

Holiday Season





How to Use Your Holiday Season Planner

Stress less with a little planning and fill your holidays with joy!

Congratulations! I'm so glad you've decided to download this holiday season planner, because it means that you are tired of the crazy, "have to do all the things," mantra of the holiday season.

You're ready to take a bit of time to plan what's really important to you and your family to create fun times and sweet memories - and just say no to all the rest!

When my kids were young, I bought into much of the crazy and some years I drove us all to distraction (and one memorable year to tears) with all the things we "had" to do in my desire to make everything picture perfect.

How I wish I would've had a simple planner like this that could've guided me to really think about what I wanted to do, talk to my family about what **they** wanted, and think about what could really be accomplished in our real world.

In other words, to prioritize the people and activities that bring JOY and leave anything that doesn't out!

That's my hope for you - **that you would use the parts of this planner that will bring joy for you and your family to help you feel LESS stress, not more** (Don't send cards? Not into baking? Chuck those pages! Do a lot of entertaining? Print more of those pages!).

The planner can help you remember to do the things your family likes to do each year so you don't forget. It also becomes a record of what you did, gifts you gave, food you ate, and more, so every year afterwards can be even easier to remember the things you cherish from the season. (Tip: Be sure to visit AnOregonCottage.com each year to download the new version and add the pages to your planner-record!)

I've titled this guide a "Holiday Season Planner" because it covers the whole holiday season, the end of October through the end of December, including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. Many plans and activities overlap during these months, so it just made sense to include them all in one planner.

Here's to a happy holiday season and blessed new year!

xo

Jami

Getting Started With Your Holiday Season Plan

1. Print only the pages of the planner and printables you would like to use. If you aren't sending holiday cards, then don't print off that page - this is the beauty of downloaded printables, you can personalize them!

Pro Tip: The pages are 8.5x11 default. To print A5 (half-sheet) size, I find it easiest to print at 66% - the pages are shorter, but the width is maximum allowing for easiest writing. Then trim the pages to fit your planner, allowing more space at the bottom for extra notes.

2. Set up: add the planner pages to a thin binder or include the pages in a section of your regular planner. You can also take it to be spiral bound at a printer.

While you can print out all or just a few of the pages, I'd suggest using at least these pages:

- Cover
- User Guide
- 9-Week Holiday Season Checklist
- November and December Calendars
- Thanksgiving Week Checklists
- Thanksgiving & Christmas menus
- Gift Record
- Family Activity Wish List

Then add the other pages that you would like to, printing off as many as needed (for example, print off as many party planners as dinners/parties you plan to be in charge of).

I've provided a blank lined page so you can add other categories that are important to you (budgeting, a running list of family favorite recipes, etc.).

Note: There are three printable pages that are designed to be used outside of your planner:

- **Thanksgiving Menu printable** - print and fill out with menu and then clip to a clipboard or magnet board so all the guests can see the day's menu.
- **Christmas Dinner Menu printable** - use same as the Thanksgiving menu above.
- **Christmas gift tags** - print on card stock weight paper with a color printer. Cut along the lines and punch a hole in the marked area to create easy tags for your Christmas gifts. Use coordinating ribbon or jute twine to attach to gifts.

3. Plan: find 30 minutes to an hour for planning with your printed pages. Fill in the calendars with non-negotiables that you know of and mark off possible dates for the activities you'd like to do that your family has enjoyed in the past.

4. Family Meeting: have a family time to talk about the holiday plan - it can be just one or two dinner times where you talk about activities everyone likes or recipes they want to eat and/or make. Use the Holiday Plans coordinating sheets.

Tips for Using Your Holiday Season Planner

1. Even though the Holiday Season Checklist starts the last week in October, *you can start the plan ANYTIME.*

Any amount of planning you can do will help ease the stressors that can come with this busy time of the year, I promise!

2. There are no right or wrong ways to use this plan!

Use what you want when you can that will help you and your family the most to remember the true meaning of the season.

3. Use the monthly calendars to give you an overall view of your holiday activities so you don't over schedule.

4. The rest of the plan's pages are self-explanatory - again, print only what you need and as many as you need.

5. Remember the "reason for the season" and do not try to do.all.the.things. Pick and choose, plan, and decide to enjoy all that the holiday season has to offer!

DO what you can,
WITH what you have,
WHERE you are.

-Theodore Roosevelt

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9-Week Holiday Season Checklist

Last Week of October (9 Weeks from Christmas)

- _____ Prepare Christmas budget & gift list
 - _____ Plan handmade gifts
 - _____ Start creating handmade gifts
 - _____ Plant amaryllis and/or paperwhite bulbs
 - _____ Take family Christmas photos
 - _____ Start a holiday calendar & post it for all to see
-

First Week of November

- _____ Clean/stock the kitchen for Thanksgiving
 - _____ Decide decorating scheme for Christmas & gather supplies
 - _____ Plan your part of Thanksgiving meal
 - _____ Talk about what Family Traditions/activities to add to holiday calendar
 - _____ Shop for any gifts or stocking stuffers
-

Second Week of November

- _____ Continue working on handmade gifts
- _____ Plan Christmas cards
- _____ Plan Thanksgiving tablescape
- _____ Shop for Thanksgiving & holiday baking

3rd Week of November

- _____ Write and send cards
 - _____ Plan any party/open house/cookie exchange you're hosting
 - _____ Plan baking for Thanksgiving & Christmas
 - _____ Do any make-ahead dishes for Thanksgiving & freeze
-

Fourth Week of November - THANKSGIVING

- _____ Set Thanksgiving table according to plan
 - _____ Bake/cook for the holiday meal
 - _____ Decorate porch/door for Christmas
 - _____ Put up outdoor lights
 - _____ Buy or set up Advent calendar
-

First Week of December

- _____ Decorate tree & house
 - _____ Start baking & freeze
 - _____ Plan a way to donate or give to those in need
 - _____ Mail gifts
-

Second Week of December

- _____ Gather supplies, set up a wrap station & start wrapping
- _____ Plan food & drinks for Christmas
- _____ Continue decorating house
- _____ Plan Christmas meals & tablescape
- _____ Continue baking

Third Week of December

- _____ Grocery shop for Christmas meals
 - _____ Clean the house
 - _____ Finish wrapping gifts
-

Fourth Week of December - **CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS**

- _____ Finish baking
- _____ Deliver baked goods to neighbors & friends
- _____ Cook for family meals
- _____ Set table according to plan
- _____ Plan 1-2 activities for after Christmas (to avoid holiday 'let down')
- _____ Enjoy your family!

"The best of all gifts around
any Christmas tree:
the presence of a happy family
all wrapped up in each other."
- Burton Hillis



Holiday General To Do List

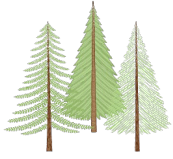
Task	Done!	Task	Done!



Favorite Holiday Family Traditions

What are your family's favorite things to eat, do, watch, eat, and read over the holiday season?
Talk about them together as a family and list them below.

Thanksgiving	Christmas	New Years
Eat:	Eat:	Eat:
Do (games, events, etc.):	Do:	Do:
Watch:	Watch:	Watch:
Read:	Read:	Read:



Holiday Activity Wish List

Tip: Prioritize with a star next the the most important activities.

Holiday Activity	Details	Done!



Holiday Activity List IDEAS

If you need help coming up with ideas, look through this list with your family and check which ones to add to your custom family list.

Holiday Activity	Add	Holiday Activity	Add
Decorate house		Drink hot cocoa	
Make gingerbread house		Sing Christmas songs	
Make simple gifts for people		Bake goodies for neighbors	
Make paper snowflakes		Have a White Elephant party	
Watch classic Christmas movies - which?		Cut your own Christmas Tree	
See a new movie in theaters (holiday themed or not) with dinner out		Make an Advent Tradition	
Make & decorate cut out cookies		Read a holiday-themed book weekly	
Go iceskating		Give gifts to homeless shelter	
Make cards and/or wrapping paper		Wear matching PJs	
Make a holiday craft or ornament		Go to a tree lighting	
Decorate tree with hot cocoa		Drive around to see holiday lights	
Go Christmas caroling		Do a holiday themed scavenger hunt	
Play a Christmas game		Shovel neighbor's walk/drive (leaves or snow)	
Go sledding		Wear ugly sweaters	
Donate toys/clothes to charity		Decorate windows	
Read Christmas story		Have a gift shopping/lunch day	

Holiday Weekly Meal Plan

Week of:

Monday	Saturday

Tuesday	Sunday

Wednesday	Shopping
	☐
	☐
	☐
Thursday	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐
Friday	☐
	☐
	☐



Year: _____

[illegible]

November

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat



One-Week Before

THANKSGIVING

Checklist

Weekend Before

- Create table centerpiece and any decorations you want (placecards, etc.)
- Gather napkins, wash and iron if needed
- Wash plates, serving bowls, and glasses if needed, then stack where ready to use
- Clean house
- Make and freeze bread, desserts and stuffing
- Place frozen 16-21 lb. turkey in refrigerator to start thawing (a full day for every 4 pounds is recommended)
- Double check with guests on what they're bringing

Monday Before

- If using a frozen 12-16 lb. turkey, place in refrigerator to start thawing
- Shop for any fresh ingredients you still need

Tuesday Before

- If you didn't make pies or desserts, make crusts now or other dessert.
- Make cranberry sauce and refrigerate
- Cube fresh bread and lay out to dry for stuffing (SO much better than the store-bought cubes, especially if you use a good artisan bread)

Wednesday Before

- Make any pies that still need to be made, thaw any desserts that were made ahead at room temperature
- Make sides that will reheat well, like casseroles or creamed onions - bake completely, refrigerate and reheat on Thursday OR refrigerate unbaked and cook if there's room (tip: use a slow cooker for potatoes or green beans to free up space)
- Prep any garnishes, salad greens, or dips that you're using.
- You can make a stock ahead for the gravy with the turkey neck and vegetable scraps- refrigerate until needed on Thursday.
- Set the table now or first thing in the morning on Thursday

Thanksgiving Day

- In the morning, take out any frozen bread to thaw at room temperature.
 - Finish any last-minute things you've missed (cranberry sauce, table setting, peeling potatoes, etc.)
 - Clean kitchen in preparation for lots of people (make sure dishwasher is empty, ready for the evening meal)
 - An hour before dinner, you can do more prep if needed: make mashed potatoes, whip cream for pies, prep coffee (but wait to brew)
 - Reheat side dishes and make gravy after removing turkey from oven to rest.
 - Serve food and enjoy the day!
- Time backwards from your dinner to bake turkey according to directions for size, with a 20-30 minute rest. Plan on 13 minutes per pound in a 350 degree oven for an unstuffed turkey.*
- Sample timeline for a 16-pound defrosted, unstuffed turkey baked at 350 degrees for a 4:00 meal time:**
- 11:45 Preheat oven according to recipe; prep turkey
 - 12:00 Place turkey in oven: baste every 45 minutes
 - 2:30 Begin checking the turkey's temperature in the breast, outer thigh, and inside thigh (the meat should be 160-165°F - if not put the turkey back in the oven for 20 minutes intervals).
 - 3:15 to 3:30 (when turkey is done) remove turkey to a cutting board: tent with foil to rest for 30 minutes
 - 3:45 Carve turkey
 - 4:00 Serve with sides and gravy



Location: _____ Date/Time: _____

[illegible]



Thanksgiving Dinner Menu Plan

Food	Who's Bringing?	Prep Notes
Drinks 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____		
Appetizers 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____		
Entrees 1. _____ 2. _____		
Sides 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____		
Desserts 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____		

Add to grocery list:

Menu



December

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat





Holiday Baking

Recipe Name	Where to find	Made

Grocery List:



Favorite Holiday Recipes

Do you have favorite recipes that everyone wants each year - sides, breads, breakfast, etc.? List them here so you don't forget next year!

Recipe Name	Notes/Where to Find	Made



Holiday Cards (Christmas or New Years)

Name	Address	Mailed



Holiday Party Planner

Occasion:

Occasion: _____

Location: _____ Date/Time: _____

[illegible]



Location: _____ Date/Time: _____

[illegible]



Christmas Dinner Menu Plan

Food	Who's Bringing?	Prep Notes
Drinks 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____		
Appetizers 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____		
Entrees 1. _____ 2. _____		
Sides 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____		
Desserts 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____		

Add to grocery list:

Menu





Holiday Thank You Notes

From	Gift or Kindness	Sent!

[illegible]

[illegible]


To: _____
From: _____


To: _____
From: _____


To: _____
From: _____


To: _____
From: _____


To: _____
From: _____


To: _____
From: _____


To: _____
From: _____


To: _____
From: _____


To: _____
From: _____


To: _____
From: _____



Have you seen [The Flexible Planner?](#)

It's the planner that finally works for YOU - and helps you stop letting life just happen by planning out a few goals, ideas and dreams to help create a life you love.

The flexible planner is truly unique in its approach to planning as a mash up of traditional planner and bullet journal where you create the pages you want.

The Flexible Planner contains the pages you need, like monthly and weekly spreads and goal setting pages, so you don't have to make them over and over.

But there are plenty of dot-grid pages that allow you to make your planner look like you, with a list section to hold all your ideas - and no more sticky notes everywhere.

[Click HERE to learn more!](#)

(You can choose from a download-at-home printable version as well as a spiral bound printed option.)