

FINANCES

Better watch out



KENA BETANCUR — GETTY IMAGES

Customers visit the American Mall dream mall during Black Friday on Nov. 25, 2022, in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Becoming a victim of a scam can turn anyone into a Scrooge. Learn how scammers operate to preserve your time, money and holiday spirit in the last months of the year.

5 credit card scams to avoid this holiday season

By Jae Bratton
NerdWallet

In the list of things you want to be doing around the holidays, fending off scam artists has to be at the bottom. And yet, the holidays can be a prime time for scammers hoping to take advantage of the busy season. One fraudulent transaction is easily overlooked in a bank statement full of gift purchases, and there may not be time to dispute suspicious charges when you're hosting out-of-town guests.

Research-based advisory firm Javelin Strategy & Research defines an identity fraud scam as a tactic that a criminal uses to steal someone's personal information for the purpose of illegal financial gain. Consumers lost \$43 billion in 2022 to these scams, according to Javelin's 2023 Identity Fraud Study.

If there's good news, it's that there were fewer reported victims of identity fraud in 2022 as compared with 2021, with a 17% decrease in the amount of money lost to scams. The bad news is that scammers have become more sophisticated in their methods and have a new tool in their arsenal: artificial intelligence. AI programs can be used to generate scam emails, text messages or audio recordings that mimic the speech of loved ones.

An awareness of scammers' latest tools and tactics is a potent defense against identity fraud. Here are five credit card scams to watch out for this holiday season.

1. The Amazon scam

Amazon will be the go-to holiday shopping destination for many people. But as our inboxes fill with order confirmation emails and delivery updates, be cautious about messages that claim to be from Amazon. Scammers may contact you by email, text or phone in an attempt to steal your credit card information. They may say that you need to update your payment method

to prevent your Prime membership from expiring, or that your Amazon account will be deleted unless you verify your account by providing payment details.

How to fight it: If you're unsure if an email or text message is legitimate, don't click on any links in it. Instead, log in to your Amazon account and go to the Message Center, which contains a record of all communications from Amazon. If you're contacted by phone, don't provide your credit card information. Amazon won't ask for payment information by phone. And never input your Amazon payment info on any website except Amazon.com.

2. The romance scam

The holiday season may heighten feelings of loneliness, which can make romance scams particularly effective. After creating a fake profile on a dating website or social media platform, scammers will strike up a relationship with their victims before making a plea for money. Common reasons for needing money include medical or legal bills or funding for an investment opportunity. The 2023 Consumer Impact Report from the Identity Theft Resource Center, a nonprofit that helps victims of identity crimes, noted that romance scams consistently report six-figure losses, highlighting the seriousness of this scam.

How to fight it: If someone you've just met on a dating website or social media platform asks you for money, research their name and do a Google reverse image search of their profile picture to try to figure out if they're masquerading behind another's identity. Investigate any detail that sounds suspicious; you don't have to automatically accept what someone says as truth.

Don't give payment details or personal information that could be used to open credit cards to someone you haven't physically met.

3. The gift card scam

Gift cards make great stocking stuffers or last-minute gifts, but they're also a favorite target of scammers. The scammer will contact victims by phone, email or text and ask them to purchase gift cards, usually as a form of payment for an outstanding bill or as prepayment for a service they're offering to render.

For example, a person posing as a computer technician says he can remove a virus from your laptop in exchange for a \$100 Amazon gift card. Once the gift card has been bought, the scammer asks for the gift card's number and PIN. That way, the scammer doesn't need to expend any effort getting their hands on the actual card.

How to fight it: No legitimate business or government agency accepts gift cards as payment. Whenever you buy gift cards, keep the receipts and take pictures of the card numbers and PINs in case you need to file a report with the gift card company or the Federal Trade Commission.

4. The charity scam

When you're asked to make a donation, get the charity's name and the cause it supports. If you aren't sure whether you're corresponding with a legitimate charity, take a beat to do more research. Look up the charity's name on a website that vets nonprofits, like Charity Watch or Charity Navigator.

How to fight it: Ask for the charity's name, then look it up on a website that vets charities, like Charity Watch or Charity Navigator. Of course, the scammer could pose as an employee of a legitimate charity. If you aren't sure, you don't have to make a donation right away. When you're ready to give, pay with a credit card if possible: The major card issuers have zero-liability policies that offer you financial protection from fraud. Payments made in cash, cryptocurrency or by wire transfer

are harder to recoup; if you're asked to donate in those ways, it could be a sign that you're dealing with a scammer.

5. The lottery scam

Coming into a windfall of cash during the holidays sounds too good to be true, and it probably is. In this scam, the criminal says you've won a physical or monetary prize, which is yours as long as you remit payment or hand over your payment information to cover a processing fee.

How to fight it: Ask for the name of the company claiming you've won the sweepstakes, and contact them to confirm whether you're a winner or not. Take care, though, to look up the company's information yourself rather than using a phone number provided to you by the person saying you've won.

How to minimize damage and recover from a scam

Even the most vigilant among us can fall victim to a scam. However, there are steps you can take to minimize the damage and work toward recovery.

Prevention: Freeze your credit file with the three major credit bureaus: TransUnion, Experian and Equifax. Scammers can't open a new credit line in your name when a freeze is in place. You might also elect to receive alerts of suspicious account activity on your credit card, or even when any transaction is made.

Mitigation: If you think your credit card has been compromised, place a lock on the card so it can't be used until you unlock it. Then, call your card issuer — ask for the fraud department, if one exists — and communicate your concerns.

Recovery: Learn the six actions you can take to help you reclaim your money and identity after they've been stolen. For free personalized assistance, contact the Identity Theft Resource Center.

PLANNING AHEAD

How to master shopping early for the holidays

"The early bird gets the worm" is a well-known English proverb that historians trace all the way back to the 1600s. Though the words might first have been popularized hundreds of years ago, they remain as true today as they were then, particularly in regard to holiday shopping.

Savvy shoppers have long touted the importance of starting early when looking for holiday gifts for loved ones. Seasoned procrastinators may never embrace early shopping, but others who want a less hectic holiday shopping season can consider these tips:

▪ Begin with a plan. Holiday shopping excursions, whether they take place in town, at the mall or online,



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

can take longer than expected when they're looking for. Prior to your first holiday shopping trip, jot down gift ideas for each person on

your list. Then scour stores or websites for those items. Starting early affords shoppers time to bargain hunt and ensures supply shortages or other issues won't

early start on holiday shopping. Shoppers who want to ensure everything arrives on time for the holiday season must recognize that "early" shopping now involves beginning around Halloween, if not earlier.

▪ Take the (local) road less traveled. Shopping local merchants in person is a strategy savvy shoppers have long since embraced, but it's one that's especially beneficial in an era marked by supply chain issues and inflation. Local merchants don't have the overhead or sizable staffs of big box or chain stores, which enables them to keep costs low. And since local merchants produce many of their own products, it's likely there's something in store that shoppers will

love and less likely that they will have issues filling orders. A late fall afternoon in a local shopping district can yield an array of treasures and help holiday shoppers find the right gift for many a person on their list.

▪ When in doubt, go gift card. If the right gift is proving elusive even when shopping early, shoppers should not hesitate to go the gift card route. Shoppers need not feel as though a gift card is a nonstarter, as a 2022 survey from the National Retail Federation found that 54% of survey respondents indicated gift cards were the most desirable gift of the holiday season.

— Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

HOME
FURNISHING
DESIGNS

McLaughlin's

*A family-owned
business serving
metro Detroit for
over 71 years*

BRADINGTON-YOUNG Luxurious Refinement. Exceptional Comfort.



71st



Anniversary Sale!

Save 25% - 50% OFF

Storewide*

METRO DETROIT'S LARGEST SELECTION OF BRADINGTON-YOUNG FURNITURE



Metro Detroit's Quality Home Furnishing Stores

71 YEARS

A Family Business Committed to Quality Home Furnishings and Customer Service.

home
furnishing
designs

McLaughlin's

mclaughlins.com

Metro Detroit's Largest
Collection of American
Made Home Furnishings



NOVI 248.344.2551
42200 Grand River, Novi

SOUTHGATE 734.285.5454
14405 Dix, Southgate

LAKESIDE 586.803.8108
45490 Utica Park Blvd., Utica

Sale ends November 30th, 2023. Cannot be combined with any other offers. Certain restrictions apply. See store for details. Discounts off MSRP. Prior sales excluded.

Lots of
Stocking
Stuffers

WHERE THE MAGIC BEGINS!

Whistle Stop
hobby & toy

586-771-6770

Shop Online at
whistle-stop.com

Mon-Sat 10-8 • Sun 12-5
21714 Harper Ave - 8 1/2 Mile, St. Clair Shores

MONEY

Finance nerds share tips for managing holiday budgets, stress

By Elizabeth Ayoola
NerdWallet

Holidays are meant to be full of love, but sometimes they're full of stress and anxiety. One of the culprits can be the unspoken financial commitment of family dinners, travel and chaotic gift-buying. Sometimes the stress is beyond your control, but there are some things you can champion like planning and budgeting.

We asked a few of our Nerds to write down their best strategies for managing holiday stress and spending. Here are their responses.

Set a gift budget

If money wasn't a thing, we could buy our loved ones anything they want or need. But money is a factor, so it's ideal to work within a budget, which means having a limit for how much you spend on gifts. You can also take it a step further by agreeing on a spending cap with your loved ones, something senior copy editor Jim McNett does.

"The small circle of people I exchange gifts with have a quiet understanding to keep gifts under about \$100," he said.

Give secondhand gifts

It can feel taboo to give loved ones used gifts, but giving secondhand gifts is a cost-effective option. Copy chief Erica Harrington sometimes buys gifts for her loved ones secondhand.

"I shop on Etsy and eBay. For instance, my mom liked one of my purses I bought several years ago, so I searched for the brand on eBay and found her something similar from the same brand," Harrington said.

To give it a new feel, get nice packaging for the gift. If you're not sold on the idea of secondhand gifts, start with small, slightly used items like books. It's also possible to find new items for less in charity shops and on online platforms like eBay, although you may have to bid for them.

Aside from buying gifts secondhand, you could also get holiday decorations from charity thrift shops.

Take a break from spending in the new year

It's possible to spend more during the holidays than you do the rest of the year. Gifts aside, you could end up going out to dinner with friends more often or doing holiday activities with family. Spending more during the holidays isn't a terrible thing if you financially plan for it. Spending big chunks of money can feel stressful, however, especially if you don't have a surplus of funds. To help you recover from large holiday ex-



KENA BETANCUR — GETTY IMAGES

A woman carries shopping bags as customers visit the American Mall dream mall during Black Friday on November 25, 2022 in East Rutherford, New Jersey. The holidays can be a financially stressful time. Saying yes to budgeting and no to overextending yourself can help.

penses, consider minimizing spending a few months after the holidays.

"If I know I'm going to be traveling or spending a lot over the holidays, I also plan to have a lot of downtime in January and February and even March, when I know I won't be planning any big purchases," said editor Chris Davis. He explained that taking time to financially recover post-holidays requires discipline, but it can help you get back on track for the rest of the year.

Try wish list apps

Not being sure what to buy a loved one can be stressful and lead to last-minute shopping. Last-minute purchases can sometimes be more expensive, especially if retailers mark prices up. To save yourself time and eliminate worry around whether your loved one will like the gift, consider using a platform like Giftster to share gift ideas. You can create a wish list, add items to it and share it with loved ones. There's even an option to create a group wish list, which can be helpful for families or friend groups. Other apps you can use for wish lists include Giftbuster and WishSlate.

If you aren't into apps, there are other ways to go about sharing wish lists with your loved ones like creating a spreadsheet to exchange gift ideas. iPhone

users can also use the Notes app to collaborate on gift ideas.

Don't feel pressure to buy gifts

While it is nice to give people gifts, it's not a necessity, especially if it's overwhelming or you can't afford it. Editor Pamela de la Fuente experiences anxiety around the holidays, but "takes it in stride." The mom of two has a busy life, so she doesn't get around to doing meticulous financial planning for the holidays.

"I just try to limit the amount of toys I buy. I don't exchange gifts with my husband or in-laws anymore, and I ask my sister what she wants and try to keep that gift-buying budget in check," said de la Fuente. "I also try to do some experiences. Maybe instead of a gift, here's money to go on a trip together or something like that."

Use apps to budget

Holidays are a great time to blow the dust off your budgeting apps if they've been inactive. Creative producer Amanda Deisler uses an app to help her stay organized and plan spending.

"I actually use YNAB and set aside a specific amount for all holiday spending," Deisler said. She also tracks her holiday expenses in the app.

Consider using apps to cre-

ate a holiday budget, then throw funds in there weekly or monthly, using the apps to keep track of your savings. For instance, if you'll be spending Hanukkah out of town with loved ones, you may want to create a budget for food and travel.

Repurpose or DIY decor

Buying new holiday decor every year can be expensive, especially if you go all out on ornaments and lights. Think about reusing or repurposing existing decorations. You may also add a festive touch by creating something new using items you have at home. For instance, you can make ornaments out of copper, foil and paper mache.

"I save money on the Christmas tree by having some fun using substitutes sometimes," McNett said. He once decorated a ladder with lights and that served as his Christmas tree.

Track spending

When you're spending with multiple credit and debit cards during the holidays, it's easy to lose track of how much you're charging. Consider taking a page out of writer Tommy Tindall's book.

"I use just one credit card for all purchases and pay closer attention to my bank app during the spending season," Tindall said.

Using a credit or debit card that gives you cash-back rewards or points may also be a clever way to get money back during the holidays.

Plan travel and gifts early

You don't have to wait until the holidays to start shopping. Consider buying gifts throughout the year like content management specialist Sabrina Parrys does.

"If I know I'm going to be spending money on presents, I try to remember this throughout the year and purchase things for later to relieve the pressure of purchasing something that's probably marked up around the holidays," she said. Major sales on days like the Fourth of July and Black Friday are great times to buy gifts at a discount.

The same applies to travel — think about deciding who is spending the holidays where early in the year so you can buy tickets while they're cheap. It's also OK to skip traveling during pricey periods such as Thanksgiving or New Year's if you can't afford it.

Bottom line — focusing on the things you can control like your budget and spending can hopefully make the season less stressful.

Elizabeth Ayoola writes for NerdWallet. Email: eyoola@nerdwallet.com.

TIMES HAVE CHANGED

Black Friday shopping tips, tricks

Retail holidays now dot the consumer landscape throughout much of the year. That shift has made a day like Black Friday somewhat less unique than it was in years past. However, Black Friday remains the unofficial kickoff to the holiday shopping season, and it's still a major day for retailers big and small.

According to Adobe Analytics, in 2022, consumers spent \$9.12 billion while online shopping on Black Friday. A separate report from the National Retail Federation and Prosper Insights & Analytics indicated just under 200 million consumers shopped online and in-store between Thanksgiving Day and Cyber Monday, which is the Monday following Black Friday.

Such figures indicate that holiday shopping on the weekend of Thanksgiving might have changed, but it's still wildly popular.

This Black Friday, shoppers can consider these tips to ensure they find the right gifts at the right price.

- Do some research before the big day. The spirit of competition is alive and well on Black Friday. Consumers once flocked en masse to store parking lots in the wee hours of the morning in order to get sale items before shelves emptied. Some still do, so shoppers may need to be willing to compete to find the best deals. But some pre-Black Friday research might prove the best way to land the best deals, and it may not require waking up in the middle of the night. Much like shoppers compete with one another to grab sale items, retailers also compete to get shoppers in their stores or on their websites. As a result, it's not uncommon for retailers big and small to advertise Black Friday sales weeks in advance. Shoppers can research these sales and plan when to visit certain stores in order to land the best deal.

- Wake up early. Shoppers may not need to get out of bed at 3 a.m. to land the best Black Friday deals, but the early bird still gets the worm on the day after Thanksgiving. Plan to shop early in the morning, which increases the chances of finding the right gift at the right price. If an item you've earmarked is part of a doorbuster deal, plan to get to the store or onto the website as early as possible.

- Establish a budget. It's easy to go overboard when shopping deals on Black Friday. However, busting the budget on the first day of the holiday shopping season sets a bad precedent for the weeks to come. A holiday debt survey from LendingTree found that 35% of shoppers took on debt to pay for their holiday purchases in 2022, with the average consumer accumulating more than \$1,500 in debt. Savvy shoppers devise a budget prior to shopping and stick to that budget. Black Friday remains a wildly popular retail holiday.

A little research, a willingness to get up early and some determination to stay on budget is a formula for a successful Black Friday.

— Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

TIPS

Clever holiday shopping strategies to save time and money

The holiday season is here again, which means the time for shopping lists and gift-buying has returned, as well.

Shoppers long have relied on Black Friday deals to save some money and streamline shopping excursions. But now Thanksgiving Day sales and additional retail holidays like Plaid Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday have made it easier than ever to score holiday deals.

The following tips can make holiday shopping more fruitful:

Know your prices

Shoppers who would do well on TV's "The Price is Right" can save money. It's important to have a general idea of what items cost, especially those that will be on holiday lists. Shoppers can set up price alert notifications on the gifts they plan to buy to compare prices in advance of holiday sales. This way they will have a better idea if the Black Friday/Cyber Monday "deal" is just a markdown on an exaggerated price or if it's a legitimate bargain.

Consider price-matching

Before shoppers run to a dozen stores in the name of saving a few bucks, learn about stores' price-matching policies. For example, Best Buy may be willing to give the same price on a printer if you can prove that Staples is offering it for \$30 cheaper. Keep in mind that many stores are even willing to match Amazon's prices or their own online prices, which sometimes can differ from their in-store prices.

Utilize a shopping app or coupon aggregator

Online shopping is here to stay, and one way retailers provide deals is with coupon codes. Shopping applications can help shoppers save money and time. Some, like Rakuten, offer cash-back and instant discount opportunities, particularly during the holiday season. Others, like Honey, are apps as well as browser extensions that will automatically search for and apply coupon codes on retailers' sites to ensure a shopper is getting the lowest price.

Shop ahead and pick up

Be aware of retailers who offer a lower online price for merchandise than what the same item sells for in-store. For example, a six-pack of socks may be \$9.99 when purchased online or \$13.99 in-store. If the store offers free pickup for online orders shipped to the store, then consumers can use this option to get the discount but avoid shipping fees. Plus, pickup kiosks generally are less crowded than waiting for the checkout registers.

Buy now, resize later

Shoppers who can't find their needed size or color in clothing or merchandise can buy any size or color on sale day at a discounted price, then exchange a few days later for the item they need.

Think beyond the usual retailers

Lowe's, Home Depot and even pharmacies have lesser-known, but advantageous deals, as well. Don't overlook these retailers for holiday decor or stocking stuffers. Holiday sales shopping is more budget-friendly with some simple saving strategies.

— Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Shoppers who would do well on TV's "The Price is Right" can save money. It's important to have a general idea of what items cost, especially those that will be on holiday lists.

GENERAC®



GIVE THANKS

for **FAMILY GATHERINGS.**

Be grateful every holiday party you have will shine bright! With a Generac Automatic Standby Generator, you'll provide power for ALL your Holiday Festivities:

- All Major Appliances
- Furnace
- Sump Pumps
- EV Chargers
- Security Systems
- Fire Alert Systems
- Holiday Lighting

Eat, Drink & **Be POWERED!**

CALL THE GENERATOR EXPERTS!

METRO ELECTRIC - FULLY LICENSED AND AUTHORIZED GENERAC INSTALLATION



AUTOMATIC STANDBY GENERATORS: COMFORT, CONVENIENCE & SECURITY

- 24/7 Automatic power for your entire home
- Runs on your homes existing Natural Gas or LP
- One day installation
- Remote monitoring available
- Maintenance packages available



CALL TODAY FOR YOUR FREE QUOTE!

1-586-336-9121

www.MetroElectricMichigan.com



- A Michigan Business
- 100% Guarantee
- Licensed & Insured



TRIVIA

5 fast facts about November

Americans celebrate Thanksgiving each November, thus kicking off a holiday season that lasts until Jan. 1. Though many see November as the start of a festive time of year, there are even more interesting and fun facts about the eleventh month of the year.

1 Like various other months on the calendar, November has something of a misleading name. November gets its name from the Latin word “novem,” which means “nine.” But today November is the 11th month of the year. So is November a misnomer? Not exactly. November was the ninth month of the early Roman calendar. However, when the Gregorian calendar was adopted and the Julian calendar was abandoned, November kept its name if not its spot in the monthly pecking order. Hence, November is still known as “November” even though it’s now the 11th month of the year and not the ninth.

2 If October goes out with ghouls and goblins on Halloween, which is celebrated on Oct. 31, November begins a little more piously. That’s because Nov. 1 is All Saints’ Day, a Christian solemnity, or feast day, that honors the saints of the Christian church.

3 November is a significant month in world history. On Nov. 11, 1918, at 5:45 a.m., an armistice was signed between the Allied Powers and Germany at Compiègne, France. The signing of the armistice ended hostilities on the Western Front, thus putting an end to World War I, which had begun more than four years earlier. The signing of the armistice ultimately led to the observance of Armistice Day on Nov. 11, 1919. Armistice Day was subsequently renamed Remembrance Day and Americans celebrate Veterans Day on Nov. 11. Both Remembrance Day and Veterans Day honor military personnel who served honorably in times of war, conflict and peace.

4 Topaz is the traditional birthstone of November. According to the Farmer’s Almanac, the ancient Greeks believed topaz could make anyone who wore it invisible. Though that idea no longer holds water, topaz remains a symbol of honor and strength.

5 Upon his inauguration as President of the United States in 2021, Joe Biden became the sixth U.S. president with a November birthday. That tied November with July as the months with the most presidential birthdays. In addition to President Biden, Presidents James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, James A. Garfield, and Warren G. Harding were all born in November.

— Story courtesy Metro Creative Connection



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION



ALVARO BARRIENTOS — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

People walk between crosses on All Saints Day at the state cemetery, in Pamplona, northern Spain, Wednesday, Nov. 1.

TAKE THE STRESS AWAY

Dining out for the holidays

For some people, there is no better way to celebrate the holidays than to spend time with friends and loved ones around the dinner table.

Although cooking and dining at home are popular this time of year, some celebrants may not have the time or the inclination to host the holidays at home.

Preparing and serving holiday meals to guests can be time-consuming. In fact, many holiday hosts and hostesses lament that hosting duties can compromise the time they get to spend with the ones they love each year.

Dining out is one way to save time and free up more moments for interacting without the pressure of food shopping, cooking and cleanup. The following are some tips for families who opt to dine out for the holidays:

- Confirm restaurants are open. Many restaurants close on major holidays to enable staff to spend time with their own family members. This may be more so for Thanksgiving and Christmas than with week-long celebrations like Chanukah and Kwanzaa. Verify with restaurants if they have holiday hours, and more importantly, that they will be open on the day you will be dining out. Christmas Day falls on a Monday in 2023, which typically is a day when many restaurants



DREAMSTIME/TNS

already are closed.

- Make a reservation. If you find an establishment open for the holiday, reserve a table early. Also, some restaurants may ask for a deposit on reservations to ensure you show up.

- Expect some menu changes. To account for reduced staff or even ease in meal service, some restaurants may opt for a price-fixed holiday menu or a limited menu from their typical offerings. Some may showcase a seasonal menu that caters to holiday favorites they think diners will expect. There also may be fewer substitutions or customizations allowed.

- Avoid peak dining times. Restaurants may fill up after church services or around dinner time. Consider reserving your table for a less popular hour to reduce the propensity for long waits or being rushed out.
- Be patient. Kitchens

can get backed up on a holiday, and it may take longer than expected for food to make it out to tables. Cut kitchen employees and servers a break as they are likely frazzled. They are trying their best to service all patrons.

▪ Plan to tip generously. It’s the season of giving, and you should make sure you take care of your server. You can make the day even brighter with some words of gratitude and a nice gratuity.

▪ Pace alcoholic beverages. It’s normal to enjoy some spirited drinks during holiday celebrations. It’s easier to indulge a bit more at home and you do not need to get behind the wheel. When dining out, do not overdo things, and have a plan for who will be driving home.

— Story courtesy Metro Creative Connection



Black Friday 11.24.23
Small Business
Saturday 11.25.23

15% off
Your purchases, including in-store holiday pre-orders

Gift Card
1 per customer with purchase
Mystery amount from \$5-\$50

Free Calendar
Viviano’s calendar with monthly coupons

Offers available in-store only.
Visit any of our 5 stores to participate.

Cyber Monday 11.27.23

15% off
Your online viviano.com orders with coupon code **JOYFUL**

Yes, you can use the coupon more than once during the day!



All discounts exclude weddings, events, funerals, wire, and phone orders. Discounts cannot be combined with other discounts, offers, or coupons.

Rochester • Shelby Twp. • Chesterfield • Grosse Pointe Woods
St. Clair Shores • 1-800-VIVIANO • www.viviano.com

YE OLDE TOY SHOPPE
NEW, USED AND COLLECTIBLE TOYS

29929 HARPER • ST. CLAIR SHORES
N. OF 12 MILE
586-775-7927
EBAY SELLER

Mon-Thurs 11-5; Fri.12-5; Sat.11-6; Closed Sun.

Now accepting credit cards

10% off
New and Collectibles

50% off
Basic Used Toys!
THRIFTY THURSDAYS
75% off
All Used Toys



CELEBRATE **THE SEASON IN STYLE**

30% - 50% OFF

MICHIGAN'S
LARGEST
SELECTION
OF EXQUISITE
NATURAL
WINTER
FASHIONS

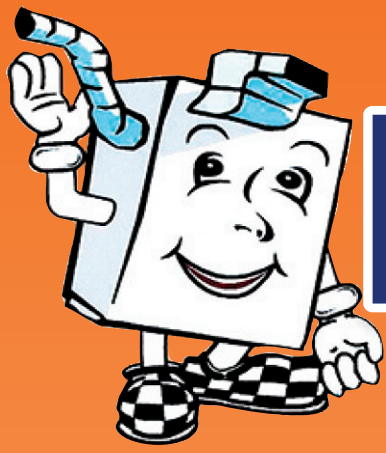
NOV 10TH - 25TH

RICH FURS

Dittrich
Since 1893

DETROIT 7373 THIRD AVE. 313-873-8300

dittrichfurs.com



Over 30 Years Experience

Mr. Furnace

MICHIGAN'S #1 FURNACE COMPANY

SAVE BIG
FURNACE OR A/C

A/C OR FURNACE TUNE-UP
ALL MAKES • ALL MODELS
only \$69⁹⁵
Mr. Furnace Must be operational at time of tune-up. Not valid with any other offer.

Cut Gas Bill up to 50% with a 95% Furnace!

FREE
Trion Air Purification Filter System with purchase of Furnace-A/C Combo
Mr. Furnace INCLUDES INSTALLATION. Call for details. Not valid with any other offer.

SERVICE CALLS
only \$59⁰⁰
Mr. Furnace Not valid with any other offer.



We Service All Makes & Models



Call Today!



586-777-6666 | MrFurnace.com

SHOPPING

'From Michigan With Love' releases 2023 holiday gift basket shopping guide



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FROM MICHIGAN WITH LOVE

Alden Mill House

By Franklin Dohanyos
For MediaNews Group

If you're thinking about sending a gift basket to someone you love or as employee appreciation gifts, here is the perfect list of some Michigan companies that offer gift boxes and baskets.

Two facts to keep in mind:

1. About 40% of people will be cutting back on holiday spending and about 60% of people will be purchasing online.
2. If every Michigan household spent about \$45 per month on Michigan-made items, it could potentially generate \$2 billion for the Michigan economy.

Now onto the products:

ALDEN MILL HOUSE

Alden
aldenmillhouse.com

Have you ever cooked something and found it was missing something special? Maybe it lacked flavor or a "zing"? Alden Mill House is the perfect place to visit to spice up your meals without using salt.

Alden Mill House has over 33 custom spice blends to satisfy your taste buds. Chef Geno Moglovkin and his wife, Joy, started with an all-purpose seasoning "Miracle Blend" and other pepper mill spices. The spice company blossomed from there and is now run by the couple's daughter, Colleen, as Alden Mill House. Alden Mill House products are made of the finest ingredients carefully selected from around the world and are available in three sizes. All Mill House products are free of additives, MSG, preservatives and gluten.

BETTER MADE SNACK FOODS

Detroit
bettermade.com

Now in its 93rd year, Better Made continues to be Michigan's favorite potato chip and snack food maker. The company is still family-owned, still in Detroit, and supports the people of the city. Better Made offers a deluxe gift box filled with a variety of products that makes a perfect gift. The company recently introduced two new products — Wildfire Chili Lime flavored potato chips and New Era Brand Tortilla Chips. Better Made's chocolate-covered chips also are back and available in a 7 oz. tin of milk or dark chocolate. For packing lunches, the company also offers variety packs.

HEART OF MICHIGAN

Howell
heartofmi.com

Heart of Michigan offers all kinds of gift baskets and gift boxes filled with Michigan-made products. You can design your own basket or choose from one of many available. Some of the Michigan companies include Sanders, Better Made, Dearborn Sausage, Vernors, U.P. Foods, Germack, Schulers and more. Heart Of Michigan also offers licensed Faygo-scented soy-wax candles that look and smell like the real thing.

MICHIGAN AWESOME

Holland
michiganawesome.com

In business since 2009, Michigan Awesome works with dozens of companies across Michigan to find quality products for its gift boxes, which are popular, especially around the holidays. The boxes feature artisan food from across Michigan, packed in custom gift boxes. During the holiday gift-giving season, nearly half of the gift boxes purchased are shipped outside of Michigan. They make great gifts to friends and family who may have moved away and are longing for a taste of home. Other available items include T-shirts and other wearables, drinkware and home goods. The company also offers its own line of wines and hard ciders made from grapes grown along the shores of Lake Michigan and Michigan apples.

PINCONNING CHEESE CO.
Pinconning
pinconningcheese.com



The Toffee Store

Pinconning is known as the "cheese capital" of Michigan. That's where you'll find The Pinconning Cheese Co. Deli and Fudge Shoppe — home to the famous Pinconning brand of cheese. Pinconning Cheese Co. has delicious cheese and sausage gift baskets that are terrific for gift-giving and holiday parties. The shop includes a number of specialty items, such as creamy homemade fudge, homemade sausages, custom takeout sandwiches, and pizza, as well as the now-famous Pinconning Pizzaloaf. The company also offers cheese and custom-made cheese spreads, Michigan-made meats and jerky, smoked fish, pickled items, and a wide array of specialty condiments and sauces.

THE TOFFEE STORE

Oakland
thetoffeestore.com

The Toffee Store produces delicious small-batch toffees that are savory, sweet and easy on the teeth. The company makes a variety of gift boxes, including an Artisan Gift Box with an assortment of gourmet edibles. The Toffee Repertoire features one each of eight pure, crisp and thin varieties. Variety Bits are the perfect party contribution, with 32 bite-sized pieces.

GILBERT CHOCOLATES

Jackson
gilbertchocolates.com

Gilbert Chocolates, the premier chocolate maker in the Midwest, produces a decadent variety of smooth, silky chocolates and also offers delicious chocolate-covered strawberries, all made by hand. Boxes of chocolates can be shipped anywhere in the contiguous United States and the dipped-by-hand chocolate-covered strawberries are available only in person, either at the Jackson storefront or in the center court of Briarwood Mall in Ann Arbor.



Better Made



Heart of Michigan



Michigan Awesome



Pinconning Cheese Co.



Gilbert Chocolates

THE Pleasure ZONE

Are you on Santa's Naughty list? There's still time!

BLACK FRIDAY SALE 20% OFF

We-Vibe Products
Womanizer Products

(In-store Only)
Nov. 13th - Dec. 4th

What's your pleasure?

Lingerie • Corsets • Queen Size Lingerie • Hosiery • Shoes • Dancewear • Clubwear • Jewelry • Adult Toys • Adult Games • Costumes • Massage Oils • Lubes • Creams • Bachelorette Party Supplies • Gifts and DVD's

Visit Our Website
thepleasurezonestore.com

35806 Van Dyke, Sterling Heights
South of 16 on the east side

Mon.-Sat. 10am-9pm
Sun. 12 noon-5pm

35806 VAN DYKE AVE. - STERLING HEIGHTS,
MI 48312 @ 15 1/2 MILE RD.
(586) 722 - 7913

#1 ADULT STORE
2 YEARS IN A ROW!

Like us on Facebook

HOSTING THE HOLIDAYS

Tools of the trade

Prepare: Essential gear for first-time Thanksgiving hosts

Hosting Thanksgiving is a large undertaking that can put some hosts under pressure.

Unlike some other holidays that are less food-focused, Thanksgiving is largely about the meal. Turkey is the centerpiece of the celebration, and any guests who come over are going to expect turkey and a number of side dishes.

Leaving hungry is never an option on Thanksgiving. Individuals who are new to Thanksgiving hosting may be at a loss as to where to start with their preparation.

There are certain must-haves hosts should familiarize themselves with. Many of these essentials revolve around tools for cooking in the kitchen and serving guests.

Large roasting pan

You'll need somewhere to oven-roast the turkey. While it's perfectly acceptable to purchase a disposable aluminum pan for this purpose, if you plan to host Thanksgiving year after year, investing in a quality roasting pan will help deliver even cooking temperatures to the food and also can be used for roasting other meats.

Wire rack

The turkey is placed upon a rack inside of the roasting pan so that it will not swim in the juices and cause a soggy bottom during cooking. Many roasting pans and racks are sold as sets, but others can be purchased separately. The rack can be used for other purposes as well, including cooling baked cookies or even drying out fresh herbs.

Food thermometer

Ensuring the turkey and other foods are cooked to the correct internal temperature is essential. You do not want to send guests home with foodborne illnesses. Food thermometers run the gamut from very basic to those that can be programmed to alert cooks through an app on a smartphone. Turkey is done when the temperature reads 170 F in the breast and 180 F in the thigh. If stuffed, the stuffing should register 165 F, according to Butterball.

Coordinated casserole dishes

Casserole dishes can hold all of the sides served with the turkey, including stuffing, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, green beans and more. A set of matching dishes will help the table look more coordinated.

Service for eight or more

Thanksgiving draws a crowd, so take inventory of silverware, dishes, wine glasses, and any other table needs to ensure that you can accommodate all of the guests. Purchase new items if you cannot set the table completely with what you have, as mixed and matched may be okay for informal events but may not set the tone hosts are aiming for on Thanksgiving.

Table and chairs

Determine if you have enough table space to seat all of your guests. Some dining tables come with an extension leaf, but you still may need to supplement with a folding table. You may need more seating. Chairs can be rented or you can utilize some folding chairs.

Turkey serving platter

When the turkey is ready, it can be placed on an attractive serving platter for your photos, after which you slice and then return the sliced poultry to the serving platter for dining.

— Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



GETTY IMAGES, PHOTO BY CRYSTAL SING FOR EYEEM



PHOTO COURTESY OF STATEPOINT MEDIA

Having the right tools makes all the difference when you're preparing to be the host with the most.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Entertain: Must-have items for hosting with ease this holiday season

'Tis the season for gatherings galore. Whether you're an all-star entertainer or a first-time host, having the right tools will set you up for success—meaning you can spend less time in the kitchen and more time with loved ones. Here are a few must-haves to add to your holiday shopping list:

Classy and creative cocktails

Create memorable cocktails or mocktails that everyone will be talking about with uniquely shaped craft ice. Tovolo offers a variety of craft ice molds to fit every occasion—from spheres and sports balls to novelty and holiday ornament shapes. The easy-to-use, durable, stackable molds are dishwasher safe for easy clean-up. Plus, the slow-melting shapes keep drinks cool for longer. So, drop them in for fun and festive drinks at your next gathering.

Pops in a pinch

Popsicles aren't just for summertime. In fact, they're a great option for a holiday crowd since you can prep them well in advance, and they make for a light dessert after a night of feasting. With Tovolo Stackable Pop Molds, simply puree some fruit — strawberries, kiwis, etc. — pour the mixture into the molds, stack them in the freezer, and voilà, you've got a delightful treat that basically made itself. Better yet, guests can add the fruity pops to a glass of champagne or cocktail of choice to add flavor and keep drinks cool.

Table-worthy tools

When hosting a dinner party, dishes will inevitably pile up in the sink. One way to cut down on dirty dishes is to use a set of kitchen utensils that is both stylish and attractive, so you can go from the stovetop to the dining table without needing to dirty any additional tools. Another tip is to make the meal family style, which allows your guests to choose what they want and reduces the need to portion out individual servings, ultimately giving you more time to enjoy the party.

Spatulas that make you smile

From cookie batters to mashed potatoes, everyone needs a quality spatula to whip up their favorite holiday dishes. And now you can add both fun and function to your feast with Spatulart Spatulas featuring double-sided holiday designs and puns. With a nylon core, these high-quality spatulas provide strength for the heaviest mixing jobs and silicone edges that remain flexible for easy scraping. Plus their FSC-certified wood handle makes them an environmentally-conscious way to add a touch of whimsy to the kitchen roster.

Functional and fashionable bowls

Despite the name, mixing bowls can be one of the most versatile kitchen tools, used for mixing, prep, storage, and if you choose a stylish design like stainless steel, even serving! Why dirty multiple dishes when you can opt for one-bowl recipes? When it comes to entertaining, it's best to work smarter, not harder.

Having the right tools makes all the difference when you're preparing to be the host with the most. Be sure to equip yourself right for a season of easy and festive holiday prep, and don't forget that when it comes to hosting, versatility is the name of the game.

— Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

Tips to prepare to host holiday guests

They're back! Family, friends and acquaintances will soon be taking up residence on cots and fold-out sofas across the country again as loved ones gather to celebrate the holiday season. That's welcome news nearly three years after a pandemic first restricted such gatherings. But hosts must ask themselves: Am I ready to host house guests?

As individuals get ready to host holiday guests, here are some strategies to maximize space and make guests feel comfortable.

- Discuss plans in advance. Every traveler is different. Some people thrive on making lists and following itineraries. Others fly by the seat of their pants. It's reasonable to ask potential house guests how they envision their visit, including if they plan to stay long and if it will include sleeping over. This way you can make accommodations accordingly, particularly if guests request to borrow a vehicle or want to see the sights.

- Create some extra privacy. While some homes are equipped to handle guests comfortably, smaller homes may not be equipped with such luxuries. Folding screens can be used to create a barrier and add some privacy in open spaces where guests will be staying.

- Stash away travel samples. Travel-sized soaps, shampoos and lotions can make guests feel more welcome. Stock up at the grocery store or pharmacy and leave them in the room where guests will be staying.

- Stock up on new linens. Treat guests to fresh fluffy towels and new bed linens, especially if it's been awhile since you have restocked these items.

- Ask about food preferences. Your guests may not want to munch on kale chips and tofu hot dogs apart from the holiday meal. Don't push your food restrictions on others. Ask guests what they typically eat and then fill the pantry and refrigerator with some of the items they mention. When guests need snacks, they'll have familiar foods on hand.

- Be mindful of bedtimes. Consider guests' preferences about bedtimes. While you may be a night owl, some guests may hit the hay much earlier, particularly older relatives or those with young children. If need be, make an effort to be quiet when kids or early birds are staying over.

— Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

As individuals get ready to host holiday guests, here are some strategies to maximize space and make guests feel comfortable.

Hosting the holidays when times are hectic

Who wouldn't love the holiday season to unfold similarly to the plot of a made-for-TV movie?

In such films, families get along, townfolk are overcome with the holiday spirit and even minor obstacles all get worked out by the time the credits roll.

Hosting the holidays in the real world doesn't always go so smoothly.

The period between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day can be hectic, as social schedules fill up and work demands mount before people take an end-of-year break. Food may not turn out perfectly and gifts may be purchased in the 11th hour. In fact, most people's holiday celebrations may be more "Clark Griswold" than "Norman Rockwell."

However, a few tips can help any host handle a hectic holiday season:

Set the date early

Give guests plenty of time to plan for your event. If it is a holiday social gathering that does not take place on the holiday itself, provide at least three weeks' notice so guests can plan accordingly. This also allows you plenty of time to work backward from that date to ensure all details are accounted for.

Keep it simple

Instead of a four-course dinner with gourmet fare, consider something small and easy. A gathering that's not geared around trying to impress can ensure hosts have time to kick back and relax with their guests — something every-

one can use during this busy time of year. Choose a theme, like hot cocoa and cookies or cocktails and charcuterie, so you won't have as many tasks to tackle. Asking everyone to bring a dish also reduces the hosts' workload.

Space out cleaning

Rather than a mad dash to the finish line the day of the event, space out getting the home in order the entire week prior to the party. Focus on the rooms that will get the most attention, such as living areas, bathrooms and kitchens.

Prepare overnight spaces

If guests will be spending one or more nights, decide where they will sleep. Choose a private spot away from the hustle of the household, such as a den, home office space or even a finished basement. Create a welcome basket that includes some creature comforts and necessities, such as extra toiletries, a book, a note with the Wi-Fi password, and some individually wrapped chocolates.

Set aside a quiet retreat

Sometimes you may need to sneak away for a moment to take a breather from the action. Delegate a private space where you can retreat for a few minutes to catch your breath and do some relaxation exercises. Then you may return refreshed and ready to interact with guests once again.

— Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



**BAVARIAN INN LODGE
PRESENTS**

2023 NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION!

WITH 2 GREAT PARTIES TO CHOOSE FROM



JOIN US FOR OUR ADULT GALA CELEBRATION

\$130.00 PER PERSON

Includes Party Favors, Dinner with Wine Service, Entertainment, Dancing, a Champagne Toast, Soup Buffet at Midnight, New Year's Day Breakfast Buffet, and all taxes and gratuities.

JOIN US FOR OUR FAMILY CELEBRATION

\$92.00 ADULTS

\$49.00 CHILDREN 2-12

FREE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 2

Dinner and Dessert Buffet, New Year's Necklace for each person, Party Favors, Interactive Dances, Global Countdown in the New Year, Bring your camera - Willy the Dragon will be available for photos, New Year's Day Breakfast Buffet, and all taxes and gratuities.



**ADD ONE OF THESE PACKAGES TO ANY
NEW YEAR'S EVE GUESTROOM STAY!**

FAMILY FUN CENTER

Features 160+ Video & Redemption Games, Mini Golf, 2 Water Slides, 4 Indoor Pools, and more!



COME CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR WITH US!



Limited rooms available! Don't wait, **BOOK TODAY!**
Call 888-974-3128 or visit us at Bavarianinn.com

Scan QR Code to see full New Year's event brochure



RECIPES



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAMILY FEATURES

Putting a plant-based twist on traditional recipes offers everyone the opportunity to indulge with decadent treats.

Put plant-based twist on holiday baking

Flavorful desserts are a staple of the holidays and the exciting, appetizing allure of new recipes can help elevate seasonal gatherings and create sweet memories. With near-endless options for celebrating the season, putting a plant-based twist on traditional recipes offers everyone the opportunity to indulge with decadent treats.

In seasonal sweets like Brulee Pumpkin Pie and No-Bake Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheesecake, an option like Country Crock Plant Cream can be used as a dairy-free substitute for heavy whipping cream. With 29% less saturated fat than dairy heavy whipping cream, it's an easy 1:1 swap and is also soy-free, certified plant-based and 100% vegan, making it ideal to have on hand during holiday baking season. It's all of the deliciousness of heavy cream, with none of the heaviness of dairy.

Visit CountryCrock.com for more delectable holiday dessert ideas.

Brulee Pumpkin Pie

Prep time: 45 minutes
Cook time: 1 hour
Servings: 8
Pie Crust:
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
8 tablespoons Country Crock Plant Butter, cold and cut into cubes
2 tablespoons chilled vegetable shortening, cut into pieces
4 tablespoons ice water
Pumpkin Filling:
½ cup maple syrup
1 tablespoon vanilla
1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin puree
¼ cup coconut cream
1 cup Country Crock Plant Cream
1 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon ginger
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon ground clove
½ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons cornstarch
3 tablespoons white granulated sugar
Whipped Topping:
2 cups Country Crock Plant Cream, chilled
¼ cup powdered sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
To make pie crust: Preheat oven to 350 F.
In bowl of food processor, add flour, sugar and salt; pulse to combine. Add cold plant butter and shortening. Process about 10 seconds until it looks like coarse meal.
With food processor running, add ice water. Process until mixture clumps together.
On lightly floured surface, roll dough into 14-inch circle. Transfer to 9-inch pie dish. Lift edges and allow dough to drape into dish. Trim, leaving 1-inch overhang. Fold excess dough under and crimp edges.
To make pumpkin filling: In medium saucepan over

medium heat, add syrup and vanilla; warm about 2 minutes then remove from heat and set aside.

In large bowl, combine syrup mixture, pumpkin, coconut cream, plant cream, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, clove, salt and cornstarch; blend with hand mixer until smooth. Pour mixture into pie crust.

Bake 1 hour. If crust starts to burn, cover edges with aluminum foil. The middle will still be jiggly.

Cool at room temperature 30 minutes then cover and transfer to refrigerator to chill at least 5 hours or overnight.

Before serving, sprinkle pie with white sugar and, using kitchen torch, brelee until sugar is melted and dark brown.

To make whipped topping: Using electric hand mixer or stand mixer, whisk plant cream, powdered sugar and vanilla on high until mixture thickens and stiff peaks form.
Slice and serve with whipped topping.

No-Bake Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheesecake

Prep time: 5-10 minutes
Cook time: 5 minutes
Total time: 6-7 hours
Servings: 8
Country Crock Plant Butter, for greasing
Crust:
1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
½ cup Country Crock Plant Butter, melted
Filling:
2 packages (8 ounces each) dairy-free cream cheese, at room temperature
1 cup peanut butter
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
½ cup Country Crock Plant Cream
1 cup powdered sugar
Chocolate Ganache:
1 stick Country Crock Plant Butter, cubed
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
Grease 9-inch pie dish with plant butter; set aside.
To make crust: In medium bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs and melted plant butter; mix thoroughly. Add crust to greased pie dish and press firmly to bottom and sides; refrigerate.
To make filling: In bowl of electric mixer, beat cream cheese until smooth and creamy.
Add powdered sugar; beat until fully incorporated.
Add peanut butter, vanilla extract and plant cream; beat until smooth and creamy.
Pour filling into prepared crust and refrigerate 5-6 hours or overnight.
To make chocolate ganache: In pan over medium heat, add plant butter cubes and chocolate; stir continuously. Spread chocolate ganache evenly on top of chilled cheesecake. Refrigerate at least 1 hour before slicing and serving.

— Story courtesy of Family Features

RECIPES

Serve up smiles with favorite sides

Turkey and ham may sit centerstage, but classic holiday sides can make the season truly special. You can bring smiles to your loved ones' faces by dishing out those favorite recipes everyone asks for year after year.

Made with a delicious combination of rice, cheddar cheese, cream of mushroom soup and broccoli florets, this quick and easy version of Broccoli and Cheese Rice Casserole is an ideal one-pot dish to keep the holidays simple. With three easy steps and everyday ingredients, it comes together with minimal effort for traditional casserole taste.

When it comes to feeding a crowd, it's often best to let your oven do the work. This Brussels Sprouts and Ham Rice Gratin recipe allows you to serve up a filling favorite with little effort using pantry staples. Plus, it's a kid-friendly way to encourage veggies at this year's holiday meal with gooey cheese providing tempting taste bud motivation.

These seasonal classics and more are made quick and easy with an option like Success Boil-in-Bag Rice, a pre-measured, mess-free way to make fluffy, high-quality rice. It's cooked by simply dropping a bag of rice in a pot of water or broth then boiling it for 10 minutes. BPA-free and FDA-approved, the bags are safe to use and made to withstand high temperatures.

An added bonus: If you're aiming to achieve a particular flavor, just season the rice by cooking in water infused with herbs, spices, broth, coconut milk or other liquids like juice for sweeter recipes.

Visit successrice.com to find more holiday recipe inspiration.

Brussels Sprouts and Ham Rice Gratin

Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Servings: 4
1 bag Success White Rice
½ pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
1/3 cup diced ham
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon olive oil
¾ teaspoon salt, divided
¼ teaspoon black pepper, divided
1 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons finely

chopped fresh chives
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided

1/3 cup breadcrumbs
2 tablespoons butter, melted

Preheat oven to 450 F. Prepare rice according to package directions.

In large bowl, toss Brussels sprouts, ham, garlic, olive oil, ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Place on parchment paper-lined baking tray and roast 12-15 minutes, or until caramelized. Decrease oven temperature to 425 F.

In large bowl, toss rice, Brussels sprouts mixture, cream, chives, Dijon mustard, remaining salt and remaining pepper. Stir in cheddar and 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese. Transfer mixture to greased, 2-quart baking dish.

In small bowl, stir breadcrumbs, remaining Parmesan and melted butter. Sprinkle over rice mixture.

Bake 12-15 minutes, or until golden brown and bubbling.

Broccoli and Cheese Rice Casserole

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Servings: 4-6
1 bag Success White Rice or Brown Rice
nonstick cooking spray
1 can (10 ¾ ounces) condensed cream of mushroom soup

2 cups frozen broccoli florets, thawed and drained

1 ½ cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided

½ cup evaporated milk
3 tablespoons butter, melted

1 tablespoon grated onion
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper

Prepare rice according to package directions. Preheat oven to 350 F.

Coat 2-quart casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray. In medium bowl, combine soup, broccoli, 1 cup cheddar cheese, evaporated milk, butter, onion, salt and pepper. Fold in rice.

Pour mixture into prepared dish and top with remaining cheddar cheese. Bake 20 minutes.

— Story courtesy of Family Features

ENTERTAINING

How to avoid dry turkey this Thanksgiving

Turkey is the centerpiece of Thanksgiving dinners. The National Turkey Federation estimates approximately 46 million turkeys are consumed on Thanksgiving each year, followed by 22 million turkeys at Christmas.

Turkey makes a pleasing picture on the dinner table. However, some people insist that turkey is their least favorite component of the Thanksgiving meal. One of the biggest complaints is turkey tends to be dry.

There are many reasons why turkey can come out dry. Turkey is a lean meat, and Healthline reports that turkey has slightly less fat in its dark meat than chicken. Another reason why turkey may be dry is due to its poor breast-to-leg ratio. By the time one gets the leg meat to cook to temperature so it's safe for consumption, the breast meat often has dried out. Seeing how many people dive for the breast meat initially, they could dish up some dry bird.

There are many ways home cooks can prevent dry turkey this Thanksgiving. Consider these turkey-tending tips.

▪ Brine your bird. According to ScienceBlogs, what causes a human to perceive a food as juicy may actually be his or her own saliva at work. Salty foods may stimulate the production of saliva in the mouth, helping the food to feel much more moist while on the palate. To adequately inject enough salt into the turkey meat, submerge it in a salt brine for a

few days before cooking.
▪ Watch your cook time. It's important to avoid overcooking the turkey, which will turn it as dry as the Sahara. Some turkeys come equipped with pop-up timers to help cooks gauge when to take them out of the oven. However, a more accurate tool is a digital food thermometer that can be set to go off when the turkey reaches the correct internal temperature.

▪ Cook the turkey parts separately. As previously noted, the breast meat will likely reach the desired temperature before the leg meat. To fix this, take the turkey out of the oven when it reaches five to 10 degrees before safe temperature for the breast meat, around 165 F. (Remember, the meat will continue to cook while "resting.") Let guests "ooh and aah" over the picture-perfect turkey. Then cut off the legs and return them to the oven until they are done. Arrange the properly cooked breast and leg meat together on a serving platter.

▪ Offer condiments. A moist dollop of stuffing, a drizzle of gravy or a scoop of cranberry sauce can add moisture to turkey. This approach does not prevent drying out, but it can make a turkey that has dried out a bit more satisfying.

Dry turkey can put off diners. However, some strategies can harness as much moisture as possible to enhance Thanksgiving dinners.

— Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

RECIPES

Healthy holiday baking swaps

Many holiday hosts tend to pull out their most treasured family recipes when entertaining loved ones. After all, taste is the most important aspect of most holiday spreads, particularly when it comes to favorite baked goods and desserts.

Put a better-for-you twist on your baked classics this holiday season by swapping out less healthy cooking fats like butter, canola oil and vegetable oil with an option like Pompeian Light Taste Olive Oil. Ideal for baking desserts like this Lemon Cake or Sugar Cookies with Orange Glaze, as well as frying, this light tasting olive oil provides a healthier take on your holiday recipes without impacting the taste you and your guests love.

Find more better-for-you holiday recipe inspiration at Pompeian.com/recipes.

Lemon Cake

Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 1 hour, 15 minutes Servings: 30
1 1/3 cups Pompeian Light Taste Olive Oil, plus additional for oiling pan
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar
¾ cup brown sugar
1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 ¼ cups whole milk
3 large eggs
1 ½ tablespoons grated lemon zest, plus additional for garnish (optional)
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
¼ cup (optional) powdered sugar, for garnish (optional)
dried sweetened lemon rings, for garnish (optional)

▪ Heat oven to 350 F. Oil 8-by-12-by-2-

inch pan with olive oil and line bottom with parchment paper.

▪ In bowl, whisk flour, sugars, salt, baking soda and powder. In another bowl, whisk 1 1/3 cups olive oil, milk, eggs, lemon zest, juice and limoncello. Add dry ingredients; whisk until just combined.

▪ Pour batter into prepared pan and bake 60-75 minutes until top is golden and cake tester comes out clean. Transfer cake to rack and let cool 30 minutes.

▪ Run knife around edge of pan, invert cake onto rack and let cool completely, 2 hours.

▪ Sprinkle with powdered sugar, lemon zest and lemon rings right before serving, if desired.

Sugar Cookies with Orange Glaze

Prep time: 15 minutes Cook time: 10 minutes Servings: 36

Cookies: 2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup cake sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup Pompeian Light Taste Olive Oil
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
½ teaspoon almond extract
2-3 tablespoons unsweetened milk of choice

Glaze: 1 cup powdered sugar, plus additional if needed, for thickening
2-3 tablespoons fresh orange juice
1/8 teaspoon salt

Orange slices or blood orange slices, for topping sugar, for topping

▪ To make cookies: Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly grease baking sheet.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAMILY FEATURES

Sugar Cookies with Orange Glaze

▪ In large bowl, stir flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt to combine.

▪ Add olive oil, vanilla extract and almond extract. Stir until crumbly dough forms.

▪ Add 2 tablespoons milk; stir until soft dough ball forms, adding more milk if needed.

▪ Place dough ball on lightly floured surface. Roll out dough until ¼-inch thick. Using jar lid or other circular object, cut out cookies; place on baking sheet. Repeat until all dough is used.

▪ Bake 8-10 minutes; do not overbake. Set aside to cool.

To make glaze:

▪ In small bowl, stir powdered sugar, 2 tablespoons orange juice and salt until thick glaze forms. Add more juice, if needed, to thin out glaze or add more powdered sugar to thicken.

▪ When cookies are cooled, glaze them. Top with orange slices or blood orange slices and pinch of sugar.

— Story courtesy of Family Features

ENTERTAINMENT

Fun books to read to children this season

The holiday season is a special time of year for people of all ages, but children might be the most enthusiastic celebrants come December.

Children spend much of the holiday season anticipating the arrival of the man in the red suit, and that enthusiasm can be contagious.

Families have their own unique traditions during the holiday season, but one popular way to harness kids' enthusiasm between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day is to read them holiday stories.

There's no shortage of great holiday books for kids, but here are a handful that kids may remember well into adulthood.

- "The Polar Express," by Chris Van Allsburg: The beloved tale is the story of a young boy who boards a mysterious train bound for the North Pole.
- "The Littlest Elf," by Brandi

Dougherty: Part of a series, this story focuses on a tiny elf named Oliver and a series of misadventures as he navigates his way through Santa's workshop.

▪ "Olive, the Other Reindeer," by Vivian Walsh: Olive is no ordinary reindeer. In fact, Olive is a dog who heads to the North Pole believing she is a reindeer. Her decision to join Santa's team ultimately benefits the big man and his trusty reindeer.

▪ "The Miracle of the First Poinsettia: A Mexican Christmas Story," by Joanne Oppenheim: A little girl named Juanita is the star of this retelling of a traditional Mexican tale with a valuable lesson.

▪ "Gingerbread Mouse: A Christmas Holiday Book for Kids," by Katy Bratun: A fallen tree branch almost ruins Christmas for Mouse, whose determination and resourcefulness mixed



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

in with a little Christmas magic ensures she finds a place to call home in time for the holidays.

▪ "A Night in Santa's Great Big Bag," by Kristin Kladstrup: Santa saves the day in this tale starring a young boy's favorite stuffed animal, whose excitement for Christmas compels him to climb into Santa's big bag of presents on Christmas Eve.

▪ "Santa Claus and the Three Bears," by Maria Modugno: This twist on the popular tale "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" finds three unsuspecting bears encountering a familiar fellow in a red suit upon returning home after a nighttime walk.

▪ "Twas the Night Before Christmas: Edited by Santa Claus for the Benefit of Children

of the 21st Century," by Clement C. Moore: Parents will appreciate this updated version of the popular tale that, among other things, has removed the reference to Santa smoking.

▪ "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" by Dr. Seuss: Children can join generations of fans that came before them as they hear the redemption story of the Grinch who was once determined to ruin Christmas for the happy people of Who-ville.

▪ "The Nutcracker," by the New York City Ballet: The classic story is retold based on famed choreographer George Balanchine's production. The holiday season is steeped in tradition.

Reading new and classic holiday stories to children is one tradition any family can embrace.

— Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

ENTERTAINMENT

Top 10 movies to enjoy over Thanksgiving weekend

By Dave Herndon
For MediaNews Group

Thanksgiving is not traditionally associated with films, but there are many movies that include at least some scenes set during the holiday.

Here's the list of the top 10 films with a Thanksgiving theme:

- 10 "Home for the Holidays" (1995) — Directed by Jodie Foster, starring Robert Downey Jr., Claire Danes and Holly Hunter. In this story of a family on the mend, Hunter plays a single mother who decides to fly home for Thanksgiving, only to learn her teenage daughter insists on staying home to spend the holiday with her boyfriend. The whole family is filled with crazy characters who leave the viewer thinking about the special characters within their own families.
- 9 "Funny People" (2009) — Adam Sandler plays George Simmons, a world-famous comedian diag-

nosed with a terminal illness. He hires a new writer to help him return to his first love of doing stand-up comedy, and along the way the two become friends. Most of the film doesn't include Thanksgiving themes, but one of the best scenes in the movie is set in the apartment of the newly hired assistant and this is where we find out that you don't have to be related to be family.

8 "Dutch" (1991) — Dutch Dooley is getting married, but he hasn't ever met his fiancée's son. In an attempt to get to know him, Dutch volunteers to pick the boy up from prep school and return home in time for Thanksgiving. Wacky adventures ensue as the two guys learn to share the love of the most important woman in their lives.

7 "ThanksKilling" (2009) — What happens when the turkey decides to eat you for dinner? Watch this one to find out. This is the only horror movie to make the list.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

6 "Son in Law" (1993) — Yes, a Pauly Shore movie made the list, not because he is a good actor, but because there aren't a lot of movies on the topic of Thanksgiving. It's about a college freshman who returns home with a fake fiancée to upset her parents.

5 "The Ice Storm" (1997) — Set the weekend after Thanksgiving, 1973,

this film tosses an eclectic bunch of family and neighbors together who frankly don't get along, yet are stuck together due to the worst ice storm in more than a century.

4 "The Big Chill" (1983) — Not to be confused with the 1999 made-for-TV movie of the same name, this film is about a group of seven friends returning to a posh Californian neighborhood around

Thanksgiving time to mourn the loss of a dear friend.

3 "Scent of a Woman" (1992) — Again, not generally considered a "Thanksgiving" film, but it does have an excellent scene set around the holiday and it won Al Pacino an Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role.

2 "Miracle on 34th Street" (1947 and 1994) — Both versions are excellent, and, of course, few would consider it a movie about Thanksgiving. It's a fair thought, as Santa Claus is a main character, but the whole movie is set around the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

1 "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" (1987) — The screenplay tosses Steve Martin and John Candy together and tells them just to be funny — and it works. The men suffer through various modes of transportation while trying to get home to see their families for the holiday.

Carpet ♦ Luxury Vinyl Plank ♦ Hardwood ♦ Laminate ♦ Tile ♦ And More!

★★★★★ Save with the Stars of FlooringSM

Save \$100 for every \$1,000 spent

with the highest-rated flooring company.*

Book your FREE in-home consultation today!

Visit fcipromotion.com or call **586-482-8881**. Hurry, offer expires 11/30.

FLOOR COVERINGS
international

*Minimum job sizes apply. Product may not be sold separate from installation. Residential installations only. Only at participating franchise locations. Promotional financing available to qualified customers - check with your local FCI branch. Valid 10/1/2023 through 11/30/2023. Offer subject to change. Photo: Shaw Floors Exquisite Alabaster Walnut Hardwood. Each Floor Coverings International® business is independently owned and operated.

GENERAC®

NEVER BE WITHOUT POWER AGAIN

Wishing you a Wonderful Holiday Season!



Financing available starting as low as \$129.00 per month!*

OVER 45 YEARS OF SATISFIED CLIENTS!

A permanently installed automatic standby generator protects your family and home from damaging, dangerous power outages:

- * Now installing and Repairing Furnaces and Air Conditioners
- We strive to create continuous customer satisfaction, at the highest quality
- Free In Home Consultation
- No pressure sales - We strive on our service, to assist you & your family
- 24/7 automatic power protection from blackouts
- Hands free operation: no gas cans, no extension cords
- Runs on home's existing natural gas or LP fuel supply
- Works whether you're home or away

CALL US TODAY

for more information on the turnkey installation of an automatic standby generator and to schedule an in-home consultation.

\$250.00 OFF WITH A PURCHASE OF YOUR GENERAC GENERATOR.

Terms and conditions apply. Coupon not valid with any other coupon offer! Expires 12-15-23

GENERAC®

*Terms and Conditions: Offer only valid on purchases made 11-15-23 - 12-31-23, and when the Generac home standby generator is purchased directly from JP Electric. Refurbished products are excluded from this promotion. The only Generac home standby generators that are eligible for this promotion are Model#s7172,7224,7226,7043,7209. Generator must be installed and activated in order for the warranty to be applied. JP Electric reserve the right to rescind or change this offer at any time. The free warranty is provided by JP Electric, not Generac Power Systems, Inc. For questions related to eligibility, please call JP Electric 248-362-3608.

***Terms and conditions apply. Call for details.**



Licensed & Insured



JP Electric, Inc.

375 Oliver, Troy, Michigan 48084

Service (248) 362-3608 • www.joepizikelectric.com



FEE FREE DAYS

November 23–November 28, 2023

Stumped on what to buy family and friends this holiday season? We have the gift for you! Give the gift of theatre. If you purchase tickets between Nov. 23–28, 2023, we will waive our handling fee!

The Box Office will be closed Nov. 23–25 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. No need to worry, this offer will be available online at MacombCenter.com.

Not valid with other offers, discounts or previously purchased tickets.



All Events.
All Tickets.
Now On Sale!

**DON'T
PROCRASTINATE,
BUY YOUR TICKETS
TODAY!**

November

26 Assisted Living: The Musical®
THE HOME...for the holidays

December

8 Celtic Angels Christmas

January 2024

12 Rumours: The Ultimate Fleetwood Mac
Tribute Show
13 ruben & clay Twenty | The Tour
20 The American Soldier
21 Hipler Ballerinas
26 Best of Broadway: The Music of
Andrew Lloyd Webber
27 The Lettermen

February

3 Steve Solomon's Cannoli,
Latkes & Guilt!...the therapy continues
6 Rapunzel | **Page to Stage**
9 Lee Rocker of The Stray Cats
16 The Chipper Experience!
Where Comedy & Magic Collide
17 Superstar. The Carpenters Reimagined
23 The Barricade Boys, Stars from the
West End cast of Les Miserables

March

2 Leahy
9 Puppy Pals Live!
10 Vicki Lawrence & Mama:
A Two-Woman Show
15 Alfreda Sings Aretha
16 Drum Tao
19 Rainbow Fish | **Page to Stage**
23 ABBA-Mania—An ABBA Tribute

April

13 Tweet Tweet!
18 The Greatest Piano Men
21 360 Allstars

**GOOD
LORD!**



586.286.2222 | MacombCenter.com

MacombCenter
for the Performing Arts

44575 Garfield Road (at Hall Road), Clinton Township, MI 48038
Macomb Community College – Center Campus



Voted #1 Local Flooring Dealer 2010-2023

THE CARPET GUYS

CARPET • VINYL • HARDWOOD • LAMINATE

FLOORING SPECIAL

INSTALL BEFORE
CHRISTMAS
OR IT'S FREE!

PLUS
UP TO **75% OFF**
SELECT IN-STOCK CARPET



SHOP-AT-HOME

FREE NEXT-DAY INSTALLATION**

EASY WE'LL MOVE YOUR FURNITURE, **FREE!**

LIFETIME INSTALLATION WARRANTY

Next-day installation on in-stock carpet only and subject to availability* Minimum purchase required with selected in-stock carpet or flooring only. Includes basic installation, does not include extras. Valid only at the initial consultation. * Offer applies to in-stock products only, no special orders. Residential only. The customer must be available for scheduled installation on/before the guaranteed date of Friday, December 22, 2023. Order changes made by customer voids the guarantee. The contract must be signed and approved by The Carpet Guys office no later than Wednesday, December 15, 2023, with a minimum of 35% deposit. Not valid on previous purchases. Retail liability is limited to \$1500. Offer ends 12/15/2023. <https://www.carpetguys.com/install-by/>

BE WISE. CALL THE CARPET GUYS
586-698-7092