
- New York State inspections
- Oil changes
- Suspension and under carriage repair
- Tires and tire repair
- Tune ups

716.772.7591

7642 Rochester Road (Rt 31)
Gasport, NY 14067
www.durfstires.com

---

**Della’s Chocolates**

**HOLIDAY GIFT BASKETS**

Milk, Dark, White & Orange Chocolate
- Peanut Butter Cups • Bear Paws • Sponge Candy
- Nut Clusters • Truffles • Chocolate Covered Oreos
- Sugar Free Chocolate and much more!

15% OFF your total purchase
Limit one coupon per customer. Exp. 12/24/21

512 Main Street • Medina, New York 14103
Open Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm
Extended Hours in December:
Thursdays til 8pm and Sundays Noon-4pm
585.798.5815 • www.dellaschocolates.com

---

**Wagner’s Farm Market and Grill**

QUALITY FRUITS, VEGETABLES, GROCERIES AND MEATS

WE HAVE THAT EXTRA SPECIAL GIFT...

**GOURMET GIFT BASKETS**

WE USE FRESH FRUIT AND A VARIETY OF EXTRAS:
Jam, Honey, Candy, Chocolates, Maple Syrup, Pancake Mix, Cheese, Crackers and More!

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR ANYONE
We Deliver
Call 731-4440
GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

2672 LOCKPORT RD., SANBORN • 731-4440

---

**HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE**

November-December 2021 26
The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Many traditions are decades if not centuries old, while others do not have such lengthy histories. One younger tradition that many people cannot go without during the holiday season is centered around a wildly popular beverage made at an equally well-liked coffeehouse chain.

The peppermint mocha was introduced to Starbucks® customers during the 2002 holiday season. The beverage became something of an instant classic and is now served at more than 30,000 stores across the globe.

Holiday hosts can bring the peppermint mocha into their own homes this holiday season thanks to Starbucks®. Though Starbucks® notes the following DIY recipe for the “Peppermint Mocha” isn’t the official recipe, it can help holiday hosts impress their guests and satisfy their cravings for this beloved beverage should families find themselves snowed in during their holiday gatherings this year.

**Treat guests to a beloved holiday staple**

**DIY Peppermint Mocha**

Makes one 12-ounce beverage

1 fluid ounce coffee or 1 shot espresso, such as Starbucks Christmas Blend or Starbucks Espresso Roast Coffee
1/2 cup milk (or dairy alternative)
2 tablespoons peppermint flavored syrup
3 tablespoons mocha sauce
Whipped Cream
Dark chocolate or shaving

1. On a stovetop, heat milk on medium setting. Whisk the milk to make foam about 30 seconds. Set aside. (Or, use an electric milk frother at home if you have one.)
2. Pour two tablespoons chocolate sauce and two tablespoons peppermint syrup into bottom of 12-ounce or larger coffee mug.
3. Add one shot of brewed espresso. (Don’t have an espresso machine? Make concentrated coffee by using less water in an alternative brewing method.)
4. Fill mug with steamed milk.
5. Top with whipped cream and garnish with chocolate shavings.

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Toast to good health with traditional wassail

The practice of wassailing is a time-honored tradition that has spanned centuries. When wassailing, people go door-to-door, singing and offering a sip of drink from something called a wassail bowl. Most do it to spread holiday cheer and wish good health on their neighbors.

The word “wassail” is derived from the Anglo-Saxon phrase “waes hael,” which loosely translates to “good health” or “be whole.” Wassailing remains popular in some communities, though caroling has overtaken it as a way to spread cheer through singing.

Wassail drink was originally made from mulled ale, curdled cream, roasted apples, eggs, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, and sugar, according to the holiday customs and traditions resource WhyChristmas. Most wassails are now mulled ciders, which are popular in late fall — notably around Thanksgiving. Wassail was traditionally enjoyed on Twelfth Night (January 5 or 6), but it can be used to toast to good health and merriment at any time during the holiday season.

There are many versions of wassail beverages, including this “Traditional Wassail,” courtesy of “The Farmer’s Almanac.”

**Traditional Wassail**

Serves 8 to 12

- 5 to 6 large baking apples, peeled and cored (such as Baldwin, Gravenstein, McIntosh, or Stayman Winesap)
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 quarts beer or ale
- 2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half, or 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 1/2 cups sherry or sweet red wine

Preheat oven to 400 F. Cut the apples into thick slices, and arrange in layers in a covered casserole dish, sprinkling a few teaspoons of sugar over each layer. Cover and bake for 30 minutes. (The apples will get puffy and soft.)

While the apples bake, combine the beer, spices, lemon zest, and remaining sugar in a large saucepan. Heat slowly, bringing just to a simmer. (Don’t let the mixture boil.) When it is hot, add the sherry and keep heating until the mixture reaches a simmer again, still not boiling. Place the hot baked apples in a punch bowl, and pour the hot wassail over them. Serve hot.
Garage Doors & Electric Openers
Sales · Service · Installation
Residential · Commercial
Parts & Accessories
Installed or Cash & Carry Available!

FREE Estimates on new door installations!
Gift Certificates Available

SUNRISE DOOR & WOODWORKS
INTEGRATED

3122 Hartland Road, Gasport NY 14067
www.sunrisedoor.com  |  sunrise@sunrisedoor.com
Serving Niagara, Orleans, and Northern Erie Counties since 1998!!

(716) 772-2123
(716) 625-9097

SNEAKER BARN & More
10640 Ridge Rd., Medina, NY
(Corner of Fruit Ave. & 104)
798-3784

Holiday Gift Ideas!
Large Selection of Shoes, Boots, Slippers, Socks & More!

Click Here to Shop!

Cozy Warm Slippers for Men & Women
Medium & Wide Widths
Some with Indoor/Outdoor Soles

Take $10 OFF!

Running & Walking Shoes for Men & Women
Super Comfortable Saucony Walking Shoes in Medium & Wide

Take $10 OFF!

Steak Stone & Sushi
Bar & Grill

Buy $50, Get $10 Bonus

Christmas gift card SPECIALS

5772 S. Transit Road
Lockport, NY 14094
433-1459 • 433-1593
Mon-Thurs 11am-10pm  •  Fri/Sat 11am-11pm  •  Sun Noon-10pm

1340 Military Road
Niagara Falls, NY 14304
215-6815

www.steakstoneandsushi.com

KISSEL COUNTRY TIN
Holiday Gift Ideas!
“Gifts for the Nest”

We have so many new Holiday ideas, Unique Holiday Wreaths and Arrangements, new Folk Art & Country Florals & Hand-picked Holiday Gifts. There are Santas & Primitive Angels, Snowmen, and much more!
Corner of Schulz Rd. at Niagara Falls Blvd. 692-0052
Open Sundays, Noon-4, December 5th ‘til Christmas

Raveloe Fibers
Knitting • Spinning • Weaving • Felting • Implements • Instruction • Inspiration
7296 Schulz Rd. @ NF Boulevard • Open Tues-Sat 10-5
Individuals may be presented with plenty of opportunities to cook for a crowd over the course of a typical year. But no time of year is more synonymous with large sit-down meals than the holiday season.

Certain foods, such as pasta dishes and casseroles, are ideal dishes to cook for crowds. However, for those home cooks who want to prepare in advance and then enjoy themselves on the actual holiday, it may be best to choose foods that taste better the day after the dish has been cooked. Many recipes develop deeper flavor profiles after they have been left to rest and are then reheated. Holiday hosts can explore these ideas for meals that can be cooked in advance and then serve in an attractive crock for the holidays.

**Stew**
A stew that’s been simmering on the stove or in the slow cooker all day will have a winning flavor. But stew can be even more delicious the next day. The starch in the potatoes will enable the sauce of the stew — whether it’s tomato-based or comprised of a mix of brown gravy and meat drippings — to thicken. The meat may continue to cook and tenderize while reheating. As a one-pot meal, stew is simple to prepare in advance and then serve in an attractive crock for the holidays.

**Meatloaf**
The herbs and spices in a meat loaf continue to release their flavors, and letting the loaf sit can improve the texture and the ability to slice it without it falling apart. Consider pan-frying individual slices of meatloaf until they’re browned so they’ll be crisp on the outside and tender in the middle.

**Lasagna**
Lasagna is a layered pasta dish featuring flat noodle sheets, cheese, sauce, and sometimes meat like ground beef or sausage. Lasagnas that are served right out of the oven can be runny even if they taste scrumptious. Baking it and letting it sit overnight allows all of the layers to gel together, making for a much more cohesive and fortified dish the following day.

**Curries**
Curries are typically made with many spices that help to make the dish flavorful. A curry that is freshly made may feature intense flavor because each of its components can be tasted individually. After a night of resting in the refrigerator, those flavors meld and mellow. Furthermore, if potatoes are used in the recipe, a night in the fridge gives the potatoes an opportunity to absorb the spices, making for an even tastier meal.

Many meals can be made ahead of time for holiday dinners and will taste even better when they are served the following day.
Now taking orders for Christmas

298-8232

Sahlen and Smith Hams
Beef Tenderloin
Rib Roasts
Pork Roasts
Crown Roasts

Fruit and Cream Pies
Cheesecakes
Cooked Roast Beef
Turkeys
Turkey Breasts

Leg of Lamb
Lobster Tails
Shrimp
Polish Sausage
Pierogi

Party Snacks

Stuffed Banana Peppers
Stuffed Mushrooms
Buffalo style Chicken Fingers
Chicken Wing Dip
Taco Dip
Pizza Logs
Mozzarella Sticks
Jalapeno Poppers

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE IN ANY AMOUNT

Click For More Info

Premium Tobacco Retailer & Lounge

Shop a wide selection of cigars, pipe tobacco and related accessories.

Check out our large walk-in humidor and cigar lounge!

Gift Sets Available

Check us out on Facebook!

513 Main St., Medina, NY 14103 • (585) 318-4162

NEW! Catering Menu For Holiday Gatherings

Gift Certificates Available

GRAB & GO Holiday Desserts & Treats

Prep you home for the holidays!

We’re your One-Stop, Locally-Owned Shop for
Refrigerators • Ranges • Washers/Dryers • Dishwashers • Microwaves

AMANA

Speed Queen

Family Owned

In-House Delivery & Installation Available!

6300 S. Transit Rd., Lockport, NY 14094 • 716-625-8081
www.mullensapplianceservice.com
After a delicious holiday meal, there’s a good chance guests will be looking forward to a sweet treat. Many families have their go-to desserts on special occasions, but holiday meals can be made even more memorable, and flavorful, by taking a chance on new recipes.

A decadent cheesecake is on the menu in many Italian American families, who may dive in after enjoying a bowl of fruit, fennel and chestnuts. Italian cheesecake does not typically contain the cream cheese or graham cracker crust found in many commercial cheesecakes. Rather, Italian cheesecakes are full of citrus flavor and made with modified pie crust. Dig into this recipe for “Torta Dolce di Ricotta” from Daniel Paterna’s “Feast of the Seven Fishes: A Brooklyn Italian’s Recipes Celebrating Food & Family” (Powerhouse Books).

### Torta Dolce di Ricotta

Serves 10 to 12

**Crust:**
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra to dust board and pan
- 3/4 cup sugar
- Zest of one lemon
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened, plus extra to grease the pan
- 2 large eggs

**Filling:**
- 8 large eggs
- 3 pounds ricotta cheese, drained of excess water
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- Zest of 2 oranges
- Juice of 1 orange
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1/4 cup candied pear, chopped (optional)

To make the crust, place the flour, sugar, and zest on a pastry board or clean, dry, flat surface. Mix thoroughly to combine. Add the butter and work it into the dry ingredients. Gather the mixture into a round and create a well in the center. Drop eggs into the well, beat with a fork while gathering the dry mixture, then knead once the dough completely forms. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Butter and flour a 10-inch springform baking pan. Set aside.

Meanwhile, to prepare the filling, combine the eggs, ricotta cheese, vanilla, sugar, orange zest, orange juice, lemon juice, and candied pear (if using) in a large mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly and set aside.

After the 30 minutes, remove the dough from the refrigerator and place it on a large board or clean, dry, flat surface, lightly dusted with flour. Using a floured rolling pin, roll the dough out into a large circle, approximately 14 inches in diameter. Now roll the dough over the rolling pin and carefully unwind it over the baking pan, gently easing it to fit evenly in the bottom and up the sides of the pan.

Pour or spoon the filling mixture into the crust, leaving about 1/4 inch below the rim of the pan. Place the pan in a preheated oven and bake for 1 hour and 45 minutes, until the center is slightly firm. Cool for at least 2 hours. Author’s note: I have left it unrefrigerated overnight when I have baked it the night before to save time.

Carefully run a plastic knife or rigid spatula around the sides of the pan to remove it, so that no crust is pulled away when you release the spring of the pan. Serve at room temperature.
‘Tis the season for gingerbread cookies

Tradition plays a big role during the holiday season. Food is at the center of many families’ traditions, which may include big family dinners and Sunday brunches together.

Holiday baking sessions also hold a sacred spot in many households. Such sessions are a great opportunity for adults and children to have some fun in the kitchen and create some tasty treats the whole family can enjoy.

Baked goods devotees may find it hard to imagine the holidays without gingerbread, and this recipe for “Soft Glazed Gingerbread” from Elisabeth M. Prueitt and Chad Robertson’s “Tartine” (Chronicle Books) can ensure the whole family enjoys this holiday season staple.

**Soft Glazed Gingerbread**
Yields 12 to 20 cookies

**Dough**
3 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon cocoa powder
4 teaspoons ground ginger
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
11/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
3 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 large egg
1/2 cup blackstrap or other dark molasses
2 tablespoons light corn syrup

**Glaze**
1 cup confectioners’ sugar
2 tablespoons water

To make the dough, stir together the flour, cocoa powder, ginger, cloves, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, and pepper in a mixing bowl. Set aside. Using a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium-high speed until creamy. Slowly add the granulated sugar and mix on medium speed until the mixture is completely smooth and soft. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Add the egg and mix well.

Add the molasses and corn syrup and beat until incorporated. Stop the mixer again and scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the flour mixture and beat on low speed until a dough forms that pulls away from the sides of the bowl and all the ingredients are well incorporated. Remove the dough from the bowl, flatten it on a large piece of plastic wrap into a rectangle about 1 inch thick, cover the dough with the plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper on a nonstick liner. Unwrap the dough and place on a floured work surface. If using a plaque with a design, roll out the dough 1/3-inch thick, lightly dust the top with flour, press your cookie molds over the dough, and then cut out the shapes with a small knife and place on the prepared baking sheet, spacing them about 1 inch apart. Alternatively, using the mold as a guide, cut around it with a small knife, flip the mold over so the design is facing you, and place the dough over it, pressing it into the design. Unmold the shapes onto the prepared baking sheet, leaving about 1 inch between them.

If using a patterned rolling pin, lightly dust the lined baking sheet with flour and transfer the dough to the pan. Lightly dust the top of the dough with flour and roll it into a rectangle about 1/3-inch thick with a plain pin. Then, using the patterned pin, roll over the dough with enough pressure to ensure a clear impression of the design. Trim the sides with a small knife. It is not necessary to cut into smaller sizes before baking.

Bake the cookies until lightly golden along the sides but still soft to the touch in the centers, 7 to 15 minutes. The timing will depend on the size of the individual cookies, or if you have made a single large patterned piece that will be cut after baking.

While the cookies are baking, prepare the glaze. In a small bowl, whisk together the confectioners’ sugar and water until smooth.

When the cookies are ready, remove from the oven and let cool in the pan on a wire rack for about 10 minutes. Then, while the cookies are still warm, using even strokes, brush a light coat of glaze on the top of each cookie, evenly covering it. Let the cookies cool completely. When the glaze dries, it should leave a shiny, opaque finish. If you have used a patterned pin to make a single large plaque, cut into the desired sizes with a small, very sharp knife. The cookies will keep in an airtight container in a cool place for about 2 weeks. They do not freeze well, however, as the glaze becomes watery when they are thawed.
We help bring your holidays together.