

Holiday Cleaning Tips

Christmas is a time when homes are filled with friends and family celebrating the holidays. And it is a difficult time for the homemaker who wants to enjoy the holidays and still have the home in tip-top shape for visitors.

But the holidays do not have to be a drag for cleaning if you get organized. First, give your home a thorough cleaning before the holidays and put everything in order before decorating for Christmas. It will put you one step ahead of the clutter when time runs short.

Don't bless the mess, get organized. Follow these tips to cut the time you spend cleaning up and increase the time you have to enjoy the season.

First, create a realistic cleaning schedule. Don't set so many chores for yourself that you are busy into the wee hours of the morning or too many that you simply give up in despair.

Divide into daily, weekly and monthly sections. Then, write a checklist and post it on the refrigerator door, where all family members will see it. Hang a brightly colored pen from the list and check

off the tasks as they are accomplished.

Daily

Clear up the clutter as you go. Once the mess gets ahead of you, it takes that much longer to catch back up. Make family members responsible for their own mess. Clean dishes after eating, wipe the bathroom sink and use, put clothes straight into the closet or dirty clothes hamper. Wipe down kitchen counter and appliances with a glass and surface spray cleaner. Empty trash cans into one bag and take it out.

Weekly

Clean all the surfaces in your home with just one all purpose cleaner and reusable cleaning cloth. Make sure to use a cleaner that is safe for all hard surfaces.

Strip beds. Do laundry. Vacuum. Put an old sock on each hand and dust with both hands.

Let your microwave zap its own dirt by adding a few drops of a concentrated dishwashing liquid to a cup of water. Boil in the microwave for three minutes. The steam will soften caked-on, dried food so it can be wiped off easily.

Before you clean the bathroom, run a hot shower. Wall and tile dirt comes off faster when it's loosened by steam.

Monthly

For larger jobs use a product that is multi-functional cleaner. Add 1/4 cup to one gallon of warm water and you're set to clean the floors, fridge, walls and cabinets.

File papers on your desk. Recycle newspapers, magazines and catalogs.

Preventative Tips

Keep dirt from coming in by using mats at all entrance doorways.

To save time cleaning the oven, place a sheet of aluminum foil on the lower rack.

Throw salt on the logs in your fireplace. This can reduce the soot by up to two-thirds.

Starting the holidays with a clean house is the key to keeping it clean. Holiday decorations and other things added to the house can make everything seem cluttered. But do not stress too much. Everyone else is having the same problems with holiday cleaning.

"Deck the Halls" With Holiday Projects

Elmwood Park, NJ—Add sparkle to this holiday season using quick and easy decorating tips while saving money for gifts for family and friends.

"According to HIA's recent nationwide consumer study, 47% of crafters make holiday decorations," says Susan Brandt, assistant executive director/director of communications for HIA (Hobby Industry Association). "Many crafters brighten their holidays using favorite products such as colorful ribbons, wreaths, decorative paints, stamps and stencils from the local craft store."

Consider these festive holiday

decorating ideas from HIA's Craft and Hobby Information Bureau.

*Roll pine cones in a small puddle of glue, then coat with glitter or colored sand. Attach a bow to the top, and adorn the tree, a wreath, or display in a bowl.

*Use gold or silver spray paint to update dried flowers.

*Fill egg nog bottles with colored water (red, green, and gold). Put candles inside and a flowered candle ring around bottle bottom for an instant centerpiece.

*Cut leftover fabric into "ribbon" strips with pinky shears. Tie on everything from packages to plant pots, wreaths, and the tree.

*Wire silk roses or poinsettias onto wreaths. Add ornaments in between flowers and garnish with wire-edge ribbon.

*Spray pine cone with gold paint. Attach a small doll's head and glitter tulle for wings to make an angel.

*Use a hole punch to cut patterns in paper bags. Insert candles for instant luminaries.

*Shellac fresh fruit and pine cones before adding to wreaths so that they last longer.

*Spray paint packaging peanuts, alternating with satin wrapped balls on string for a faux popcorn and cranberry strand.

Pork Roast Leftovers Makes Foundation for Holiday Meals

DES MOINES, Iowa - Ooops! You prepared too much pork roast for your annual holiday dinner. Or was it intentional? Your guests are beginning to wonder... because leftovers are becoming a tradition. That's okay.

"Roasts are perfect for planned-overs," says Robin Kline, M.S., R.D. and director of the Pork Information Bureau for the National Pork Producers Council. "By preparing larger roasts, people can enjoy the leftovers in sandwiches, salads and pasta dishes for the rest of the week."

Here are a dozen delicious reasons for leftover roast this holiday season:

*Mince leftover roast pork and mix with cooked leftover potatoes for a hearty breakfast hash.

*Dice chilled leftover pork loin or tenderloin and toss into a main-dish salad with cooked green beans, cherry tomatoes, potatoes and chopped lettuce. Dress lightly with a lemon vinaigrette.

*Spread a flour tortilla with a little cream cheese and horseradish, top with thinly sliced leftover pork roast and alfalfa sprouts. Roll up for a walk-around sandwich.

*Prepare gravy from a packaged mix or use a purchased jar of meat gravy, mince leftover roast pork and add to gravy; top a baked potato with this mixture.

*Dice leftover pork roast, mix with some fruit yogurt and drained mandarin oranges; tuck into a pita pocket bread and top with chopped pecans.

*Cube leftover pork roast, skewer on toothpicks and serve with honey-mustard or mustard-jam mixture for dipping.

*Heat diced leftover pork roast with a jar of spaghetti sauce, stir in some chopped olives; use to top hot cooked noodles and serve with grated Parmesan or Romano cheese.

*Slice leftover pork roast and heat gently with your favorite barbecue sauce; serve on sandwich buns.

*Coarsely chop leftover pork roast, mix with a little salad dressing or mayonnaise, pickle relish, chopped onion and mustard for a tasty sandwich spread.

*Cube leftover pork roast, stir into curry sauce (packaged mix) and

serve over rice with raisins and salted peanuts.

*Slice leftover pork roast into spears, heat and serve with your favorite dipping sauces for a finger-licking good snack.

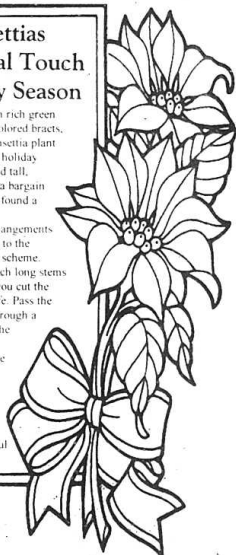
*Cube leftover pork roast and simmer it with a can of meatless chili or stew for a hearty meal. Serve with cornbread.

Cut Poinsettias Add Special Touch To Holiday Season

Compact plants with rich green foliage and brightly colored bracts, that's the kind of Poinsettia plant many seek during the holiday season. But, if you find tall, spindly poinsettias at a bargain price, you may have found a treasure as well.

Use them for cut arrangements to add a special touch to the Christmas decorating scheme.

Twelve to eighteen inch long stems are just right. When you cut the stem, use a sharp knife. Pass the cut end of the stem through a candle flame to stop the bleeding of the milky white sap. Arrange the flowers (bracts) in a festive vase or place individual stems in water vials and combine with greenery for a cheerful swag or garland.



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