

Fill your week with smiles!

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 19 HOLLY DAY

Add holiday style!

"The bright mix of holly and evergreens evokes a feeling of warmth and holiday joy," says floral pro Tracy Haferbier of Rose Garden Florist in Barnegat, New Jersey. And today's the perfect day to bring the cheery Christmas favorite right to your tabletop! To create this fresh-picked

display, press cut-to-fit soaked floral foam into a 6" red vase. Insert Fraser fir and evergreen trimmings into the foam, forming a soft mound. Next, evenly space a handful of holly stems throughout. To finish, tuck in a craft-store wooden reindeer accent and ornaments.



JOKE OF THE WEEK

What's the Wi-Fly?

After searching several rooms, a woman asked her daughter if she had seen her newspaper lying around anywhere. "Newspapers are so old-fashioned," the young girl said as she handed her mother an iPad. "People use tablets these days." Her mom took the iPad, disappeared into the other room for a bit, then came back and said, "That fly didn't stand a chance!"

SUN, DEC. 16 NATIONAL CHOCOLATE-COVERED ANYTHING DAY

Treat yourself!

What better way to celebrate this holiday than by making dessert fondue? And you don't even need a fondue set to do it, says Jason Miller, executive chef for The Melting Pot restaurants. But since melted chocolate can clump, he suggests adding 1 tsp. of a neutral-flavored oil (like canola) per 4 oz. of chocolate. "Toss solid chocolate pieces with the oil to better distribute it and help the chocolate melt more evenly." Microwave for 1 minute, stir and heat in 30-second increments until melted, then dip in your favorite fruits and treats!



Have gift cards to spare?

Consider sending them to Support Military Spouses (SupportMilitarySpouses.org). The nonprofit uses the cards to buy items for the care packages they donate to families of active-duty military personnel to brighten their day. Mail to Support Military Spouses, 1100 Commons Blvd., #907, Myrtle Beach, SC 29572.

FRIDAY, DEC. 21 NATIONAL LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE DAY

Feel happier!



Not usually a "glass half full" gal? You can teach yourself to be optimistic! In a study published in the *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, participants were asked to spend five minutes a day thinking about their daily activities or imagining their "best possible self" (BPS): how their life would look if everything turned out as they hoped. The surprising results? After just one session, those picturing their BPS had significant increases in optimism—an effect that remained after two weeks of daily practice. "Imagery activates the same brain areas as 'real' memories," explains study author Madelon Peters, Ph.D. "When repeated, they become more prominent and accessible."

SATURDAY, DEC. 22 SUPER SATURDAY

Snag deals!

This holiday—the last Saturday before Christmas—is celebrated by a whopping 66% of consumers looking to pick up presents! "Retailers know shoppers are scrambling to find last-minute gifts, so they'll be competing to draw shoppers in," says Courtney Jespersen, a consumer savings expert for NerdWallet.com. That means amazing deals for you! And to ensure you're getting the best savings, use the free Shopular app, which lists bargains in stores near you. Already finished shopping? You can still walk away with great finds for *next* season. Scoop up great deals on decorations, says Jespersen. "Retailers will be starting to clear out their Christmas displays."



THURSDAY, DEC. 20 NATIONAL SANGRIA DAY

Raise your glass!

The weekend's almost here—celebrate with a sangria cocktail! "The wine and fruit are delightful, but throw in brandy and let the ingredients meld with some time together in the fridge and you have a drink that's over-the-top good," says Dominique DeVito, author of *Seasonal Sangria*.

To make DeVito's Plumdemonium: Combine 1 bottle dry red wine (like Merlot), 2 plums and 1 apricot (pitted and sliced), 1 cup cranberry juice and ¼ cup brandy in a pitcher. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours. Add ice and 1 cup seltzer. Stir and serve. Garnish with cranberries and orange slices.



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Start your week with a **Laugh!**



"Grandpa, what kind of reindeer games did you play before video games?"

Q Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing?
A They always drop their needles!



"The good news is, I found the Christmas lights..."

Kids are **fUNny!**

One afternoon, I was talking to my 8-year-old when he got home from school. As he told me what he'd learned in science class that day, he said, "The teacher told us that everything in the world is made of atoms. But I'm a little confused. If everything is made of Adams, then what is made of Eves?" —G.K., Cary, NC

