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## Holiday Checklist

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### Last Week of November:

- ☐ Buy stamps, cards, and wrapping supplies.
- ☐ Plan a “secret Santa” or other gift swap with friends to limit your total number of purchases.
- ☐ Sign, address, and send holiday cards.
- ☐ Spend a few hours shopping on weekdays or after work, when stores are calmer than they are on weekends.
- ☐ Write out gift lists, and organize addresses, preferably on a computer or a PDA to help with neatness and efficiency.

### First Week of December:

- ☐ Buy bulk gifts, such as a case of wine or multiple candles, to offer to neighbors, acquaintances, and party hosts.
- ☐ Drop off a few festive outfits at a dry cleaner.
- ☐ Hand out gifts and gratuities to service people.
- ☐ Plan holiday menus; order a turkey, ham, or other specialty foods.
- ☐ Set up a wrapping station in a low-traffic area of your home; wrap gifts as you buy them.
- ☐ Shop online; you can do so at any time of day, and it will save you the time of wrapping and shipping gifts.
- ☐ Take an inventory of baking staples, and replace those that are running low.
- ☐ Unpack decorations, and inspect them for damaged ornaments and burned-out bulbs.

## Second Week of December:

- ☐ Carry your address book or PDA as you shop, since some stores will ship items directly.
- ☐ Complete half of the house cleaning, starting with infrequently used areas, such as the guest room or formal dining area.
- ☐ Firm up travel plans; when the time comes, check in and print boarding passes at home.
- ☐ Have a family outing to pick out the tree and other greenery; you can also buy a tree online and have it delivered.
- ☐ Make and freeze cookie dough to bake as you need treats over the coming days.
- ☐ Prepare chicken stock for use in gravy and other recipes; freeze the stock in jumbo muffin tins, and keep the rounds in freezer bags.
- ☐ Polish silver, and hand-wash stemware.
- ☐ Put up exterior decorations; greenery lasts longer outdoors.
- ☐ Put up interior decorations.
- ☐ Ship gifts early to guarantee on-time delivery; save a trip to the post office by scheduling an at-home pickup at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).
- ☐ Trim the tree toward the end of the week; you'll have time to enjoy it, and it will stay fresh.

## Third Week of December:

- ☐ Clean the rest of the house, this time focusing on frequently used rooms.
- ☐ Finish up any last-minute wrapping.
- ☐ Get an early-morning jump on the main meal to allow more time for socializing.
- ☐ Launder and iron table linens, then roll them around wrapping-paper tubes for short-term, wrinkle-free storage.
- ☐ Make seating plans, and write out place cards; set the table.
- ☐ Prepare make-ahead side dishes; cranberry sauce, for example, can be taken care of early.

- ☐ Shop for food, again at an off-hour (some stores and markets expand their hours; consider having your purchases delivered).
- ☐ Take stock of and clean serving dishes and utensils if you're hosting a holiday meal.