



I'M DREAMING
of a

PURPLE, YELLOW,
PINK

AND
POLKA-DOTTED

Holiday Season

December Toolkit

Thrive



With the winter holidays upon us, it's time to begin enjoying ourselves. Too often, holidays are so full of 'You-Shoulds' and 'Must-Feel-Gratefuls' that it's hard to quieten down and take it easy. Let's vow to have fun this holiday season, and explore new ways of letting go of the rule book. One way is through learning color and pattern symbolism and how you can apply the new knowledge during this season.



COLOR SYMBOLISM

Colors can influence emotion and can hold specific meanings. Patterns have meaning, too, and we can channel their meaning in a way that brings us personal fulfillment. Here's how you can throw out the traditional "red, white and green" and harness the power of purple, yellow, pink and polka dots through this holiday season...

PURPLE

Purple traditionally conveys wealth and extravagance, and is oftentimes associated with dignity and creativity. If you are having a little trouble slowing down this holiday, try changing your phone's wallpaper to something purple, hanging up a purple work of art on your wall, or buying some purple socks to wear at home.

YELLOW

Yellow is a powerful color that can be very stimulating. It can lift spirits and energy. If you're looking for a little extra "oomph" or extraversion this holiday season, carry around a yellow water bottle, change your computer's desktop image to something yellow, or place a vase of sunflowers in your dining room or bedroom.

PINK

Pink represents compassion, nurturing and love. Pink soothes, rather than stimulates. If you need some introspective nurturing and compassion this holiday season, embody this color by wrapping yourself in a pink throw blanket, buy a new pink shirt or pajamas, or get a new pink mug.

POLKA DOT

Polka dots—characterized by spots that are even in size, as opposed to spots with irregular spacing and size—are making a comeback. This pattern is known to inspire nostalgia. Embrace the nostalgia by sprucing up your holiday outfits, gift wrap, tablecloths and/or household decorations with this classic pattern.





Put your creative hats on and have some fun. Here are some suggestions to get you going:



LETTERS AND TREATS FROM SANTA:

This is similar to “Elf on a Shelf” but with a creative and inexpensive twist. Buy or make a small mailbox to set on the counter for each of your children. Create fun envelopes with notes and treats from Santa, and if your children behave, they get a letter the next day with a cute message. You could put a variety of inexpensive items in the envelope or directly inside the mailbox. You could even leave a little money so they can save and buy something after Christmas. This activity can really encourage good behavior during the month of December. Your children will look forward to running into the house and checking their mailbox every day. You could even send a card or letter through regular postal service, too.



COOKIES AND CARROTS:

Put cookies and milk out for Santa and carrots and water out for the reindeer. Be creative! For example, you can bust up the cookies and leave some crumbs, take a few bites of the carrots and trail some water drops around to make it look like deer drank the water.



START A DECORATION TRADITION:

Make homemade ornaments for your Christmas tree. You can still have all your lights and traditional ball ornaments, but fill you're the rest of your tree up with homemade ones. If you do not celebrate Christmas, you can still make lovely decorations for the season to hang in the house, use as a centerpiece or display on a counter.



SOME IDEAS THAT YOU CAN EASILY FIND ON THE INTERNET:

- Paper snowflakes.
- Salt dough, beaded, family photo or pine cone ornaments.
- Hand-decorated cardboard ornaments (or cover them in yarn).
- Button ornaments using popsicle sticks.
- String any combination of the above together to hang off of doorways or counters, or along a wall.



MAKE HOLIDAY CARDS FROM SCRATCH:

There are so many things you can do to make these special. Recycle old buttons, jewelry or ribbon you don't wear or use anymore. You can pair stickers or stamps with brightly colored, striped or plain paper. The ideas are endless on the internet, and they usually come with instructions.



HAVE A HOLIDAY MOVIE MARATHON:

Have an evening where you watch holiday movies and serve popcorn and hot chocolate. Choose one evening a week to do this together as a family and invite friends over. Some movie suggestions are A Christmas Story, Home Alone, The Nightmare Before Christmas, The Polar Express and It's a Wonderful Life. Pick your favorites together!

You could even turn it into a game by pausing the movie and asking what the next line is. Get as creative as you want – let each family member have responsibility for creating a snack each movie night.



MAKE COOKIES AND SEND A CARD OR LETTER TO A SOLDIER:

Everyone knows a friend or someone in their community serving in the military. If you don't, check your local TV stations, churches or organizational groups for information on how to find somebody. Soldiers abroad really appreciate these reminders from home.



TRAINS, PLANES AND AUTOMOBILES

If you're planning a vacation for the holidays, just not sure yet where to go, we've detailed some excellent destinations and travel info below to spark some ideas.

You can always plan a family staycation. This gives you and your family the opportunity to unwind, leave business out of the home (as if you're on a real vacation), take on fun family projects and lounge like you never really get to. Check out the second page of our July Toolkit for more ideas and information on staycations.

If you're flying out to visit family or friends, download the Hopper app (available on iPhones and Androids). This app notifies users of the cheapest flights, and also uses forecasting to inform users of the best day to find the cheapest deal. You can even subscribe to their "keep a watch list" of each flight in which you're interested, and the app will notify you of all-time lows.

Trains offer a cheaper alternative to plane rides, as well as a family-friendly adventure. If you're staying close (like Austin or Kansas City) for the holidays, think about taking a train to your destination. You can visit the Amtrak website for reservation availability. They offer everyday discounts for military, AAA members, students, senior citizens and more. Plus, kids always ride for 50 percent off. Browse the "Deals" tab for more information on deals and discounts.

For a low-key vacation, pick a local destination for a road trip. Oklahoma is filled with amazing hiking, camping and cabin spots in nature. Bigger cities include Tulsa, Oklahoma City and Norman. If you prefer nature spots, Sulphur has Chickasaw National Recreation Park and a spa resort, Medicine Park neighbors the Wichita Mountains with family-friendly hiking as well as lodging, and Broken Bow offers Christmas decorated cabins in Beaver's Bend every year during the holidays. For really great ideas, look on the Travel OK website.



❄️ MINI HOLIDAY
PANCAKE
BITES

❄️ HOLIDAY
CARROT
CRACKERS

❄️ GINGERBREAD
GRANOLA

❄️ ALMOND
MILK HOT
CHOCOLATE

MINI HOLIDAY PANCAKE BITES

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup stevia
- 2 large whole eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup applesauce, unsweetened
- 1 ¾ cup milk of choice

OPTIONAL ADD-INS:

- 2 tablespoons red and green sprinkles
- ¼ cup crushed peppermint
- ¼ cup mini white chocolate chips

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375° F and coat a mini muffin pan with non-stick spray.
2. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and stevia in a large bowl and stir until well combined.
3. Combine eggs, vanilla extract, applesauce and milk in a separate bowl, stirring until well mixed.
4. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients, mixing until combined.
5. Add add-ins of choice, if any, and stir.
6. Pour into prepared mini muffin pan and add additional desired toppings. Bake for 12-15 minutes. Serve with pancake/maple syrup, eggs and strawberries for a well-rounded breakfast.

HOLIDAY CARROT CRACKERS

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 tablespoons oat flour
- 1 ½ cups grated carrot
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup grated cheese
- 2 large whole eggs

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- Use holiday shaped cookie cutters (think stars, ornaments, etc.).
- If you don't have oat flour, just take oats and grind in a food processor or blender until powdered.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Mix the carrot and water in a bowl, cover and microwave on high for 3 minutes.
3. Drain the carrots and then place them on a clean cloth or absorbent paper and squeeze out the liquid. The carrots need to be quite dry, or else the crackers will fall apart.
4. Place the carrots back in the bowl and mix with the remaining ingredients.
5. Prepare a baking tray with baking paper or use a silicon baking sheet.
6. Form star shapes of the mixture onto the sheet using a cookie cutter.
7. Bake for 12-15 minutes, until crispy on the sides.
8. Serve with sliced cheese, salsa, hummus or any other fun holiday dips.

GINGERBREAD GRANOLA

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- ¼ cup uncooked quinoa (or substitute additional rolled oats)
- ¼ cup ground flaxseed
- ¾ cup raw nuts (such as slivered almonds, cashews, pumpkin seeds, pecans, etc.)
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ cup melted coconut oil or olive oil
- 3 tablespoons pure maple syrup or honey
- 2 tablespoons stevia
- ¾ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

OPTIONAL ADD-INS:

- ¼ cup candied ginger, chopped
- ¼ cup mini butterscotch chips

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place rack in the center of your oven and preheat the oven to 350° F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or use a silicon baking mat.
2. In a large mixing bowl, stir together the oats, quinoa, flaxseed, nuts, salt, cinnamon, ginger, stevia and cloves.
3. Drizzle the coconut oil, maple syrup and vanilla over the oat mixture. Stir until well combined and evenly moistened.
4. Spread the granola in an even layer on the prepared baking sheet. Then use the back of a spatula or your fingers to press it into a flat, even layer. Bake for 20 minutes, remove from oven, stir in the candied ginger and golden raisins, then press back into a flat layer. Bake 10 additional minutes, until golden and fragrant (the granola will still be a little moist). Remove from oven and let cool completely. The granola will continue to crisp and dry as it cools.

ALMOND MILK HOT CHOCOLATE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 3-4 packets Truvia, or other sweetener to taste
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk
- pinch of instant coffee (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. In the bottom of your mug, use a fork to whisk together cocoa powder, sweetener, vanilla extract and instant coffee (if using). Add 1 tablespoon of almond milk, whisk until incorporated. You should end with a smooth paste.
2. Slowly add an additional ¼ cup of almond milk and mix again until smooth. It should resemble chocolate syrup at this point.
3. Add remainder of the almond milk and stir until smooth, being sure to scrape the sides.
4. Microwave for 1-1½ minutes. Give it a final stir and enjoy!

BLENDER METHOD:

Blend all ingredients in a blender, transfer to a mug and microwave 1-1½ minutes until hot. If you have a high-powered blender, like a Ninja or Vitamix, blend all ingredients together until milk is hot.

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