

*more*  
101<sup>v</sup> DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

101+ RECIPES & CRAFTS FOR A DIY HOLIDAY



Mandi Ehman | [LifeYourWay.net](http://LifeYourWay.net)

# 101 Days of Christmas eBook

101+ Recipes & Crafts for a DIY Holiday

Mandi Ehman | [LifeYourWay.net](http://LifeYourWay.net)

Copyright © 2014 by Purple Martin Press, LLC

All rights reserved. No portion of this ebook may be reproduced or redistributed in any form or by any means (electronic, photocopying, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the publisher.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	5
--------------------	---

### COOKIES & BAKED GOODS

1 :: Cake Mix Cookies .....	7
2 :: Chai Tea Cookies .....	8
3 :: {Perfect} Chocolate Chip Cookies .....	8
4 :: Chocolate-Filled Snowballs .....	10
5 :: Chocolate-Pecan Toffee Bars .....	11
6 :: Cranberry-Pistachio Biscotti.....	12
7 :: {Easy} Drop Cookies .....	13
8 :: {Soft} Gingerbread Cookies.....	14
9 :: Gingerbread Star Christmas Tree.....	15
10 :: {Mix-and-Match} Oatmeal Cookies .....	16
11 :: Oatmeal Lace Cookies.....	17
12 :: Orange-Cranberry Scones.....	18
13 :: Pecan Sandies .....	19
14 :: Rolo Peanut Butter Blossoms .....	20
15 :: Shortbread Thumbprints .....	21
16 :: Snowball Macaroons.....	22

### BEVERAGES

17 :: Eggnog Hot Chocolate.....	24
18 :: Hot Chocolate .....	25
19 :: Peppermint Milkshake .....	26

### OTHER SWEET TREATS

20 :: Candy Cane Muddy Buddies .....	28
21 :: Candy Cane Popcorn Balls.....	29
22 :: Chocolate-Peanut Pretzel Treats .....	30
23 :: {Easy} Cookie Cutter Fudge.....	31

24 :: Corn Flake Holly Leaves .....	32
25 :: Honey Almond Mix .....	33
26 :: Peanut Butter Balls .....	34
27 :: {Easy} Peanut-Free Brittle.....	35
28 :: Poor Man's Toffee.....	36
29 :: Marshmallows.....	37
30 :: Marshmallow Gingerkids .....	38
31 :: {Shaped} Rice Krispies Treats.....	39
32 :: {Holiday} Trail Mix.....	40

### PROJECTS FOR KIDS

33 :: {Easy} 1-Cut Paper Stars.....	41
34 :: Arthur Christmas Candy Sleigh .....	43
35 :: Fingerprint Calendar .....	44
36 :: {Easy} Filled Ornaments .....	45
37 :: Milk Carton Ice Candles .....	46
38 :: Paper Star Garland .....	47
39 :: Woven Star Ornaments .....	48

### DIY DÉCOR

40 :: Burlap Tree.....	50
41 :: Dried Orange Pomander .....	51
42 :: Etched Mason Jar Candle.....	52
43 :: Holiday Table Centerpiece .....	53
44 :: Stovetop Potpourri .....	54

### HANDMADE GIFTS

45 :: Baby's 1st Christmas Onesie .....	56
46 :: {DIY} Boot Stands .....	57
47 :: Busy Bag Stocking Stuffer .....	58
48 :: Candy Cane Cookies in a Jar.....	59
49 :: Coffee-Lovers Gift Basket .....	60

50 :: Dyed Play Silks.....	61
51 :: Felt Star Wand .....	62
52 :: Hair Chalk .....	63
53 :: Knit Baby Santa Hat .....	64
54 :: Knit Candy Cane Scarf .....	65
55 :: Movie Night Basket.....	65
56 :: Monogrammed Tote Bag .....	66
57 :: Peppermint Sugar Scrub .....	67
58 :: {DIY} Photo Canvases .....	68
59 :: S'more Kit.....	69
60 :: Scrabble Boards .....	69
61 :: Soap.....	71
62 :: Soap Pockets .....	72
63 :: Burlap & Button Bows.....	74
<b>GIFT WRAP</b>	
64 :: {DIY} Cookie Tin Divider .....	75
65 :: {Fancy} Cookie Tins .....	76
66 :: Kraft Paper Wrapping .....	77
67 :: Screen-Printed Gift Bags .....	78
68 :: Treat Cones .....	79
69 :: Yarn Pom-Poms.....	80
70 :: Wrapping Paper Bows.....	81
<b>HANDMADE ORNAMENTS</b>	
71 :: Burlap Ornaments.....	83
72 :: Candy Cane Ornaments .....	84
73 :: Cookie Cutter Ornaments .....	85
74 :: Twine-Wrapped Ornaments .....	86
<b>PRINTABLES</b>	
75 :: Advent Calendar Ornaments .....	88

76 :: Advent Chain.....	89
77 :: Appreciation Tags .....	89
78 :: {Printable} Christmas Carols .....	90
79 :: {Mini} Christmas Coloring Book .....	90
80 :: Christmas Placemat .....	91
81 :: Color-Me Cards .....	91
82 :: Coffee Sleeves.....	92
83 :: Cookie Wrappers.....	93
84 :: Hanging Gift Tags .....	94
85 :: Merry Christmas Banner.....	94
86 :: Holiday Sewing Cards.....	95
87 :: Jar Lid Inserts .....	96
88 :: Jesse Tree Ornaments.....	96
89 :: {Magnetic} Nativity Set .....	98
90 :: {Printable} Nativity Set.....	99
91 :: Photo Booth Props.....	99
92 :: Partridge in a Pear Tree Postcards.....	100
93 :: Partridge in a Pear Tree Tags .....	100
94 :: Photo Ornaments.....	101
95 :: Popsicle Stick Nativity Puppets.....	102
96 :: Ribbon Bookmark Cards.....	103
97 :: Santa Letter Templates .....	104
98 :: Stencil Cards.....	105
99 :: Subway Art .....	105
100 :: Thank You Card Templates .....	106
101 :: Treat Bag Tags.....	106
BONUS :: Make Ahead Breakfasts .....	107
ABOUT.....	109

## Introduction

For our family, Christmas really is the most wonderful time of the year, and we look forward to the holiday season all year long. Not because of the presents we'll receive but because of the memories and traditions it holds, the opportunities to give and serve as a family, and the focus we put on enjoying each other and all that it offers!

101 Days of Christmas launched three years ago, and I've continued to share DIY Christmas ideas on [Life Your Way](#) in the 101 days leading up to Christmas every year since.

As we head into [our fourth annual 101 Days of Christmas series](#), I've gathered even more projects, recipes and printables from the archives to add this ebook to [the one we published last year](#) in an easy-to-browse, easy-to-print format!

Whether you're looking for a craft to do with your children, a new cookie recipe to share with your friends and neighbors, or a simple handmade gift, you'll find all of my favorite ideas and tutorials in this ebook.

Here's to a simple but meaningful Christmas!

{COOKIES AND BAKED GOODS}

## 1 :: Cake Mix Cookies



*Even though our entire family is home on most days, we still look forward to snow days, when the world outside our door is blanketed in white and we can spend the day playing in the snow, sipping hot chocolate and enjoying each other.*

*These cake mix cookies are so easy, and we keep a box of cake mix on hand so that we can whip these up on snow days throughout the winter.*

*They would also be perfect for making cookies for Santa on Christmas Eve!*

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 box any flavor cake mix
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup oil
- mix-ins, optional

### **Directions:**

Mix oil, eggs and cake mix.

Drop by the teaspoonful on a cookie sheet and decorate with sprinkles and candy.

Bake at 350 degrees F for 10-12 minutes.

## 2 :: Chai Tea Cookies



*These chai tea cutout cookies are a fun alternative to classic gingerbread cookies. With chai tea, pumpkin pie spice and molasses, these have a strong flavor, but my whole family enjoyed them...perhaps because of the white chocolate candy coating.*

*They would make a fun activity with kids—although I'd recommend smaller cookie cutters because the big cookies were much more fragile—or a unique gift for neighbors, teachers or friends!*

### Ingredients:

- 2 spiced chai-flavored tea bags
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1-1/2 cups butter softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- white chocolate candy melts
- candy & sprinkles

### Directions:

Empty tea bag contents into a bowl. Add flour and pumpkin pie spice. Mix well.

Beat butter for 30 seconds. Add sugar. Cream together until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks and molasses. Add flour mixture and mix well.

Divide dough into two balls, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 3 hours or until easy to handle.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface until it's 1/4 inch thick. Use cookie cutters to make cutouts.

Bake for 12 minutes until edges are lightly browned. Cool for 2 minutes on the cookie sheet and then transfer to rack to cool completely.

Once cooled, decorate with melted chocolate, candy & sprinkles.

### 3 :: {Perfect} Chocolate Chip Cookies



*I've always been a fan of the original Nestle Toll House recipe, but it's only been recently that I've actually perfected my chocolate chip cookies. It turns out the secret is in the method rather than the ingredients...and using mini chocolate chips helps too! The extra chocolate makes these rich and gooey, and they're especially good when they're still warm.*

*While this is a recipe we use all year long for a quick dessert, it's not often that I get to add nuts since my family prefers them without, so I look forward to making several batches at Christmastime so that I can set aside a few with toasted walnuts for myself!*

\*The original recipe calls for 3/4 cup white sugar plus 3/4 cup brown sugar, but I love the extra flavor that coconut sugar gives the cookies!

#### Ingredients:

- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 1-1/2 cup coconut sugar\*
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups (12-oz. pkg.) mini semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup chopped nuts (optional)

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In a small bowl, mix flour, baking soda and salt. It's important to make sure you measure your flour properly so that the cookies aren't too heavy or dense.

In a large mixing bowl, combine butter, sugar and vanilla extra and beat on medium-high until creamy. Add eggs one at a time and beat until well incorporated.

Add flour mixture to wet ingredients and mix. It's important not to over mix the dough at this point so stop when most—but not all—of the flour has been incorporated. Add the chocolate chips and nuts (if using) and finish mixing by hand.

Use a small cookie scoop to form cookie dough balls and arrange them on a cookie pan or stone, leaving space between them so they can spread.

Bake for 9 to 11 minutes (I tend to stick with the lower end of that range). Remove from oven and let cool for 2 minutes on the pan before moving them to a cookie rack to cool completely.

## 4 :: Chocolate-Filled Snowballs



*Mmm, these chocolate-filled snowballs are a fun twist on our [traditional walnut snowballs](#) (also called Russian tea cakes or Mexican wedding cakes)!*

*The one thing I learned the hard way is that while we cook our snowballs at 300 degrees for 35 minutes, these need to be baked at a higher temperature so that they'll cook more quickly; otherwise the chocolate ends up cooking too much, which does not taste good. But once we got that little issue ironed out, I knew these were cookies I wanted to share with you!*

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 1-1/2 cups walnuts, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- pinch of salt
- Hershey Kisses, unwrapped
- 1 cup powdered sugar, set aside

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Combine flour, walnuts, salt and sugar in a large bowl. Mix in vanilla extract. Cut butter in little pieces and mix together until you have a coarse dough.

Add 1 tablespoon dough to your hand and set a Kiss on top. Shape the dough around the chocolate to form a ball and place on a baking sheet about 1" apart.

Bake for 11-13 minutes until lightly browned.

Let cool slightly and then roll in powdered sugar. Move to a rack to cool completely.

## 5 :: Chocolate-Pecan Toffee Bars



*These chocolate-pecan toffee bars combine a shortbread crust with a chocolate-pecan center and a crispy toffee layer on top for a delicious treat that you'll find hard to resist. We scarfed down the batch I made (thankfully only a half batch!) while decorating our Christmas tree, and even my girls who don't like nuts loved them.*

*Make a batch to share at a cookie swap or package them in tissue paper for neighbors or friends...if they last that long!*

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 4 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup chopped pecans

### Directions:

In a small bowl, mix 1 cup flour, 1/2 cup brown sugar, butter, vanilla extract and salt until well blended. Press into the bottom of an ungreased 9" x 13" inch pan.

Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from oven and cool for 5 minutes.

While the crust is baking, combine remaining brown sugar and flour with baking powder and eggs until well blended. Add chocolate chips and nuts and stir gently. Spread over crust.

Bake at 350 degrees for an additional 20-25 minutes or until deep brown and set in the center. Cool completely before cutting into bars.

## 6 :: Cranberry-Pistachio Biscotti



*And so the biscotti tradition continues with a new holiday flavor combination: cranberries and pistachios.*

*For the past two years, my mom has been the one making the biscotti, and it's become one of her favorite homemade treats because she says it's so much simpler to make than it seems. This year she passed the torch onto me, and I tried it solo for the first time! The good news? It really is as simple as she's been saying, and while there are a few steps involved, none of them are earth shattering or especially difficult.*

*I especially love the sweet-and-salty flavor profile of this version!*

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) salted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup pistachios

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Cream butter and sugar together in a large bowl at medium speed. Add eggs and vanilla and continue beating until blended. Slowly add flour and baking powder, beating on low until completely mixed. Add cranberries and pistachios and mix until incorporated.

Dump dough on a floured surface and divide it in to fourths with lightly floured hands. Shape into 1-1/2 inch wide logs. Place logs on a lightly greased cookie sheet—with room to spread—and bake for 18 to 20 minutes until the edges start to brown.

Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees F while the logs cool for 10 minutes.

Cut logs into 1/2-inch slices with a serrated knife, discarding the ends. Arrange the pieces on the cookie sheet with the cut side down and bake for an additional 12-14 minutes, turning once. Cookies should be lightly browned and crisp.

Move cookies to a cookie rack and let them cool completely.

## 7 :: {Easy} Drop Cookies



*My friend Jenny posted about these cookies on Facebook, and she was generous enough to share the recipe with me. It's really just a basic shortbread cookie that she'd found in a holiday baking magazine several years ago, but the use of different flavored extracts makes them extra tasty.*

*With just 4 ingredients, these are easy to whip up! I made one batch with almond extract, one with peppermint and one with vanilla, and the almond version may just be my new favorite Christmas cookie.*

### Ingredients:

#### *Cookies:*

- 1 cup salted butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon flavored extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour

#### *Icing:*

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1-2 tablespoons milk
- sprinkles or crushed candies (optional)

### Directions:

Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, beat 1 cup butter, sugar, and flavored extract of your choice with electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Slowly mix in flour.

Shape dough into 1-inch balls and place on cookie sheet. Bake 13-15 minutes. Cookies will still be white but firm to the touch. Cool for 1 minute on the pan and then transfer to a cooling rack.

In a small bowl, beat powdered sugar, butter and milk on medium speed until spreadable. Transfer to a plastic baggie and snip off the corner. Squeeze icing onto the center of each cookie, letting it melt and run down the cookie. Decorate with sprinkles or crushed candies if desired. Let cool completely.

## 8 :: {Soft} Gingerbread Cookies



*I really, really wanted to try to find a soft gingerbread cookie, and with a secret ingredient (cream cheese!), these fit the bill. I played around with a few different recipes to come up with this one but ended up using [Shaina's spice blend](#). I've loved every cookie she's ever made for me, and it didn't seem worth messing with a good thing!*

*Our girls absolutely loved these, which surprised me a little bit, and I see another batch in our future!*

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 2 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 3/4 cup brown or coconut sugar
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon water
- 2-1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- extra sugar for rolling

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a medium bowl, cream the butter, cream cheese, and sugar until well blended and fluffy. Add the egg, molasses and water. Mix well.

In a separate bowl, mix flour, baking soda and spices. Add to wet ingredients and mix well.

Shape into 2" balls and roll in extra sugar. Set the balls 1" apart on a cookie sheet or stone.

Bake for 10-12 minutes. The edges will look cooked, but the cookies should still be soft in the middle. Move to a wire rack to cool.

## 9 :: Gingerbread Star Christmas Tree



*Want a ridiculously easy way to wow your kids? Well, look no further—this is it!*

*The girls watched me rolling out the dough the other evening: “Whatcha making?” they whispered, one by one. “You’ll see,” I replied. Then I pulled out the star cookie cutters, and that was enough excitement for them: “Ooh, star gingerbread cookies!” they exclaimed. “The tiny one is mine,” Baby Girl said.*

*When I began adding the green outline and stacking the pieces together, you would have thought I was hanging the literal stars in*

*the skies. “WHAT is that?!” “Look what Mom’s doing!” And then...”It’s a tree! She made a tree!”*

*When I spotted this [Wilton Cookie Tree Cutter Kit](#) on Amazon for just \$5, I couldn’t resist. I only used half a batch of gingerbread cookie dough and the five smallest cookie cutters from the kit to make a small tree, but my kids loved oohing and ahing over it almost as much as they enjoyed eating it, which is always a win.*

### **Ingredients:**

- 1/2 batch soft gingerbread cookie dough (from above)
- 5 star cookie cutters in graduated sizes
- decorator gel or icing
- optional: sprinkles, candies, etc.

### **Directions:**

Prepare dough according to original directions and chill until firm, about two hours.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Remove dough from the fridge, unwrap and roll out on a lightly floured surface until dough is 1/8” thick. Use star cookie cutters to cut out your cookies and place them on parchment paper-lined cookie sheets with plenty of room to spread.

Bake for 10-12 minutes. The edges will look cooked, but the cookies should still be soft in the middle. Move to a wire rack to cool.

Once cooled, outline the cookies with the decorator gel and stack them together, largest to smallest, alternating the points as you go. Break the toothpick in half and stick it halfway into the tiniest star to help hold it up on the top of the tree. Cover gently with plastic wrap if you won’t be eating it right away.

## 10 :: {Mix-and-Match} Oatmeal Cookies

*I love oatmeal cookies that are slightly crispy on the outside and nice and chewy on the inside, but—for whatever reason—it's been several years since I've made them.*

*Last year, I set out to find a base recipe that I could use with a variety of flavors, and I think this one is a winner!*

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1-1/4 cup coconut sugar (or brown sugar)
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups old-fashioned oatmeal
- 1 1/2—2 1/2 cups of mix-ins (see list below)

### Mix-ins:

- dried cranberries, raisins or cherries
- diced apple
- semi-sweet chocolate chips or chunks
- white chocolate chips
- M&Ms
- coconut
- nuts (walnuts, pecans, pistachios)

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In a small bowl, mix flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon

In a large mixing bowl, combine butter, sugar and vanilla extract and beat on medium-high until creamy. Add eggs one at a time and beat until well incorporated.

Add flour mixture to wet ingredients and mix.

Add the oatmeal and any mix-ins and finish mixing by hand.

Use a small cookie scoop to form cookie dough balls and arrange them on a cookie pan or stone, leaving space between them so they can spread.

Bake for 9 to 11 minutes until slightly browned. Remove from oven and let cool for 2 minutes on the pan before moving them to a cookie rack to cool completely.

## 11 :: Oatmeal Lace Cookies



*Crispy on the edges, slightly chewy in the middle, these are sweet cookies, but not overwhelmingly so since they're so thin. They pair perfectly with tea or coffee!*

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup salted butter
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 3/4 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 tablespoon flour

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a medium saucepan, melt the butter. Let cool and add remaining ingredients, except the eggs. Mix well. Add the eggs and mix until combined.

Drop rounded tablespoons of dough (it's really more like a batter) 3" apart on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.

Bake for 15-18 minutes until lightly golden brown.

*Note:* The cookies will look pretty soupy at first, and you may wonder if you did something wrong, but just let them be—it'll work out; I promise!

Let cool for 5 minutes on cookie sheet before using a spatula to transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely.

## 12 :: Orange-Cranberry Scones



*A couple of years ago I read a book in which one of the main characters was always messing up the breakfast scones she made, and I've been intimidated by them ever since!*

*I was determined to figure them out so that I could include a recipe that would be suitable for Christmas morning breakfast or a holiday brunch, and—thankfully—they weren't nearly as difficult as that story suggested.*

*We mostly use coconut palm sugar in our baking, which gives these a little more of a rustic appearance (since it's brown in color and not as fine as white sugar), but my girls gobbled them up. Topped with a thin glaze, they offer the perfect amount of sweetness for breakfast—delicious, but not so sweet that you start your day with a sugar high!*

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 5 tablespoons cold butter, cut in small pieces
- 2/3 cup milk
- zest one orange
- 3/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1-1/2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

In a large bowl, mix dry ingredients together. Cut in cold butter with two knives or a pastry cutter until you have a course dough.

Add cranberries and orange zest.

Add milk until just moistened.

On a lightly floured surface, knead dough gently. Be careful not to overwork the dough. Roll it out thinly and fold the dough in half and in half again. Roll out to 3/4".

Cut dough into 8-10 wedges and transfer to a baking sheet or stone.

Bake 12-15 minutes, until they are just beginning to brown. Let cool on a wire rack.

While the scones are cooling, mix together orange juice and powdered sugar. Drizzle over warm scones and serve immediately!

## 13 :: Pecan Sandies



*Although my family doesn't share my enthusiasm, I love Christmas cookies with nuts!*

*These cookies are simple to make but so tasty, and next time I plan to [toast my chopped nuts](#) ahead of time because I think that will just enhance the flavor more. (I don't think it's a good idea to toast the whole pecans, though, because those will get plenty of toasting while they bake!)*

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup brown or coconut sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cups chopped pecans
- whole pecans
- extra sugar for rolling

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In a medium bowl, cream butter and sugars until smooth. Add vanilla and egg and beat well.

In a separate bowl, mix flour, baking powder and salt. Add to wet ingredients and mix until just incorporated. Stir in chopped pecans.

Shape dough into 1" balls (I like to use a melon baller) and roll in extra sugar. Set the balls 2" apart on a cookie sheet or stone. Press 1 whole pecan into the center of each cookie.

Bake for 10-12 minutes until lightly browned. Move the cookies to a wire rack to cool.

## 14 :: Rolo Peanut Butter Blossoms



*Classic peanut butter blossoms are among my favorite Christmas cookies, but I decided to mix things up and use a caramel-filled Rolo on top instead!*

*I'm not a huge fan of caramel myself, and I was content to eat just the peanut butter cookies and leave the Rolos, but my husband loved these and much preferred them to the kind with Hershey Kisses on top.*

*One of the best things about these cookies is that they're so kid friendly. My girls love to roll the dough balls in sugar and press the chocolate on top once they've cooked, and I think they look forward to making them as much as they do eating them!*

### Ingredients:

- 48 Rolos
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 3/4 cup peanut butter
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- extra granulated sugar

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Unwrap the chocolates.

In a large bowl, beat the shortening and peanut butter well. Add the granulated and brown sugars and beat until fluffy. Beat in egg, milk and vanilla. In a separate bowl, mix flour, baking soda and salt. Slowly beat into peanut butter mixture.

Shape dough into 1" balls (I like to use a melon baller) and roll in granulated sugar. Set the balls 1" apart on a cookie sheet or stone.

Bake for 8-10 minutes until lightly browned. Press a Rolo into the center of each cookie and then move the cookies to a wire rack to cool. (The chocolate will be very soft until the cookies have cooled completely.)

## 15 :: Shortbread Thumbprints



*My baby sister, mom and I spent a full day working on projects for the 101 Days of Christmas series, and these were on the list. I completely spaced out and forgot to buy jam for these (doesn't raspberry sound good?), and all we had on hand was low-sugar grape jelly. I'm really not a fan of grape jelly at all, so I wasn't sure what to expect, but as it turns out, I really liked them anyway.*

*Ours ended up a little messy since it was our first time making thumbprint cookies, but any cookie with a jam filling screams Christmas to me, and I think these would make a great addition to any cookie tin or basket!*

### Ingredients:

- 1-1/2 cups unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- jam or jelly, any flavor

### Directions:

Mix butter and sugar. Add vanilla.

In a medium bowl, mix flour and salt.

Add flour mixture to butter/sugar mixture and mix on low speed until the dough starts to hold together.

Roll shortbread into 1-inch balls and space evenly on your cookie sheet. Using your thumb, carefully make a small indentation in the top of each cookie. Carefully add 1/4 teaspoon of jam or jelly to each indentation.

Chill for 30 minutes.

In the meantime, preheat oven to 350 degrees F. When done chilling, bake for 10-12 minutes until the cookies begin to brown on the bottom.

## 16 :: Snowball Macaroons



*My favorite thing about these snowball macaroons is how easy they are to whip up. With just a few ingredients and a few simple steps, you can have delicious cookies in no time.*

*Part coconut, part meringue, these cookies are crispy on the inside and chewy on the inside, and they're sure to be a hit with anyone who likes coconut!*

### **Ingredients:**

- 3 egg whites
- 2-1/2 tablespoons vanilla
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3-3/4 cup sweetened shredded coconut, lightly toasted and cooled
- powdered sugar

### **Directions:**

Combine egg whites, vanilla extract and salt and beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until it turns white and soft peaks form. Slowly add sugar to the mix and beat on high speed until stiff peaks form. Gently fold in coconut.

Use a melon baller or small cookie scoop to drop rounded teaspoons onto a cookie sheet.

Bake at 350 for 10-12 minutes. The cookies should be lightly browned and crispy on the outside and moist on the inside.

Let cool for 5 minutes and then dust with powdered sugar. Transfer to a rack or plate to cool completely.

# BEVERAGES

## 17 :: Eggnog Hot Chocolate



*Mmm, this recipe combines two of my favorite holiday drinks—hot chocolate and eggnog—into one rich and creamy indulgence!*

*You could definitely use store-bought eggnog instead, but I don't think anything really compares to the eggnog recipe my friend Barb shared with me last year. On the other hand, if I'm going to make eggnog, I might prefer to just drink it straight and save the stuff in the carton for using in hot chocolate instead.*

### Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/3 cup white sugar
- 1 pinch salt
- 1/3 cup water
- 2-1/2 cups homemade eggnog\*
- 1-1/2 cups milk

\*You'll want to pasteurize your eggs when making eggnog for this recipe or, in the words of Shaina, you could end up with scrambled egg hot chocolate instead!

### Directions:

Combine cocoa powder, sugar, salt and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Let simmer for 1-2 minutes, stirring often.

Add eggnog and milk and continue heating over medium-low until hot.

Top with whipped cream and a sprinkle of nutmeg.

Makes 4 servings.

## 18 :: Hot Chocolate



During the first 101 Days of Christmas series, I shared [Alton Brown's hot cocoa mix recipe](#), which is perfect for packaging in gifts, but we were also on the hunt for a homemade hot chocolate recipe that we could pull together easily on the stove from basic ingredients. After testing a few, we finally settled on this one.

*It's rich and creamy, perfect for snow days or to sip while you're decorating your tree, and I love to add a pinch or two of cayenne pepper to mine for a little spiciness!*

### Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2/3 cup white sugar
- 1 pinch salt
- 1/3 cup water
- 3-1/2 cups milk
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Directions:

Combine cocoa powder, sugar, salt and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Let simmer for 1-2 minutes, stirring often.

Add milk and cream and continue heating over medium-low until hot.

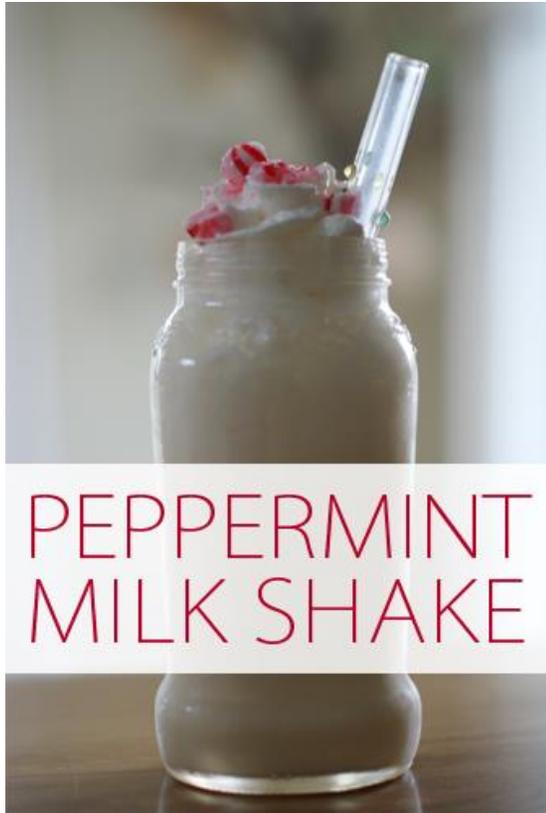
Remove from heat and stir in vanilla extract.

Makes 4 servings.

### Variations:

- Add a pinch of cinnamon or (my favorite) cayenne pepper for a little spice.
- Use almond or peppermint extract instead of vanilla.
- Top with whipped cream.

## 19 :: Peppermint Milkshake



*While the holidays bring with them scarves and mittens and wishes for a white Christmas for our family, I know it's not cold everywhere in December (the shame!).*

*Hot chocolate and wassail will always be my holiday drinks of choice, but this peppermint milkshake is a great alternative for those of you who still want to sip the flavors of Christmas without the added heat of a steaming cup of hot cocoa!*

### Ingredients:

- 3 cups vanilla ice cream
- 1 cup milk
- 1-3/4 teaspoons peppermint extract
- whipped cream
- crushed candy canes

### Directions:

Combine ice cream, milk and peppermint in a blender and blend on high until smooth and creamy.

Top with whipped cream and crushed candy canes and serve immediately.

Makes 2 milkshakes.

## OTHER SWEET TREATS

## 20 :: Candy Cane Muddy Buddies



*This treat combines two of my very favorites—classic Muddy Buddies (often called Puppy Chow) and the very best holiday flavor combination: peppermint and chocolate—in a delicious treat that's perfect for your next holiday get-together, packing in treat bags as gifts or just snacking on at home!*

*And the best part? It is so easy to make!*

### Ingredients:

- 9 cups Chex
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon shortening
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1-1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 3/4 cup crushed peppermint candy canes or candies

### Directions:

Measure cereal into a large bowl.

In a smaller microwave-safe bowl—or in a small saucepan on the stove—melt chocolate chips and shortening. In the microwave, start with 1 minute, stir and then repeat for an additional 30 seconds.

Add peppermint extract and stir well. Pour mixture over cereal, stirring until evenly coated.

Pour into 2-gallon resealable food-storage plastic bag and add powdered sugar, shaking until well coated. Add crushed candy canes and gently mix.

Spread on waxed paper to cool, sprinkling with additional powdered sugar if needed, and then store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Stir gently before serving because the candy cane pieces will settle to the bottom.

## 21 :: Candy Cane Popcorn Balls



*I've never made homemade popcorn balls before...although we've happily eaten them as part of various gift baskets over the years!*

*Although there are "classic" recipes for popcorn balls that call for a more complicated mixture of corn syrup and other ingredients, I decided to cheat and use the simpler marshmallow version. Not only is it easy, but anything that calls for a bag of mini marshmallows is a winner in my opinion. Add a few candy canes (or, ahem, peppermint star mints) mixed in for a fun holiday treat!*

### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- 10-ounce package mini marshmallows
- 12 cups popped popcorn
- 1 cup candy canes, crushed

### Supplies:

- nonstick saucepan
- silicone spatula
- large bowl
- popcorn baller

### Directions:

Pop popcorn and crush candy canes ahead of time. Mix together in a large bowl.

In a medium saucepan, melt butter over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until completely melted.

Pour the melted marshmallows over popcorn mixture and toss with a spoon.

Scoop popcorn into the popcorn baller and press down with the lid (or shape with well-buttered hands). Release the popcorn ball onto a sheet of wax paper to harden.

## 22 :: Chocolate-Peanut Pretzel Treats



*Peppermint-chocolate pretzel treats are one of our very favorite Christmas treats—to make and to eat—and the combination of M&Ms and peppermint Hugs makes that version extra sweet. In this version, I decided to play up the salty element instead, using milk chocolate Kisses and roasted peanuts.*

*That combination makes these less rich but even more addictive, and we'll definitely be adding them to our list of annual treats and traditions.*

### Ingredients:

- small pretzels
- Hershey Kisses, milk or dark chocolate
- roasted peanuts

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 170 degrees F.

On a baking stone or cookie sheet, lay out pretzels. Unwrap Kisses and place one in the center of each pretzel.

*Note:* If you're doing a mix of Kisses, you'll want to make them in separate batches because they'll melt at different speeds.

Bake for 5-7 minutes. Your Kisses will be shiny and should be soft enough that the peanuts sink into them easily when pressed on top. (If they're not soft enough, they won't stick to the pretzel on the bottom. But if you let them get too soft, they'll puddle. The good news is they'll still taste good either way!)

Pull them out of the oven and quickly begin pressing peanuts into the top of each one. The Kisses will be slightly melted, so expect this part to be a little messy for little ones.

Let cool completely.

## 23 :: {Easy} Cookie Cutter Fudge



*This simple fudge recipe from Betty Crocker has always been one of my favorites because it's quick, easy and tasty.*

*For a fun Christmas treat, it's made even better when presented in cookie cutters (yet another use for the set of tiny cookie cutters that has been in my pantry for too long without being used!).*

*These would make great party favors at a cookie decorating party, or you could pack a few in a tin or box for a sweet gift.*

### Ingredients:

- 1-1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup peanut butter chips
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

### Directions

In a medium bowl or pan, heat chocolate chips, peanut butter, chips, milk and butter, stirring every 30 seconds until the chips are melted. Stir in vanilla.

Tightly seal foil around the bottom of each cookie cutter and lightly spray with cooking spray.

Pour fudge mixture into the molds and refrigerate uncovered for 2 hours.

Decorate with sprinkles and candies.

## 24 :: Corn Flake Holly Leaves



*My step-mom, who passed away almost 10 years ago, when our oldest was just a baby, used to make these holly leaf treats every Christmas. We'd all end up with green fingers and teeth from taste testing as we went, and while I'm not a huge fan of food dye, I couldn't resist making them myself this year!*

*Unsurprisingly, they were a hit with the girls, although I'll admit our youngest was a little concerned by the color until we convinced her to try one.*

*I like to add extra cornflakes to mine, even though it makes them not quite as uniform in color, so that they harden more quickly and offer more crunch than stickiness.*

### Ingredients:

- 20 marshmallows
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- green food coloring
- 2-1/2 to 3 cups corn flakes
- red hots

### Directions:

In a medium saucepan, melt butter and marshmallows over low heat, stirring as needed to prevent the marshmallows from caramelizing. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla extract and food coloring. Add cornflakes and stir gently until all the flakes are coated in the marshmallow mixture.

*Note:* You'll want to work quickly before the marshmallows begin to cool and become stringy.

Drop cornflake mixture on a piece of wax paper by the spoonful, shaping into holly leaves with your finger. Don't worry about making them too perfect; you just want an oblong shape that is slightly wider at one end.

Immediately add three red hot candies to the wide end of the leaf. Don't wait for this step; you want to add them while it's still sticky!

Let harden for 1-6 hours. Store in a tightly sealed container with wax paper between the layers.

## 25 :: Honey Almond Mix

*When my mom flew up here before Jackson's birth, she picked up a bag of Sahale Snacks Fruit & Almond Mix. We both loved the flavor—with almonds, cranberries and sesame seeds—but at \$5 a bag, it isn't something either of us will be buying regularly!*

*So we did what any good blogger does and decided to see if we could recreate it for the Christmas series.*

*After a few tries, I think we've come pretty close. Notably missing is the pure ground Madagascar vanilla bean, since that's just not something I regularly have on hand. But this is still tasty without it! While you might be tempted to eat it all yourself, this mix would be pretty packaged in a jar or treat bag as a snack or yogurt topper.*

### **Ingredients:**

- 2 cup whole almonds
- 1/4 cup sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 teaspoon water
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

### **Directions:**

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Toast almonds and sesame seeds in oven for 7-10 minutes.

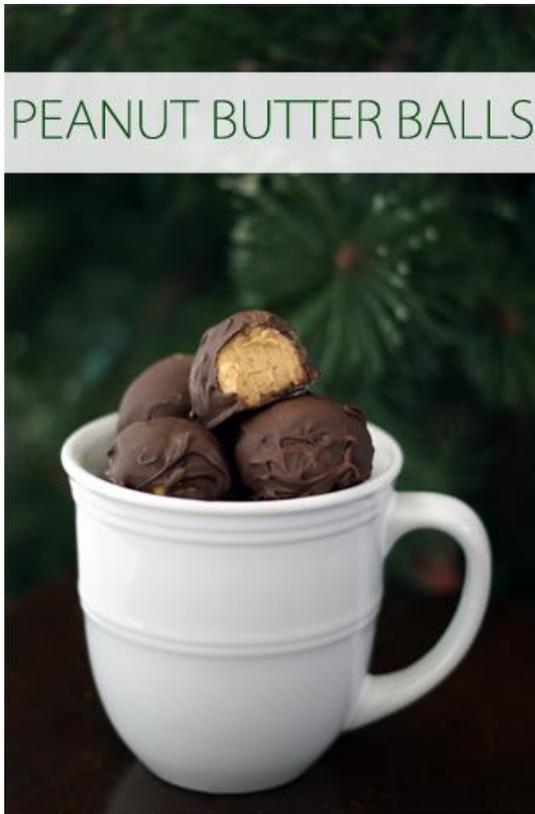
Heat butter in a small saucepan until mixture bubbles around the edges. Remove from heat and add extracts.

Add almonds, sesame seeds and dried cranberries to the honey mixture and stir to coat.

Spread out on parchment paper and let cool for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with salt.

Let cool completely before transferring to a bowl or individual treat bags.

## 26 :: Peanut Butter Balls



*I used to make peanut butter balls as part of my regular Christmas baking but somewhere along the way, I got out of the habit. I always feel a bit like Lucy and Ethel in the [classic candy factory episode of I Love Lucy](#) when I make them, working as quickly as I can, getting chocolate on my fingers, etc.!*

*However, the end result was well worth it, as my husband absolutely loved these, refusing to share them with anyone else in the family and comparing them to Reese's Peanut Butter Cups.*

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup salted butter, softened
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups powdered sugar
- 3 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 3 teaspoons shortening

### Directions:

In a medium bowl, combine peanut butter, butter, salt and vanilla extract. Slowly add powdered sugar and blend well.

Roll the peanut butter mixture into 1" balls (time to pull out my favorite tool—the melon baller!). Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and freeze for 30 minutes.

In a double boiler or the microwave, melt the chocolate and shortening together. (Confession: I do mine in a saucepan set to low heat.)

Use two forks to roll the peanut butter balls in chocolate, completely coating them and letting the excess drip off before transferring them back to the parchment-lined sheet.

Let harden completely before transferring to an air-tight container. Store in the fridge or freezer.

## 27 :: {Easy} Peanut-Free Brittle



Although it still contains nuts, this recipe, [adapted from Betty Crocker](#), is peanut-free for those dealing with peanut allergies (you'll obviously want to check to be sure they don't also have a tree nut allergy, though). It also uses finely chopped nuts rather than whole nuts, and I really like the thin airy texture that gives it!

### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup salted butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup finely chopped almonds
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

### Directions:

Heat oven to 350 degrees F and line baking sheet with parchment paper. Measure all of your ingredients ahead of time because you'll need to work quickly once you get started!

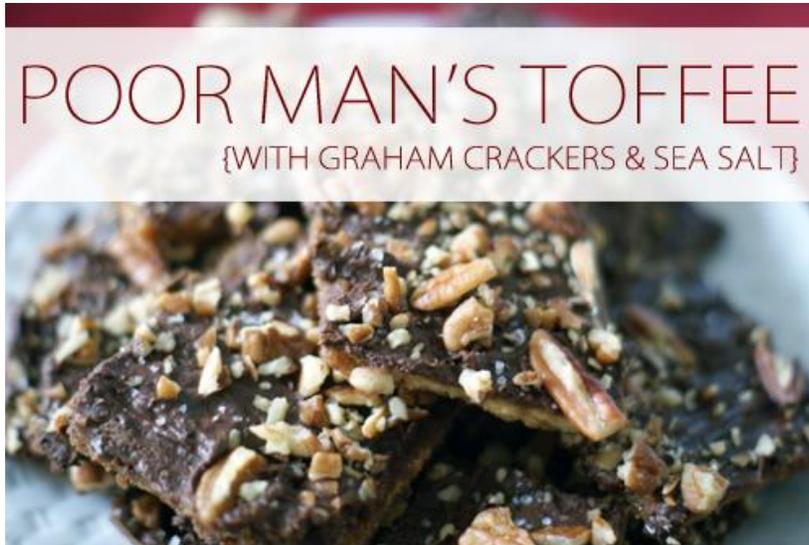
In a medium saucepan, melt butter. Add sugar and corn syrup and heat over medium-low heat, stirring constantly until the mixture comes to a boil and the sugar is dissolved.

Remove pan from heat and add flour, almonds and vanilla. Mix until blended.

Immediately spread the mixture onto your prepared cookie sheet.

Bake for 10 minutes. Brittle will spread thin and turn golden brown. Remove from oven and allow to cool for 5 minutes before moving to a cooling rack. Cool completely and then break into pieces.

## 28 :: Poor Man's Toffee



*I started seeing a lot of different versions of this “poor man’s toffee” last Christmas, and this year I decided to see what the hype was all about. In short, this is one of those super easy last-minute treats to throw together, and the great thing about it is you can really customize it however you want.*

*Although most of the recipes I saw called for a salty cracker as the base—saltines, club crackers, Cheez-Its—I decided to go with a graham cracker crust and save the saltiness for the top, and I love this flavor combination!*

### Ingredients:

- 16 whole graham crackers
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1-1/2 cups mini semi-sweet chocolate chips
- **1 cup pecans, chopped and toasted**
- kosher sea salt

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Lay out the graham crackers in a single layer on a baking pan.

In a medium saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add brown sugar and stir until the sugar is melted and incorporated and it comes to a rapid boil.

Pour the mixture over crackers, using a wooden spoon or silicone spatula to cover all of the crackers.

Bake for 5 minutes and then sprinkle with chocolate chips. Leave in the oven for 30-60 seconds until the chocolate chips begin to melt.

Remove from oven and use spoon or spatula to spread the chocolate evenly over the first two layers.

Sprinkle with sea salt and pecans, pressing down gently with your hand to be sure the nuts stick. Let cool and harden and then break into individual pieces.

## 29 :: Marshmallows



*Although homemade marshmallows are made from only a few ingredients, I've always been kind of intimidated by them. When I saw [these adorable snowflake marshmallows](#), though, I knew I needed to finally give them a try.*

*I was pleasantly surprised to discover that making these from scratch wasn't nearly as hard as I expected, and I see lots of homemade marshmallows in our future!*

### Ingredients:

- 2/3 cup cold water, divided
- 2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 2/3 cup light corn syrup
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- cooking spray
- crushed candy canes, optional

### Directions:

Grease a 9"x13" pan and spatula and set aside.

Add 1/3 cup cold water to your electric mixer bowl and sprinkle with gelatin. Let sit for 5-10 minutes.

In the meantime, bring 1/3 cup water, sugar, corn syrup and salt to a boil until it reaches 238 degrees on a candy thermometer (about 5 minutes).

Whisk gelatin mixture on low speed, slowly adding the syrup by pouring it down the side of the bowl. Gradually increase to high speed and beat for about 12 minutes until thick and white. Add peppermint extract and beat for 30 seconds.

Pour the marshmallow mixture onto your prepared baking sheet and smooth with the spatula.

Cover and let sit overnight.

Grease a cookie cutter or knife and divide into individual marshmallows. Roll the edges in powdered sugar or crushed candy canes or let them sit out for a bit to harden so that they don't all stick together. (You can also toss them in powdered sugar!)

## 30 :: Marshmallow Gingerkids



*Family Fun has always been one of my favorite magazines for activities, crafts and kid-friendly recipes, and now I love them just a little bit more. As I fought through a nasty flu virus last year, the editor's of Family Fun stepped in with this fun treat!*

*These marshmallow gingerkids are adorable, and I can't wait to give this a try with the girls once I'm feeling better. I'm also imagining the other fun shapes, characters and flavors you could make with this same process!*

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger
- 1 cup white chocolate chips
- regular and mini marshmallows
- lollipop sticks
- candy confetti

### Directions:

Combine 1/2 cup sugar with 2 teaspoons cinnamon and 1/2 teaspoons ginger in a medium bowl and set it aside.

Fill another medium bowl with water. Set aside.

In another bowl, melt 1 cup white chocolate chips according to the package directions, then transfer the chocolate to a Ziploc bag and snip off a corner.

To form each pop, slide two marshmallows onto a lollipop stick. Use the melted chocolate to adhere mini marshmallow arms and legs as shown. Let the chocolate set.

Dip the pop in the water, then roll it in the sugar mixture until coated.

Pipe on a chocolate face, then use more chocolate to attach heart and confetti sprinkle buttons, bows, and bow ties.

## 31 :: {Shaped} Rice Krispies Treats



*Looking for a fun, easy treat for an advent activity, school Christmas party or afternoon snack? Rice Krispies treats are one of our favorite easy treats, and it only takes a couple extra minutes to make them nice and Christmas-y!*

*The great thing about Rice Krispies treats is that there are so many variations. You could also decorate them with green icing, mix the sprinkles right into the marshmallow mix rather than sprinkling on top, or dye the marshmallows bright green.*

*They also make an easy gluten-free/casein-free treat with just a few modifications. Use gluten-free Rice Krispies (which taste exactly like regular Rice Krispies!) and use coconut oil instead of butter. You may need to use extra coconut oil to get the right consistency, so keep that on hand while you melt the marshmallows.*

### Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 package regular marshmallows (about 40)
- 6 cups Rice Krispies
- cooking spray
- food dye, Christmas sprinkles, icing (optional)

### Directions:

In a medium saucepan, melt the butter on medium-low.

Add marshmallows and stir frequently until melted. If using food dye, add it now. Stir in Rice Krispies. Add sprinkles now if you want them mixed in your treats.

Line a bar pan or cookie sheet with wax or parchment paper and spread Rice Krispies treat mixture evenly across the surface. Add additional sprinkles now and press down slightly.

Spray a cookie cutter with oil and begin cutting out your shapes. For an even sweeter treat, outline with icing.

## 32 :: {Holiday} Trail Mix



*I know this idea might seem overly obvious, but sometimes the best traditions are born from the simplest ideas!*

*For example, every year during the week before Christmas, we curl up on the couch to watch *Polar Express*—my very favorite holiday movie—with a big bowl of popcorn. It's one of those traditions that we all look forward to as the holidays approach.*

*Last year, we had an abundance of Christmas M&Ms for some reason, and during the snowstorm the week after Christmas, my grandmother and I put together this holiday trail mix to enjoy with the girls. It was so yummy that I decided it needed to be a part of our *Polar Express* tradition, and I'm looking forward to breaking it out again this year!*

The best part about trail mix is that you can make it with whatever you have on hand. Here are some ideas to get you started:

### Trail Mix Add-Ins:

- [stove-top popcorn](#)
- M&Ms in holiday colors
- peanuts or other nuts
- cranberries or raisins
- candy canes
- mini marshmallows
- yogurt-covered raisins
- pretzels

# PROJECTS FOR KIDS

## 33 :: {Easy} 1-Cut Paper Stars



*These paper stars are like paper snowflakes...only easier! With just one snip for each star, you can make dozens of these in just minutes. Decorate your windows, hang them on the tree or use them for a variety of other holiday crafts.*

### Supplies:

- rectangular paper in various colors and sizes
- scissors

### Directions:

Fold a piece of paper in half on the longest side. Mark the center of the folded edge.

Fold the left side toward the right side at an angle (using the crease from step 1 as your center point) until the top corner is lined up with the center of the right side.

Fold that flap back in the opposite direction—lining up the edges—so you now have three layers on the left side.

Repeat with the right side, folding it tightly across the flaps you've already created.

Create one last fold by bringing the top flap back across itself to give you a total of 5 layers.

Cut a straight line from the corner of the top flap up toward the point. The sharper your angle, the skinnier and more pointed your star will be.

## 34 :: Arthur Christmas Candy Sleigh

### ARTHUR CHRISTMAS CANDY SLEIGH



We love [Arthur Christmas](#), and a couple of years ago we decided to make an edible candy sleigh craft for Arthur & Grandfather Christmas.

#### Supplies:

- wooden round balls (3/4" with a 3/16" hole)
- wooden dowels (3/16")
- toothpicks
- gumdrops
- jelly beans
- craft paint
- graham crackers
- candy canes
- hot glue or royal icing

#### Directions:

Cut the wooden dowel into 2" lengths. Set a wooden ball at the top of each one. Glue in place (optional). Paint eyes and hair and let dry.

#### *To make Arthur Christmas:*

Once dry, slide two green gumdrops on the dowel, fat sides together.

Cut two toothpicks in half. Slide green jelly beans onto two of the toothpick halves to form arms. Slide red jelly beans onto the remaining toothpick halves. Cut a white jelly bean in half and stick on the end of the toothpicks as feet.

Insert the arms and legs into the gumdrop body.

#### *To make Grandfather Christmas:*

Once dry, slide one white gumdrop and one red gumdrop on the dowel, fat sides together.

Cut two toothpicks in half. Slide white jelly beans onto two of the toothpick halves to form arms. Slide red jelly beans onto the remaining toothpick halves. Cut a red jelly bean in half and stick on the end of the toothpicks as feet.

Insert the arms and legs into the gumdrop body.

#### *To make the sleigh:*

Holding the candy cane with the hook facing up, add a generous amount of glue or icing to the surface of the candy cane. Attach to the graham cracker. Repeat with a second candy cane.

Break a piece of candy cane off to fit between the two candy cane hooks and secure in place.

## 35 :: Fingerprint Calendar



For the past several years, I've released [templates and ideas for handprint calendars](#) to give as gifts, and last year I decided to try something a little different. So the girls and I made a fingerprint calendar instead. As a bonus, these fingerprint calendars are actually faster and less messy than the handprint calendars, which was a nice change!

I searched and searched for stamp pads (because I was trying to find the widest variety of colors for the least amount of money), and I finally settled on these [Aladine Stampo Colors sets](#), which come with 10 mini stamp pads each and are perfect for little fingers. We've been very happy with the variety and vibrancy of the colors in the [Softy set](#)!

### Supplies:

- [fingerprint calendar template](#)
- cardstock
- scissors or a [paper cutter](#)
- [stamp pads](#)

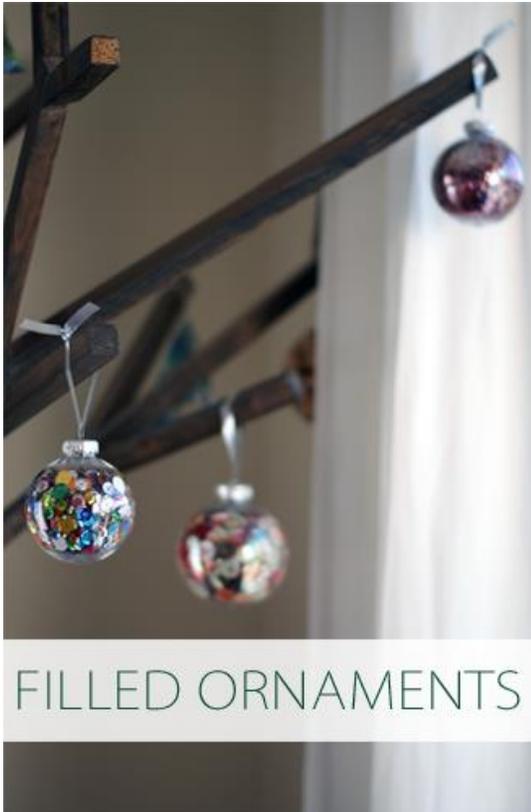
### Directions:

Print the calendar template pages and use the light grey cut guides on each page to cut out the calendars.

Choose from the fingerprint ideas above, or come up with your own, and add a seasonal picture to each page.

When you're done, punch holes in the top of the calendars and secure with ribbon or rings for a sweet gift that is sure to be treasured.

## 36 :: {Easy} Filled Ornaments



*I was so excited to spot these clear plastic ornaments at Hobby Lobby at the beginning of the holiday season, and I immediately began brainstorming all of the different things we could put in them.*

*The little girls searched through the craft box and decided to fill one with sequins, one with glitter and the big one with buttons from [our button box](#). I was so impressed by how hard they worked, as it gets a little tedious to add sequins and buttons after a while!*

### Supplies:

- plastic clear ornaments
- sequins, glitter\*, buttons, etc.
- white glue (optional)

\*The glitter ornament was the heaviest of all three, and I'm not sure how much I trust it hanging on our tree. I think you'll definitely want to glue the top on if you make one of these, and keep in mind that it's on the heavy side.

### Directions:

Fill each ornament with the material of your choice, snap the top on it and add a ribbon for hanging. It really is that easy!

### Variations:

The sky really is the limit. You could add your favorite small candy pieces (M&Ms or broken candy canes), scraps of fabric or bits of pipe cleaners, colored sand, beads, etc.

## 37 :: Milk Carton Ice Candles



*I can clearly remember making these with my mom when I was five or six years old, and even though I only remember one time, I've always had it filed under "holiday traditions" in my memory banks. I had to ask her for the details over the summer because I couldn't remember exactly how we'd made them or even what made them so special!*

*As it turns out, milk carton ice candles are as simple as they get, but they're so much fun to make! I think I might have the girls make some of these for their Sunday School teachers this year because they were fascinated by the process just like I was.*

### Supplies:

- paper milk carton\*
- crushed ice
- candle wax
- crayons for color (optional)
- essential oils or fragrance (optional)
- wicks
- tin can

\*I used a quart cream carton

### Directions:

Cut wax into pieces with a paring knife and add to a (clean) tin can. Set the can inside a saucepan and heat over medium-low until the wax melts. (Do not leave the wax unattended while it's heating.) If you want to use crayons for color, add a peeled crayon to the can as well.

While the wax is melting, cut your milk carton to height. Cut wick so that it is 1/2" taller than your carton. Poke a small hole in the bottom of the carton and thread the wick through it just enough to hold the wick in place.

When the wax is ready, fill the carton with crushed ice, holding the wick vertically. Adjust the wick as needed, and then the ice should hold it in place.

Add fragrance to the melted wax. Stir gently with wooden skewer.

Pour the wax carefully into the carton until it just covers the ice.

Set in a bowl or tray (to catch the melting ice) and let harden—about an hour. Peel the cardboard off and let the candle air dry before wrapping.

## 38 :: Paper Star Garland



*My girls love to make paper garlands out of various shapes, and this star garland is perfect for the holidays!*

*The key with paper garlands is to make sure that you don't cut out the edge of your design but rather use it to attach the pieces together. {You could just tape stars together instead, but where's the fun in that?!}*

*I've included a star template for you to trace, but you could easily just draw half a star by hand (that's what I did at first). I like the template, though, because I can print it out for the girls so that they can make these by themselves!*

### Supplies:

- paper (I used yellow construction paper)
- scissors
- [star template](#) (optional)
- pencil
- tape

### Directions:

Start by cutting your paper in half lengthwise so that you have two long strips.

Fold the paper accordion style. To get four stars from each strip, your folds should be 1.375" apart. (Or use the star template to measure out the distance.)

Once the paper is folded, hand draw or trace a star on the front piece. Make sure that the points on the end hang slightly off the paper because those will connect the stars together, so you don't want to cut through them all the way.

Cut out the star and unfold the paper.

Repeat and use tape to attach the sections.

Hang in your window or on your mantle!

## 39 :: Woven Star Ornaments



*These ornaments are really so sweet and simple, and perfect for my girls, who are really into fiber crafts right now (knitting, crocheting, embroidery, etc.).*

*Rather than using a plain cardboard circle as the background, I had my husband spray paint them first, and I love how it looks. We also used yarn instead of crochet thread, mostly because it's what I had on hand, but I think I like the "thicker" look it gives the ornaments.*

### Supplies:

- corrugated cardboard
- spray paint (optional)
- scissors
- yarn

### Directions:

Use a cup, bowl, etc. to trace a circle on your corrugated cardboard. You can make these in a variety of sizes, but mine are about 3" across. Cut out the circle and spray paint (optional).

Cut 1/2" slits all around the edge of the circle. The easiest way to do this is to start with the north-south-east-west lines and then add additional slits in between those four. Always cut the slits in pairs directly across from one another because you'll need an even number and you want the yarn to be able to form straight, even lines.

Begin threading the yarn straight across the disc, leaving a 3" tail at the beginning.

On the second time around the disc, move the yarn one position further around the circle (rather than straight across) to create a diagonal line (see diagram above). Continue until every slit has three strands of yarn, which should bring you back to where you started. Cut off the yarn, leaving another 3" tail.

Tie the ends together at the back of the star and then tie another knot at the top to form a loop for hanging the ornament.

# DIY DÉCOR

## 40 :: Burlap Tree



*Oh, burlap, how I love you!*

*I saw a burlap tree at Hobby Lobby earlier this fall, and since this is the year of burlap (unintentionally, but it's hard to deny that theme!), I knew I had to try to make one myself.*

*At first, I was worried the edges would need to be stitched or sealed so they wouldn't fray, but it ended up holding pretty well without any extra steps. Which is good because I try to be careful with my time and stitching yards of burlap just doesn't seem like a good use of it!*

### Supplies:

- styrofoam cone/tree
- white glue or hot glue
- burlap
- scissors

### Directions:

Cut 1-1/2" to 2" strips of burlap. It's important that you cut the burlap straight, and I love [this handy trick](#) for creating a "cut line" to follow.

Pull off 4-5 strands from one side of each strip to create a frayed edge. The top strand on the other edge may come off as well, so I just removed it from each of my strips.

Begin gluing the burlap to the bottom of the tree. I glued one row in a straight circle to cover the bottom and then began angling my strip to wrap up and around the cone. Add glue to a section of the burlap at a time, carefully wrapping it around the cone and pressing it in place.

As you get to the smaller part of the cone, snip the top "rail" of the strip every few inches so that you can continue creating an upward angle.

Wrap one final piece around the top of the tree, leaving 3/4" of burlap extending past the top, then fold and glue the edges like a present.

Try different sized trees or different color burlaps to create a collection of trees for your mantle or shelf!

## 41 :: Dried Orange Pomander



*I love both the look of these pomanders and their delicious scent. And as promised, burlap is making an appearance once again in this project!*

*I first heard the term “orange pomander” in [a historical novel](#) about a sweets shop in London during the plague, and last year I attempted to make them as one of our 101 projects. However, despite the mixture of orris root powder and spices that I kept them in for several weeks, they went bad.*

*Then, a couple of my blogging friends shared [their own pomander posts](#), and neither of them used any extra spices or herbs to prepare theirs, so I decided to try again this year. This simpler method actually worked much better!*

*Pomanders are a beautiful addition to your holiday decor or a thoughtful gift for a friend. You can set them in a bowl or tray or add a ribbon to hang them like an ornament.*

### Supplies:

- oranges
- whole cloves
- ribbon or burlap (optional)

### Directions:

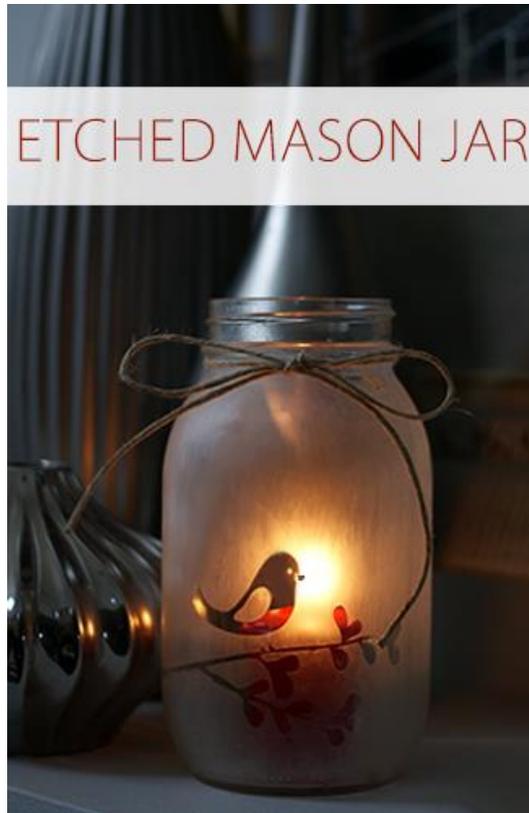
Decide ahead of time whether you want to create a pattern or just add the cloves all over randomly. Then, begin sticking the cloves through the orange peel. If your orange peel is tough or you want to mark out a pattern before you start, use a toothpick to poke the holes first.

Tie a ribbon around the fruit (optional) as decoration or to hang it.

### Variations:

- [Use other citrus fruit, like lemons or limes](#) fdsfds
- [Add to spiced apple cider](#) fdsfds
- Use pomanders in drawers or closets as a natural air freshener

## 42 :: Etched Mason Jar Candle



I really love [etched glass projects](#) because they're relatively simple to do (especially with the Silhouette) but turn out so beautifully. So when I spotted a frosted candle jar like this at the store, my first thought was, "I could do that!" and I set out to try.

If you don't have a [Silhouette](#) or [Cricut](#), you can also cut vinyl by hand or [look for a small decal you like on Etsy](#).

### Supplies:

- quart sized mason jar, preferably with at least one smooth side
- vinyl decal
- [etching cream](#)\*
- foam brush
- votive candle
- twine, wire or ribbon

\*Be sure to read the directions and warnings on the etching cream before beginning and always keep out of reach of children.

### Directions:

Make sure your jar is clean and dry.

Prepare your decal using transfer paper and affix to the glass jar, smoothing out any bubbles.

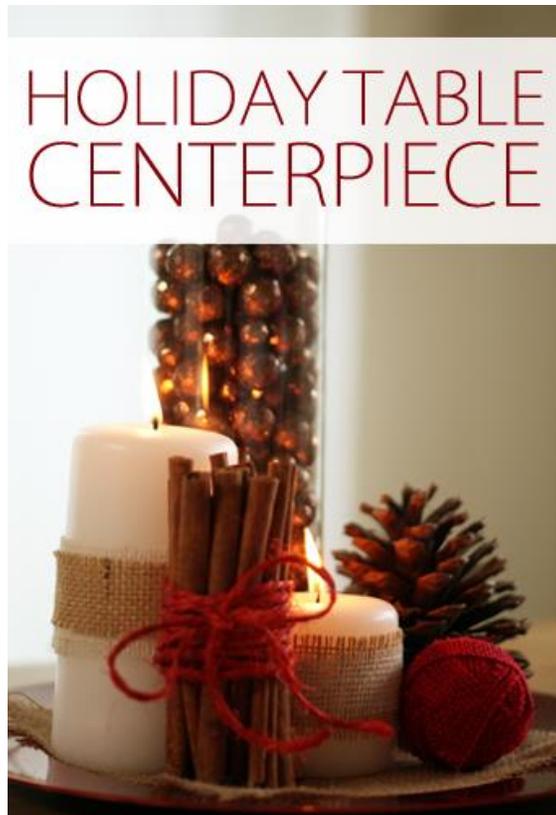
Cover the entire jar with etching cream, using long, smooth strokes for even etching.

Let sit. (The jar says 5 minutes, but I've found that it really takes closer to 10-15.)

Rinse well, using a paper towel or rag to wipe off all etching cream. Remove vinyl sticker.

Once dry, add a candle and a bow around the neck and you're done!

## 43 :: Holiday Table Centerpiece



*For most of the year, we keep a tall vase of fake purple alliums on our kitchen table, but last year I was feeling the itch to come up with a more festive centerpiece. The key for me, though, was I wanted to figure out a way to do it without breaking the bank. I began gathering things from our decor cabinet and craft boxes, and this is what I came up with.*

*I love how it turned out!*

### Supplies:

- red charger
- clear vase
- vase filler (Hobby Lobby, \$4.99)
- pillar candles, tall & short
- cinnamon sticks (Hobby Lobby, \$3.99)
- burlap, 3 colors
- twine, red
- styrofoam balls, small
- pinecone

### Directions:

Cut a square of burlap to fit on your charger. Fill the vase with the vase filler, potpourri, decorative snow, etc.

Wrap burlap, twine or ribbon around your candles. Completely wrap the styrofoam ball. Tie a handful of cinnamon sticks together.

Layer all of the elements together on the charger until you're happy with it.

## 44 :: Stovetop Potpourri



*When I was little, my grandmother would often keep this stove-top potpourri simmering in her Corningware teapot or a small crockpot in her kitchen. It smelled so delicious and always made it feel so homey, and I couldn't wait to add it to our collection of projects.*

*MawMaw actually used dried orange peels for her potpourri, and either works—collect orange peels as you use them and, once they're dried, save them in a jar or other container just for this purpose or cut a few slices of a fresh orange and add them to your saucepan.*

*This would also make a nice gift as well. Simply add the dried orange peels and spices to a cellophane bag, tie with a ribbon and share with friends and family so that they're homes can smell deliciously of the holidays as well!*

### Ingredients:

- 3-4 orange slices or a handful of fresh or dried orange peels
- 1-2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves

### Directions:

Fill a small saucepan, teapot or crockpot with water and add potpourri ingredients, heating the water to bring it to a low simmer.

Refill the water as needed.

Reuse the same potpourri over 2-3 days, covering it when not in use.

### Variations:

- Substitute ground cinnamon and cloves for the whole version.
- Use additional holiday spices—nutmeg, allspice, etc.
- Add a whole vanilla bean or a teaspoon vanilla extract.

# HANDMADE GIFTS

## 45 :: Baby's 1st Christmas Onesie



*I really love having a little baby at Christmastime (which is good since we've done it four times!), and one of my favorite parts is all of the cute "Baby's 1st Christmas" outfits available!*

*This last time, we received a couple hand-me-down sleepers, and I couldn't resist [this set](#) from Carter's, but I had some green and red flocked heat transfer vinyl from Silhouette, and I was so excited to make this onesie for Jackson as well.*

*Honestly, I don't use the [Silhouette Cutter](#) all that much (although I have a ton of project ideas in my head), but my husband uses it all the time to make custom vinyl stickers for his RC planes. If you're a crafty person (the kind that actually follows through, not just makes lists in her head!), it's definitely a fun and handy tool.*

### Supplies:

- Silhouette cutting machine
- [Baby's 1st Christmas file](#)
- [red and green flocked heat transfer vinyl](#)
- white onesie
- iron

### Directions:

Open the Baby's 1st Christmas image file in Silhouette Studio. Separate the image into two files so you can cut part of it in green and part in red.

Select "Flocked Heat Transfer Material" in the media menu and then feed the material into the Silhouette. No need to use a cutting mat; just feed it with the clear transfer sheet side down.

Peel the negative space off the transfer tape so that you're left with the design you want on your onesie.

Start by positioning the "1st christmas" cutout on the onesie, clear tape facing up. Place a cloth over the design. Using an iron set to cotton, press firmly on the design for 45-60 seconds. Gently peel the transfer sheet away from the design. If the flocked material is still sticking to the transfer sheet, repeat with the iron.

Repeat with the tree and then with "baby's" until the design is complete.

Be sure to wash inside out to protect your design.

## 46 :: {DIY} Boot Stands



*My mom actually bought my sister and I each a pair of boot stands/inserts last year for Christmas, and—because I'm a blogger—my first thought when I saw them was, "Hey, we could make these for 101 Days of Christmas next year!"*

*These are a fun gift for the boot lover in your life. These padded inserts slip right inside the boot and keep them standing straight when you're not wearing them so that the leather (ahem, or pleather) doesn't get bent or worn out. And you can make them out of any fabric you'd like so they match the personality of your recipient!*

### Supplies:

- fabric
- compass
- measuring tape
- scissors
- pins
- sewing machine
- batting

### Directions:

Start by cutting out four circles from your fabric—two for each boot stand. These need to be 4" in diameter plus a seam allowance of about 1/2" all the way around. You can either find a bowl that's 5" across to trace or use a compass set to 2-1/2" to draw a circle.

Then, cut out two rectangles that measure 13" x 17" each.

Pin one circle at a time to a rectangle along the shorter (13") side. To do this, place the fabric right side together so that the edge of the circle is lined up with the edge of the rectangle. Pin in place and then begin curving the rectangle so that it continues to line up evenly with the circle, pinning all the way around. Repeat on the opposite edge of the rectangle and then sew both pieces in place with a 1/2" seam allowance, removing the pins as you go.

With both ends sewn in place and the boot stand still right sides together, line up the open edges of the rectangle (along the length of the boot stand) and pin together. Sew together, leaving about 2" open at the bottom.

Turn the boot stand right side out and stuff with batting.

Fold the edges of the fabric in at the opening and stitch closed.

**Optional:** Insert a ribbon loop or tab between the circle and rectangle at one end before you pin and stitch them together.

## 47 :: Busy Bag Stocking Stuffer



I first saw [this cute busy bag idea](#) at Money Saving Mom, and it seemed like the perfect addition to the stocking stuffers for our littlest girls.

Not only do these encourage creativity and fine motor skills, but they're super easy to make too. I cut out the pieces one evening while making dinner!

### Supplies:

- colored felt
- stiff felt for the board
- scissors
- hole punch (optional)

### Directions:

Decide on your shapes and just begin cutting. I cut one long green triangle for the Christmas tree and then snipped it into thirds, and I used three different size glasses/jars to make the snowman's body.

Use the hole punch to cut out little dots as ornaments or buttons.

Cut out additional accessories such as the star for the tree, the snowman's hat, arms and nose, etc. On the original link, you'll see that you can include multiple style hats, buttons, etc. if you want—kind of Mr. Potato Head style.

Assemble the designs on the stiff felt boards and put inside a bag (plastic sandwich bags work, or you could make a nicer fabric bag).

## 48 :: Candy Cane Cookies in a Jar



*It's no secret that I love peppermint treats during the holidays, and this candy cane cookie mix makes a festive—and tasty—gift in a jar! Layer a few simple ingredients and add this [printable cookie tag](#) to share a little bit of holiday cheer.*

*These are especially good for neighbors, teachers or other acquaintances since you can put together multiple jars assembly line style!*

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/3 cup flour
- 1 cup coconut sugar (or brown sugar)
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1 cup candy canes, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt

### Directions:

In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda and sea salt.

In a quart jar, layer half of the flour mixture, half of the sugar and half of the chocolate chips. Add the candy canes and then repeat the layers in the opposite order: the remaining chocolate chips, sugar and flour mixture.

Put the lid on and add the [printable cookie tag](#), which includes these directions:

In a large bowl, mix 1 stick of butter (softened), 1/2 teaspoon vanilla and 1 egg. Add dry ingredients and mix. Drop by the tablespoon onto a cookie sheet and bake at 375 degrees F for 9-11 minutes. Let cool for 2 minutes and then move to a cookie rack.

## 49 :: Coffee-Lovers Gift Basket



*I love a good cup of coffee, and this basket is a fun one to put together for the coffee lovers in your life!*

*For a great centerpiece, start with your favorite coffee and two plain mugs (I got the ones in the picture at Walmart for \$1.25 each because I couldn't find any at the dollar store). Add a set of dry erase markers and a handwritten/drawn message.*

*I love this idea for a couple that enjoys their coffee together each morning because they can write each other love notes, reminders or a word of encouragement as part of their daily routine. It's fun to write a message that you know will get wiped off because there's less pressure to choose the perfect words or write something worth saving!*

You probably could stop there, but you don't have to! Here are some more ideas for your gift basket:

- [chocolate-hazelnut](#) or [candy cane biscotti](#)
- [chocolate covered espresso beans](#)
- peppermint candies
- cinnamon sticks
- ground spices
- vanilla (or other flavored) extract
- sugar or turbinado
- [chocolate-covered spoons](#)
- flavored creamers
- a book or devotional

Have fun with it and customize it for the recipient for a special gift from the heart!

## 50 :: Dyed Play Silks



*Play silks are a great open-ended toy for kids. They can become a fort, a baby blanket, a scarf or a sari.*

*I've been wanting to dye play silks for the girls for a long time now—and I've even had the silk and Kool-Aid just waiting to be used—but for some reason I kept putting it off.*

*Thanks in part to this series, I finally pulled them out yesterday to try it, and truly, it was so simple and easy that I feel a little silly for waiting so long!*

*We dyed the silks and let them dry overnight, and then two of my little models helped me get a picture of them, asking the whole time, "Can we play with them now? Are we done? Can we play with them?!"*

### Supplies:

- un-dyed silk scarves
- 1 pack of unsweetened Kool-Aid per scarf
- pots
- water
- plastic spoon or tongs

### Directions:

Soak scarves in a pot of warm water.

In a separate pot, bring water almost to a boil and mix in one packet of Kool-Aid. Transfer one silk scarf from the first pot to the pot with the Kool-Aid, stirring gently to dye the silk evenly.

The longer you leave the silk in the pot, the darker and more evenly it will be dyed, but I think I actually prefer the ones with some color variation!

Once you're happy with the color, transfer the pot to the sink and rinse under cool water to remove the excess dye. Hang to dry.

## 51 :: Felt Star Wand



*I absolutely love felt projects because there are so many possibilities, and felt is so, so, so easy to work with!*

*This felt star was actually a gift for our second daughter on her third birthday, but we just recently came across it again (hence the crooked bow!). Our four-year-old was so excited to find it that I had to share this project as a fun stocking stuffer for the little ones in your life.*

### Supplies:

- felt in two contrasting colors
- polyfill
- wooden dowel
- ribbon

### Directions:

Cut out two large stars in one color plus a smaller star in a contrasting color. {[Use this template to cut your stars.](#)}

With a machine or by hand, sew the smaller star onto one of the larger stars. Then sew both stars together, leaving a small opening at the bottom to stuff it and insert the dowel. Fill the star with the polyfill and then put a little bit of glue on the dowel and insert it into the star. Tie a ribbon at the bottom of the star, and you're done!

### Variations:

Make star bean bags: Fill with rice or dried beans instead of polyfill, add ribbon to the opening and sew closed.

## 52 :: Hair Chalk



The only problem? The price adds up when you need to buy four sets for stockings! Thankfully, my sister—who is an Aveda stylist—said that all we needed were regular soft chalk pastels (important: not regular chalk or oil pastels; you want soft chalk pastels). I bought [this set from Amazon](#) so that I could give them each 4-5 colors and still save some for arts & crafts. (About 25% of them came broken, though, so I'd buy them in a craft store if you can!)

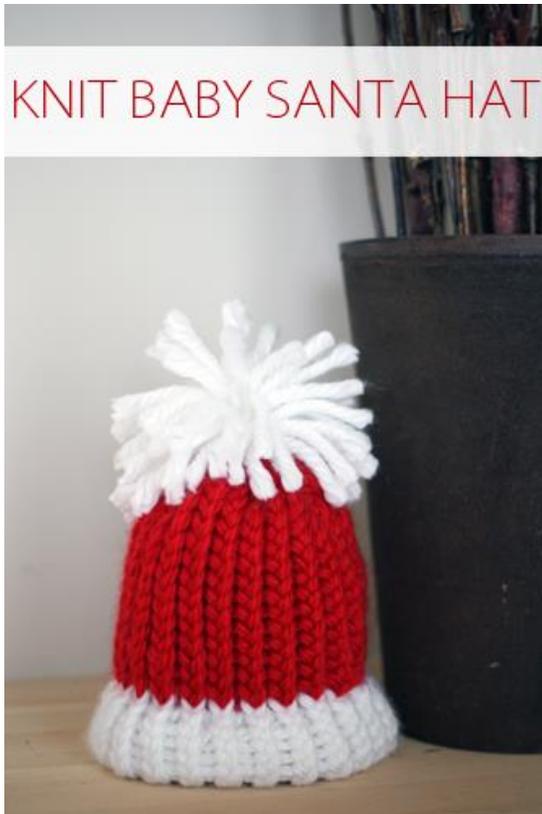
I created a cute tag that I can add to the bags of chalk (just as soon as I get more printer ink—ha!). These would also make fun party favors, don't you think?

[Click here to download or print the hair chalk tags](#)

A couple of months ago, [Tsh mentioned on Instagram](#) that she'd gotten some hair chalk for her daughter. Because I live under a rock, I wasn't sure what hair chalk was until then, but I was immediately intrigued by the idea of this temporary hair color!

We've tried temporary hair dye and kool-aid before for the girls to add fun colors in their hair, but neither worked especially well. Based on the things I've since read about hair chalk, though, I knew I wanted to include it in their stockings this year.

## 53 :: Knit Baby Santa Hat



Over the summer, my girls became obsessed with fiber crafts—knitting, crocheting, embroidering, cross-stitching, etc. My mom got our 6-year-old a set of round looms so that she could participate, and she quickly [knit her first hat](#).

She used the child size hat loom, leaving the baby size unused, and I couldn't wait to try it myself so that I could make Jackson a Santa hat. I really love having a baby at Christmastime, and “Baby's 1st Christmas” outfits (and [onesies!](#)) are always so much fun, so I figured a warm knit hat would be the perfect accessory to match the various outfits we have for the holidays.

I found this soft and fluffy yarn at WalMart and got to work, and I was surprised at how quickly it went. In no time, I had the hat ready to go, and then—of course—I had to [add a pom-pom](#) for the finishing touch!

Rather than trying to describe the process in words, I figured it'd be easier to share a how-to video, and I thought [this one](#) did the best explaining the process. The only difference is because the yarn I used was already so thick, I did not use a double strand of yarn like she does in the video.

Simple enough for a 6-year-old, but still fun if you're an adult!

## 54 :: Knit Candy Cane Scarf



After I finished Jackson's Santa hat, I knew I wanted to try making a scarf. The fluffy red and white yarn I used were so pretty together that I couldn't resist making a candy cane scarf out of them!

This is super easy, although it takes a bit longer than a hat just because of the length. If you're not familiar with using a round loom, [watch this video first](#).

For the candy cane scarf, I alternated 10 rows of each color 24 times for a total of 240 rows, which made a long, fluffy scarf! The yarn I used was Lion's Brand Hometown USA in New York White and Cincinnati Red, which I found at Walmart.

## 55 :: Movie Night Basket



Gift baskets are a fun and thoughtful gift, and this Movie Night basket is an affordable gift that's perfect for a family.

The best part about gift baskets is you can customize them to your heart's content: Include your favorite family movie, the classic you think every home DVD library needs or a Redbox gift card. Add traditional movie theater candy or your favorite [old-time candy](#). Or, if you're really feeling ambitious, make your own!

Popcorn is, of course, a must. Include microwave popcorn, Jiffy Pop or, my favorite, a jar full of kernels and instructions for easy stove-top popcorn. Add popcorn cones rolled from scrapbook paper for serving, and you're set.

[Click here to download or print the popcorn tags](#), which you can attach to a jar of popcorn kernels with easy-to-follow instructions for homemade stove-top popcorn!

## 56 :: Monogrammed Tote Bag



*I love this cute little tote bag and I think they'd make great gifts for a variety of different people. You could use them as library book bags for the special kids in your life or carry-alls for busy friends or teachers.*

### Supplies:

- plain canvas tote bag
- colorful fabric
- matching embroidery thread
- paper

### Directions:

Print a large letter on an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper. I used Arial, and my letter measured about 6" tall.

Cut out the paper letter, pin it to your piece of fabric and then cut out the fabric letter.

Pin the fabric letter to your canvas bag, making sure it's straight and centered.

Begin stitching around the edge of your letter. I used a chain stitch, but you could really use any stitch, I think.

After you're finished stitching the edge, carefully pull the loose threads to create a fringe. Trim as necessary.

## 57 :: Peppermint Sugar Scrub

### PEPPERMINT SUGAR SCRUB



*Sugar scrub is one of my very favorite luxury items, but I rarely use it even when I have it because...then it will be all gone! (Anyone else think this way? So silly!) However, I've always heard it was one of the easiest products to make at home, so I whipped up a batch, and it truly is.*

*With just three ingredients, it takes less than 5 minutes to mix together, and you can customize it with any essential oil you want. For Christmas, I went with peppermint, of course!*

*I've seen some recipes that call for a drop or two of red food or gel dye, but I just couldn't bring myself to add dye to what is otherwise a very natural product. However, I really like the way the white scrub looks with the heavenly peppermint smell.*

*This is a sweet gift by itself or as part of a gift basket!*

#### **Ingredients:**

- 2 cups sugar
- 1/3 cup light olive oil
- 6 drops peppermint essential oil

#### **Directions:**

Combine sugar, olive oil and peppermint essential oil in a bowl and mix until well combined.

Scoop into individual jars or containers and add a ribbon!

#### **Variations:**

Use almond or safflower oil instead, although light olive oil is the less expensive option.

Use another essential oil or a combination of oils to customize the scent.

## 58 :: {DIY} Photo Canvases



*DIY projects that come with a “simple and easy” promise don’t always deliver, but I have to say that this project may be my favorite ever because it was not only simple and easy (truly!) but also turned out amazingly well.*

*Photo canvases are such a fun home decor trend—and we have given all of our parents a canvas print of our family at one time or another—but they’re also fairly expensive. While these canvases don’t turn out exactly like the printed canvases (since you’re mounting the picture rather than printing on canvas), they still turn out beautifully, and it’s a fun alternative to sticking a photo in a regular picture frame!*

### Supplies:

- photos\*
- [stretched canvases](#) (in the same size as your photos)
- [Mod Podge](#)
- [foam brush](#) or dry sponge
- paint (optional)

\*I used matte photos and didn’t run into any issues with the photos bleeding, but I have not tried this with glossy photos!

### Directions:

You can leave the sides and edges of each canvas white or paint them, but you need to decide which you prefer before you start on the other steps. If you paint the edges, be sure to let it dry thoroughly before you apply the Mod Podge.

Use your foam brush or sponge to spread a thin layer of Mod Podge across the front of your canvas. Carefully position the picture and adjust it as needed before smoothing it in place with your hand to remove any air bubbles.

Use your brush to add another layer of Mod Podge over top the picture, spreading the glue from side to side. Make sure to go beyond the edges on all sides to help seal those down.

The goal here is to not only to seal and protect the picture but to actually add texture as well. One coat may be enough, but if you want to add more texture, be sure to use multiple thin coats rather than one thick one so that the glue can dry thoroughly between coats to prevent it from getting sticky.

That’s it! Be sure to let the glue dry completely before stacking or wrapping the canvases.

## 59 :: S'more Kit



If my [More Than a S'more board](#) on Pinterest is any indication, I may have a slight obsession with s'mores. I mean, what's not to like about toasted marshmallows and melted chocolate?

Share the goodness with this ready-to-go s'more kit. Admittedly, it's not fancy (but it did turn out cute!), just some packaged chocolate and graham crackers, enough marshmallows for s'mores and snacking and a cute little "Merry Christmas and Happy S'more Year!" card.

This is a fun gift for family friends, teachers or neighbors. Everyone could use a little s'more love in their life! (Sorry, couldn't help myself.)

[Click here to download or print a sheet of Happy S'more Year cards.](#)

## 60 :: Scrabble Boards



After making these [personalized Scrabble ornaments](#), I started thinking about other ways to use the [Scrabble Me! set](#) that I'd purchased (it was only \$13 at the time; not sure I would have paid \$20 for it!).

This cute personalized Scrabble board would make a fun gift for a Scrabble- or board-game loving family. Use family names or descriptive words to form the perfect keepsake Scrabble board!

### Supplies:

- [Scrabble Me! boards](#)
- letter tiles ([purchase additional Scrabble tiles from Hasbro](#))
- super glue
- cardboard

### Instructions:

Pull out the letters for the names you'll be using for your Scrabble board, trying different layouts until you find the best one.

Use super glue to carefully attach each letter to the board.

To create a stand, take a strong piece of plain cardboard about 3" wide and 5" tall (or cover a piece with scrapbook paper) and crease the board 1-1/2" from the end. Glue the smaller section to the back of your board to support it so that it will stand up (like the back of a picture frame). Let dry completely.

## 61 :: Soap



*I've always wanted to make homemade soap, but I'm intimidated by the directions for making soap from scratch because it involves lye and comes with all kinds of safety warnings. I'm a little too scattered in the kitchen—with kids running in and out and multiple projects going at once—to trust myself to do that safely!*

*Instead, I decided to get started with a store-bought soap base, and this process is really easy.*

### Supplies:

- soap base or white Ivory soap
- soap fragrance or essential oils
- colloidal oatmeal (optional)
- soap dye (optional)
- soap molds

### Directions:

If using a prepackaged soap base, start by weighing or guestimating the amount of soap you'll need. (I don't have a kitchen scale, so I just eyeballed it, using approximately 1 cup of soap and 1/2 cup of colloidal oatmeal to make three regular-size bars.) Cut the soap into chunks and add to double boiler or microwaveable dish.

If using Ivory soap, grate the soap into a double boiler or microwaveable dish.

Melt slowly, stirring regularly, until the soap is completely melted.

Once the soap is melted, add fragrance or essential oils, a few drops at a time until your desired scent is reached. Add soap dye a few drops at a time for colored soap.

For oatmeal soap, you can purchase colloidal oatmeal at a pharmacy, but it's easy enough to make on your own, especially if you already have oatmeal on hand. Simply add regular oatmeal to a blender or food processor and process until it is a fine powder.

Gently add the oatmeal (1 part oatmeal for 2 parts soap) to the melted soap, stirring smoothly to avoid bubbles.

Once all of your ingredients have been combined, gently pour the soap mixture into soap molds. Let harden for at least an hour before removing from molds.

## 62 :: Soap Pockets



*We always give the girls a new loofah in their stocking each Christmas, but I couldn't resist making these soap pockets for this year instead (especially since our new puppy loves to find and destroy loofahs!). Although it's too late for this year, these would also make a great addition to an [Operation Christmas Child box](#).*

*Slip [a bar of soap](#) inside the pocket and keep it in that bathroom for an easy way to lather up in the bath or shower. It's an easy sewing project (if I can do it, anyone can—I promise!), and they're pretty cute too!*

### Supplies:

- colorful washcloths
- sewing machine or needle and thread
- scissors

### Directions:

Cut off 2-3" from the bottom of the washcloth. Then, cut the washcloth in half lengthwise. Cut off the side hem on each half so that three sides of each piece are unfinished. The fourth side, which will end up on the outside of the pocket like in the picture, should still have a finished edge.

Fold the soap pocket right sides together: First fold the top (finished) section of the washcloth down about 2-1/2". Then fold the bottom section over it so that they overlap by an inch or so. Pin the layers in place and sew with your sewing machine or by hand. Once both sides are sewn, flip the pocket right side out so that the decorative edge is now on top.

Add a bar of soap and—voila!—you're done!

### Variations:

Add a ribbon or string to one of the corners before you sew it so that the pockets can be hung up in the shower. Make sure that the loop itself is inside while you're sewing the pocket so that it will be on the outside once you flip it right side out!

GIFT WRAP

## 63 :: Burlap & Button Bows



### BURLAP & BUTTON BOWS

*These burlap & button bows could not be simpler to make, but they are so, so darling!*

*Really, you could use this method to make bows out of virtually any material, but these continue my burlap obsession. Honestly, I've always loved burlap, but I was kind of intimidated by it. But I've discovered how easy it is to work with and how truly versatile it can be, and now I'm having so much fun coming up with new ways to use it.*

*Add these bows to gifts or use them to decorate your tree. I'm thinking a few tiny ones might even be cute attached to barrettes for our girls!*

#### Supplies:

- burlap
- scissors
- buttons

#### Directions:

Cut a strip of burlap for your bow. Mine was about 1" x 12" to start, but I just eyeball it rather than worrying about exact measurements. Use [this handy trick](#) to cut straight edges.

Fold the bow as shown in the first image above, like an awareness ribbon, with the two "tails" both facing the right away and overlapping to form a smooth loop at the top.

Pinch the middle of the loop together with the X where the ribbons cross to make a bow. Use a strand of burlap (or another string) to tie it tightly around the middle and hold the bow in place, adjusting the loops before you knot the thread.

Bring the thread back around the front of the bow and thread both ends through the button holes. Wrap around one more time and tie tightly in the back.

#### Variations:

- Use fabric or ribbon to make your bow instead.
- Wrap an extra piece of material around the bow and glue it in the back rather than using a button.
- Make bows in a variety of sizes and colors.
- Layer two or more buttons together.

## 64 :: {DIY} Cookie Tin Divider



*I may have gone a bit overboard with trying chex mix varieties a couple of years ago, making [original](#), [apple pie](#), [caramel corn](#) and [cranberry-orange](#)!*

*But the reason I created so many different varieties (ahem, besides the fact that eating them makes my heart and my stomach happy!) is because I had a vision for this fun DIY cookie tin divider.*

*Filling an entire tin with one treat can be a little boring, but it's simple to add a quick cookie tin divider so that you can give someone a variety of treats instead.*

### Supplies:

- cookie tin, any size
- thick cardstock (white or colored)
- scissors or [paper trimmer](#)
- ruler

### Directions:

Measure the interior diameter and height of your cookie tin. Cut two strips of paper to fit across the cookie tin, about 1/8" shorter than the interior height.

Next, measure to find the middle of the long side of the strips and cut a slit in each to exactly halfway through the height.

Rotate one of the strips and fit the slits together to form a flexible x with the strips. Insert in your cookie tin and begin filling each compartment with a treat.

NOTE: If you want to make your divider a little more stable, flatten the x and add a strip of tape where the two pieces meet in the middle. Open it up and flip to the next side of the x and repeat. Adding tape to all 4 corners and then creasing them along the folds will add a bit of stability. But this step is not necessary at all!

## 65 :: {Fancy} Cookie Tins



I'm a fan of simple packaging ideas that make a big difference, so today I thought I'd share my two favorite ways for taking a plain ol' cookie tin and dressing it up a bit—without spray paint, glue or anything else sticky. My dad's wife taught me the first trick a couple years ago, and I love the simplicity of both of these.

For the fancy "lace" cookie tin, simply use a doily that extends 1/2-2" past the edges of the cookie tin. Lay it on top of the cookies, making sure it's centered, and secure the lid. So simple!

For the ribbon tin, cut 8 long strips of ribbon and divide them into two sets. Cross them at the bottom and then tie them together at the top. Use scissors to curl the ribbon. Easy peasy!

## 66 :: Kraft Paper Wrapping



*If you're looking for a simple, neutral alternative to traditional wrapping paper, kraft paper makes lovely gift wrap. It's also less expensive—without being flimsy or cheap—than traditional high-quality wrapping paper.*

But it doesn't have to be boring!

In fact, you can dress up kraft wrapping paper packages a number of different ways. Here are just a few:

- Use die cut letters to spell out the recipients name
- Attach candy canes, ornaments, greenery or other embellishments with ribbon
- Create potato stamps and stamp designs all over the package
- Tie with yarn instead of ribbon
- Have the kids draw or color on the paper before wrapping the package
- Top with homemade felt, magazine or kraft paper bows
- Decorate with lace, doilies, etc.
- Stamp with letters or seasonal stamps
- Add a monogram with die cut letters, markers or fabric

## 67 :: Screen-Printed Gift Bags



*This isn't actual screen printing, of course, but using the [Silhouette Fabric Ink Starter Kit](#) that Silhouette sent me, my husband created a stencil with Merry Christmas in block letters for me to use to add some custom touches to these burlap gift bags I'd picked up a few months ago.*

*The process is easy, and while I had a little bit of bleeding around the edges because of the thick weave of the burlap, I think they turned out really cute. I tied a big red bow onto the handles to make it even more festive, but I love the overall simplicity of it!*

### Supplies:

- [Silhouette CAMEO](#)
- Stencil vinyl & transfer tape
- Fabric ink
- Mixing tray
- Applicator brush

**\*\*If you don't have a Silhouette or Cricut, you could also hand cut letters using contact paper and an x-acto knife.**

### Directions:

Start by creating your stencil in the Silhouette design software. Be sure to leave margin around your design to protect the rest of your fabric from the paint.

Run your stencil vinyl through the Silhouette to cut out your design.

Apply your transfer tape to the finished design and peel the backing off your stencil vinyl. Carefully apply the vinyl to the fabric, smoothing out ripples and bubbles as you go. Peel off the transfer vinyl, leaving the vinyl in place, and then carefully remove the design cutouts to create a stencil for your paint.

Add your fabric ink to your mixing tray. Dab your foam brush into the ink and then onto the tray again to remove any excess paint. Begin dabbing it onto your project to fill in the stencil.

Once you're finished painting the stencil, let the paint dry for 20 minutes. Then carefully peel the stencil off the fabric.

Press with a hot iron to bond the ink to the fabric, and you're done!

## 68 :: Treat Cones



*Gift cones are a fun way to share treats with friends or neighbors!*

*These are perfect for handing out snacks at a Christmas party or hanging Secret Santa treats on your neighbor's front door. And the best part is they're easy to make and easy to customize with the variety of scrapbook paper and ribbon choices available at your favorite craft store.*

### **Supplies:**

- scrapbook paper
- compass
- scissors
- double-sided tape or glue
- hole punch
- ribbon

### **Directions:**

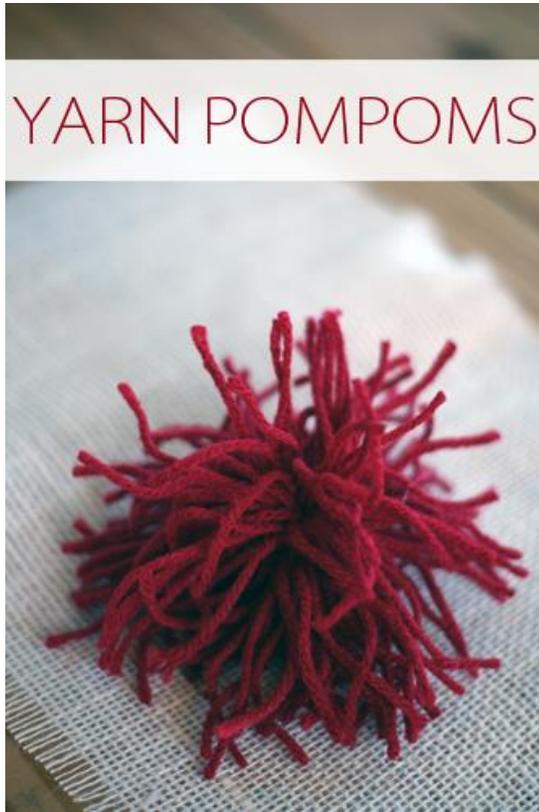
Placing one end of your compass on the corner of a piece of scrapbook, draw an arched line from one side of the paper to the other. The distance between the two ends of your compass will equal the height of your cone.

Use straight or zig-zag scissors to cut along the arched line.

Add a strip of double stick tape or line of glue to the wrong side of one length of the paper. Roll the paper into a cone (with the edge with the tape on the outside). Overlap the edges until the top circle is smooth and the cone is fully formed, and then press down securely.

Use the hole punch to punch two holes on opposite sides of the cone. Thread a ribbon through each hole, tying the ends securely to create a handle.

## 69 :: Yarn Pom-Poms



*Pompoms can be used for a variety of projects, and there's no better time to make them than during the Christmas season!*

*They're actually really simple and easy, and once you know how, you'll be able to make them in any size or color. Add pompoms to Christmas gifts in place of bows, hang them on the tree with your ornament, attach them to the top of a knit hat or the ends of a scarf...the sky is the limit.*

### **Supplies:**

- yarn
- thin cardboard
- scissors
- thread (optional)

### **Directions:**

Cut a piece of cardboard to size. The width doesn't matter, but the length determines the size of your pom-pom. Fold in half lengthwise.

Begin wrapping your yarn around your folded cardboard. The more you wrap, the fluffier your pom-pom will be, and when you think you're done, you probably need to keep going, especially if you want a pom-pom that holds its shape!

Slide a piece of yarn between the cardboard pieces (you could do this ahead of time, but I never, ever remember until this step). Use this strand to tie a knot as tightly as you can around the strands of yarn (at the open end of the cardboard). If you're using very thick yarn or your pom-pom will be heavily handled (like on a scarf or hat), you may want to grab a piece of thread for this step just to ensure you are able to tighten it enough to keep the yarn in the pom-pom secure.

Cut through the cardboard fold and all of the strands of yarn at the same time. Do your best to cut them all at once and as straight as possible so that your pom-pom is even.

Trim the edges of your pom-pom as needed.

## 70 :: Wrapping Paper Bows



Who needs store-bought bows with [so many handmade bows](#) to choose from?

I first heard of making wrapping paper bows when Amanda from OhAmanda.com posted her [gift wrap bows tutorial](#) a few years ago, but it wasn't until this year that I got around to trying them for myself. I'm not sure why I waited so long because these are so fun!

The great thing about these is you can make them in any size or color you want. Use the same wrapping paper that you wrap each gift in or add contrast with a coordinating paper. Make 'em big. Make 'em little. There really are so many options once you have the basic method down.

### Supplies:

- wrapping paper
- tape
- scissors

### Directions:

Cut a wide strip of wrapping paper off your roll and cut that strip into three individual pieces—a large one for the bow itself, a small one to wrap around the middle and a medium one to form the “tails” of the bow. Err on the side of making it too long rather than too short because you can always cut off the excess as you go.

Fold both ends of the big piece in toward the middle, wrong sides together, to make a loop. Use your hand and squeeze the middle of that loop together to form the loops of the bow.

Wrap the small piece of paper around the middle tightly several times. Trim off any excess paper and tape in place.

Cut the remaining strip in half and add angled cuts at the bottom (make sure they angle in opposite directions!). Trim to size and tape to the back of the bow.

Add to a present or use them to decorate your tree!

# HANDMADE ORNAMENTS

## 71 :: Burlap Ornaments



*This ornament was one of a few that I was inspired to make after spotting a factory-made version at Hobby Lobby, and it's really a fun project. {I know...more burlap; I warned you it was the year of burlap around here!}*

*Easy enough for older kids, this is a simple—if a bit tedious—project, and with so many colors of burlap available, you could easily customize it to match your holiday decor or for each of your recipients if you want to give them as gifts.*

### Supplies:

- 2-4" styrofoam balls
- burlap
- ribbon and/or twine
- jingle bells
- eye hook
- glue\*

\*I used white glue, but hot glue would work too!

### Directions:

Cut your burlap into strips. Keep in mind that the thinner your strips are, the more you'll need to get good coverage, but you also don't want to make them too big. I've used strips as small as 1/2" (for the burlap ball I added to my [table centerpiece](#)) to 3/4" for the one in the picture above.

Be sure to use [this handy tip](#) for cutting your burlap straight.

Add a dot of glue to the end of your first strip and press it in place. Wrap the strip around the ball, angling the strip as you go around the ball. When you get to the end, add a second dot of glue to the end and press that in place.

Repeat with as many strips as you need, using different starting points and angles rather than wrapping in the same direction each time.

Set aside until the glue dries.

Add a dot of glue to the end of an eye hook and screw into place at the top of the ornament. Tie a ribbon and/or jingle bells around the hook and another one to hang the ornament from and you're done!

## 72 :: Candy Cane Ornaments



*These whimsical ornaments are so much fun to make!*

*They don't have to be ornaments, though. You could also make monograms and tie them to gifts or leave off the string and simply give them as Christmas treats to eat.*

*The candy canes will be pretty warm when they come out of the oven, so this is really a project for older kids or adults, but it's not difficult at all, and you could easily put together a whole collection in under an hour.*

### **Supplies:**

- candy canes, unwrapped
- parchment paper
- cookie sheet or stone
- knife
- twine or ribbon

### **Directions:**

Preheat oven to 200 degrees F and line cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Lay out a few candy canes on the parchment paper. Depending on your designs, you may want to go ahead and break the candy canes into the lengths you'll need, or you can cut them once they come out of the oven.

Heat for 10 minutes and test for pliability. You want to be able to bend them and stick them together, but you don't want them melted in a pool of sugar! If they're not quite ready, continue heating for 1-2 minutes at a time until they are.

Shape the ornaments, squeezing the pieces together firmly but gently where you want to attach them. Be careful not to press down too much as you shape them because that will flatten them and make them stick more to the parchment.

Let cool for 5 minutes, peel off the parchment, and then tie ribbon or twine to use as a hanger for each ornament.

## 73 :: Cookie Cutter Ornaments



*Here is another fun handmade ornament idea for you! These simple ornaments are made from cookie cutters (we used tiny ones, but you could use any size) and scrapbook paper for a classic, vintage feel.*

*You may even want to stock up on cookie cutters after Christmas this year, when they're on clearance, to do this one next year. Otherwise, be on the lookout for ornaments at thrift shops and garage sales—or in your own cabinets, which is where I found mine—rather than paying full price!*

### Supplies:

- cookie cutters
- scrapbook paper
- white glue
- x-acto knife
- string or ribbon

### Directions:

Begin by tracing the outline of your cookie cutter onto the piece of scrapbook paper you want to use as the background. Trace as close to the edge as you can get.

Carefully run a thin bead of glue along the outline.

Align the cookie cutter and gently press it into the glue, being careful not to smear the glue.

Let sit until completely dry.

Use a sharp x-acto knife to cut out the ornament.

Glue a ribbon or string to the back of the ornament and let dry completely.

## 74 :: Twine-Wrapped Ornaments



*I spotted this idea at Hobby Lobby while we were browsing the other day, and I couldn't wait to get home and try it since I had plenty of twine in my stash.*

*This is a simple ornament to make, but I love its rustic charm. I also think these would be fantastic in different sizes and colors in a bowl on the mantle or as part of my [table centerpiece](#). You could easily make a collection of them while watching TV in the evening or riding in the car; they're that quick and easy!*

### Supplies:

- styrofoam ball
- twine
- glue
- eye hook
- ribbon, burlap or fabric
- ornament hook (optional)

### Directions:

Hold the end of your twine in place against the styrofoam ball and begin wrapping. Be sure to wrap in different directions as you go to avoid creating a pattern or making it too neat. (This is the hardest part of the project for my type-a personality, but it's worth the effort!).

Continue wrapping until the ornament is completely covered and no styrofoam is showing through.

Tuck the end of the twine under several tightly-wrapped strands and glue in place.

Add glue to an eye hook and gently push it into the top of the ornament. Tie a ribbon around the eye hook and add a second piece or an ornament hook for hanging it on the tree

# PRINTABLES

You'll find all of these printables, and more, in the accompanying Christmas printables download.  
Or click on the links to download the printables individually from our site!

## 75 :: Advent Calendar Ornaments



Looking for a simple way to celebrate advent? Be sure to print out these [cute advent calendar ornaments](#). Our family will be using them during our [12 Days of Christmas](#), but they are numbered from 1-25 and ready for you to use however you wish:

- Write an activity on the back of each one to correspond with the date in December.
- Hang backwards and countdown the days until Christmas.
- Use as labels for your [book-a-day tradition](#).
- Hang the blank ornaments up and record a memory for each day of advent on the back.
- Use for your gift exchange or cookie swap.

Just print [the ornaments](#) on cardstock and cut them out. Punch a hole in the top of each one and thread a ribbon through it and you're ready to hang them on your tree. Or, use clothespins to hang them along a piece of twine or ribbon in the window.

[Click here to download or print the advent ornaments.](#)

## 76 :: Advent Chain



One of our favorite ways to countdown the days until a special date is with a countdown chain, where you tear off one loop each day, watching the chain get shorter and shorter each day. I've combined that idea with a list of advent activities that you can print out on the back of scrapbook paper to make an advent chain!

Because you don't want to get caught by surprise with "decorate your Christmas tree" or "make handmade ornaments", I suggest using the [Christmas calendar](#) to plan out your advent activities and then creating your chain based on that order. There are 32 activity strips included, so you can pick and choose the ones you want, add your own activities to the blank strips or even use a combination of blank strips and activities so that you're not doing something every day—whatever works best for your family!

[Click here to print the advent chain.](#)

## 77 :: Appreciation Tags



Every year I intend to give gifts to our delivery drivers, mail lady and trash collectors...and every year it gets pushed to the side in the busyness of the season.

This year, I was determined to make it happen. Between reviews and giveaways and our own online gift shopping, the delivery people have been working extra hard on our behalf—especially considering the location of our home and the fact that they basically have to come all this way just to deliver to us—and I want them to know we appreciate it!

So I snagged a big bag of Ghirardelli chocolate off Amazon and divvied it up into plastic treat bags, and then I made this quick printable to tie to the bags, just to say thank you.

[Click here to download or print the holiday appreciation tags.](#)

## 78 :: {Printable} Christmas Carols



I love all Christmas music, but I especially love classic Christmas carols like O Holy Night and Joy to the World, so I put together a collection of printable carols. You could print these out and put them in a folder to use as song sheets or print your favorite on pretty paper and frame it as part of your holiday decor.

[This printable pack](#) includes O Holy Night, Silent Night, O Come O Come Emmanuel, It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing and Joy to the World, which happen to be the songs that go with our [printable advent devotional](#) plus O Holy Night, which is my very favorite.

[Click here to download or print the collection of carols.](#)

## 79 :: {Mini} Christmas Coloring Book



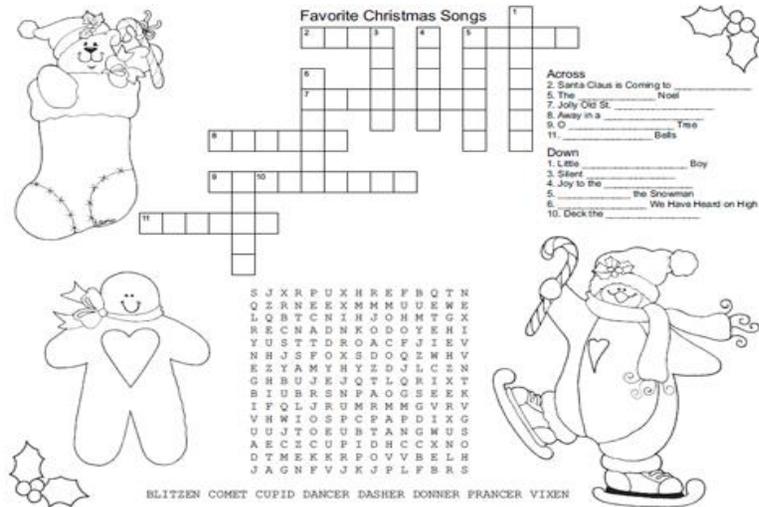
If you're looking for something fun to keep the kids occupied, try [this printable Christmas activity book](#).

With coloring pages, a word find and a fun mad lib, it would make a fun stocking stuffer, holiday party favor, gift or busy bag activity!

I love the idea of putting the finished booklet and a few crayons into a zipper sandwich bag and keeping it tucked in my purse. It would be perfect for those times when you have to wait somewhere and need a little bit of entertainment.

[Click here to download or print the mini Christmas coloring book.](#)

## 80 :: Christmas Placemat



'Tis the season for holiday get-togethers. That means family, food, fun... and the occasional squirmy kid. How can we keep the kids happy while they're waiting for Christmas dinner to be served? Simply use the same tactic that smart restaurant owners use: the activity placemat.

This [Christmas activity placemat](#) will keep them busy coloring, solving the Christmas song title crossword puzzle, and finding all of Santa's reindeer. Hopefully this will keep little hands busy until it's time to pass the mashed potatoes.

[Click here to download or print the Christmas activity placemat!](#)

## 81 :: Color-Me Cards



Looking for a fun activity for the kids this week? Help them make Christmas cards for their teachers, friends and family with these fun color-me Christmas cards from Jennifer and Jason at [New Season Design!](#)

Print page 1 of each card by itself, or flip the paper over and print page 2 with a sweet message on the inside. Fold the card in half and hand it over to the kids to color—easy, cute & fun!

[Click here to download or print the color-me cards.](#)

## 82 :: Coffee Sleeves

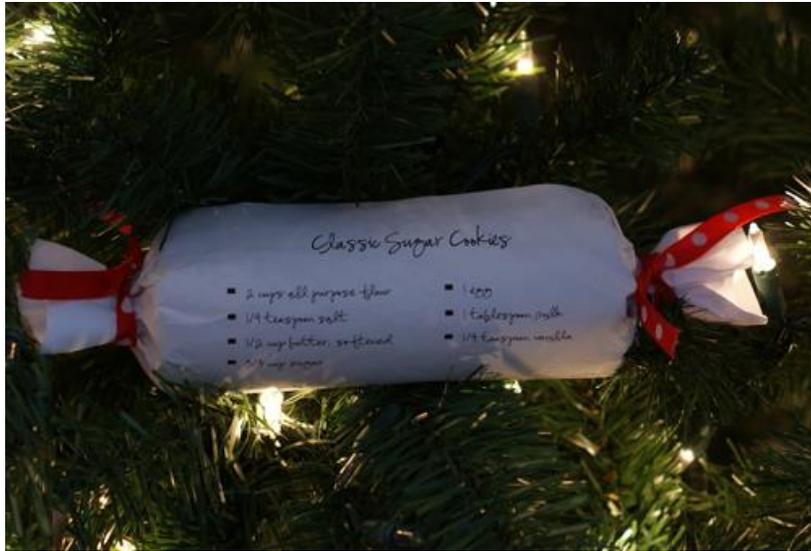


Celebrate the holidays with each cup of coffee with these [printable coffee sleeves](#), which would be perfect for a holiday party or get together!

Pick up white disposable coffee cups with lids (check Walmart or Target). Then print and cut out the coffee sleeves, taping them closed in the back. Slip each one over a coffee cup for some extra holiday cheer!

[Click here to download or print the holiday coffee sleeves.](#)

## 83 :: Cookie Wrappers



*I've seen quite a few cookie dough log gifts, but giving frozen cookie dough just doesn't seem very practical to me. A frozen—or even refrigerated—gift means I need to keep it cold until I get to my destination, and the recipient needs to keep it cold while we're at the destination (be it a family member's house, our homeschool group or church) and then rush home to get it back in the fridge or freezer.*

*Too stressful for me!*

*Rather than using a frozen cookie dough log (although you certainly could if you wanted), make your cookies round and uniform in size and wrap the actual cookies in this wrapper, which includes the recipe for the next time they want to make them and has a definite Christmas-y feel without the cost of a tin or even an [oatmeal container](#).*

### Supplies:

- white paper or vellum
- plastic wrap
- ribbon

### Directions:

Choose a cookie from the list below to make and print out however many wrappers you need.

Bake your cookies and let cool completely. Then wrap a “log” of cookies in plastic wrap. I found that the easiest way to do this was to create a vertical stack of cookies and then carefully wrap them in plastic wrap, laying the stack down to close the bottom end once everything else was secure.

Next, wrap the log with your paper wrapper. Start with the bottom of the page so that the recipe title is on the top when your paper overlaps.

Gently twist the ends to help it stay together and tie securely with ribbon.

[Click here to download or print the cookie wrappers.](#)

### Cookie Recipes & Wrappers:

- [Classic Sugar Cookies](#) from 101 Days of Christmas
- [Gingered Orange Shortbread](#) from Food for My Family
- [Oatmeal Cranberry Chocolate Chip Cookies](#) from My Blessed Life
- [Oatmeal Chocolate Drizzle Cookies](#) from Tidy Mom
- [Chocolate Crinkles](#) from Unsophisticook

## 84 :: Hanging Gift Tags



Add a personal touch to treat bags and gifts this Christmas with these printable gift tags. Just print them on cardstock, cut them out, punch a hole in the end and tie with ribbon or twine!

[Click here to download or print the hanging tags.](#)

## 85 :: Merry Christmas Banner



Window banners are among my favorite decorations for any occasion because they add such a festive feel to our home and they're not expensive or difficult to make.

Simply [print out the banner](#) and cut out each pennant flag. Hang twine or ribbon across the windows (I usually crack the windows and slide the string right through the opening and then close and lock it to hold the ends tight). Use clothespins to attach each flag to the ribbon.

Or punch holes in the upper corners of each flag and thread a ribbon through the front of each flag before securing the ends in place.

[Click here to download or print the "Merry Christmas" banner.](#)

## 86 :: Holiday Sewing Cards



*Sewing cards are a timeless activity that keep little hands busy. They're also fantastic for developing fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination!*

*These [printable sewing cards](#) are perfect for the holidays and can be used several different ways, depending on the age, ability, and experience of each child.*

### Supplies:

- white cardstock
- yarn or embroidery floss
- scotch tape (or a large, plastic needle)
- hole punch (standard or 1/8")

### Directions:

#### *Beginner*

Print the sewing cards on cardstock. Cut them out, and use a standard sized hole punch to punch the marked holes. Wrap a small piece of Scotch tape around the end of a piece of yarn, and they're ready to sew.

#### *Intermediate*

Follow the same directions as above, but punch the holes with a 1/8" punch. This will give the child a smaller target to hit with the string.

#### *Advanced*

Follow the intermediate directions. When the child has completed one loop around the shape, have her go back for a second round, filling in the empty spaces between stitches. This might be done best with a large, plastic child's sewing needle.

#### *Beyond Advanced*

If your child is comfortable with sewing and using a sharper needle, you could thread embroidery floss through a needle. Then have him sew without you punching the holes, allowing the needle to make the hole in the paper.

[Click here to download or print the sewing cards.](#)

## 87 :: Jar Lid Inserts



Gifts in a jar like this [cranberry-orange quick bread mix](#) are a lot of fun, and you can make them even more festive with these printable jar lid inserts, which slip right between the lid and band on a canning jar.

{Or, if you're using repurposed jars and lids, try these [covered jar lids](#) instead!}

Each file contains four different patterns (on separate pages) to choose from!

[Click here to download or print the jar lid inserts.](#)

## 88 :: Jesse Tree Ornaments



A Jesse Tree is an advent project. Each day you [color an ornament](#) that represents a bit of the lineage of Christ. The tree begins with creation and stretches through the Old and New Testaments until we reach the wonderful story of the birth of Jesus.

The tree gets its name from Jesse, the father of David. The first day's scripture is Isaiah 11:1-2—"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord." This branch came in the form of a babe, and through the scriptures for each ornament, you can see God weaving the stories into place to ready the world for the coming Messiah.

[Click here to print the Jesse Tree ornaments](#), which includes the instructions and Scripture references for each day's reading and ornament!

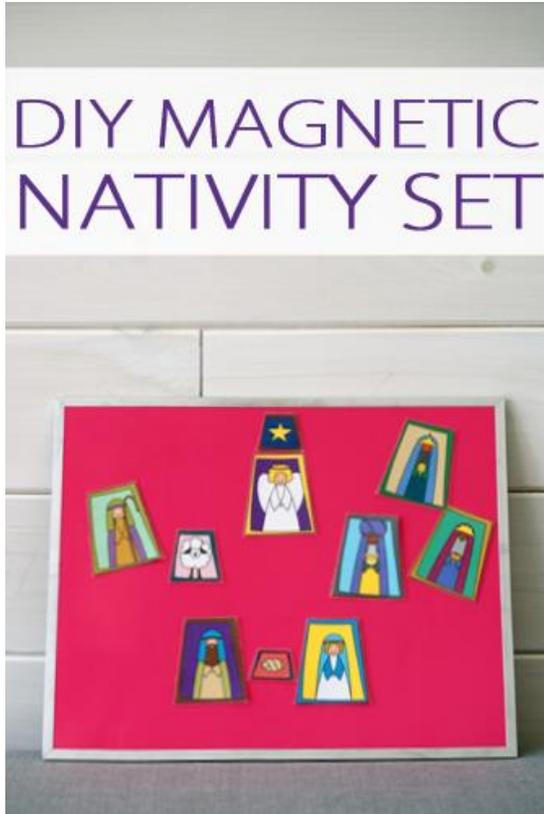
The Jesse Tree project takes place December 1 through 25. It's similar to an advent calendar, but it's more about tracing the history of the coming of Jesus.

For this particular set of ornaments, you'll need to cut 25 squares (3 inches x 3 inches) that can be used as backers for the coloring ornaments. These backers could be made from cardstock or scrapbook paper. Print the ornaments found in this document.

Each day read the scripture and color the corresponding ornament picture. Cut out the picture, and attach it to one of the square backers that you cut. Punch a little hole in the backer paper, and thread a ribbon through it. Hang your ornaments on a small tree, some branches in a vase, or whatever works for you. There's no right or wrong way to do it.

The final day's scripture tells of the journey to Bethlehem and the birth of Christ. You may want to begin your Christmas day by placing this final ornament on your Jesse Tree.

## 89 :: {Magnetic} Nativity Set



*When our oldest girls were all little, I printed and colored a set of "The Hungry Caterpillar" printables, cut them out, covered them in contact paper and added a magnet to each piece, and that set has seen hours and hours and hours of play from all four girls.*

*This year I printed out a fresh color copy of the printable nativity set and created this little magnetic set, and our four-year-old loves it! The contact paper makes the pieces durable, so hopefully it will be a set that our new little one enjoys in the years to come as well.*

### Supplies:

- [printable nativity set](#) (preferably on cardstock)
- scissors
- contact paper
- magnet tape

### Directions:

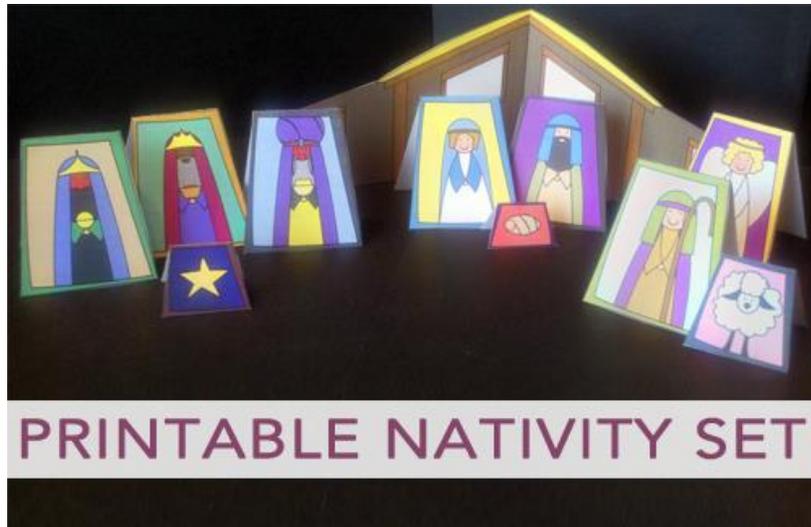
If you haven't already, start by printing a nativity set onto cardstock (color it if you're using the black and white version!), and then cut out all of the pieces.

Carefully peel the back off the contact paper and lay the pieces out with 1/2" between the pieces all the way around. If you're very talented, you can probably do all of the pieces at once; otherwise you might want to cut out smaller pieces of contact paper and do just a few at a time so that you can get the contact paper smooth on both sides (ask me how I know!).

Once your pieces are laid out, take a second piece of contact paper, peel off the backing and lay it on the back of the pieces you already did (sticky side together). Cut out each piece, leaving a 1/8-1/4" edge of contact paper around the cardstock.

Cut strips of magnet from your magnet tape and attach to the back of each piece.

## 90 :: {Printable} Nativity Set



Bringing the nativity story to life has always been an important part of our Christmas celebration. Just last year Emma captivated us with [her retelling of Jesus' birth](#). She used her Bible and her nativity set and moved the little characters around as she read each part of the story.

Like last year's [Jesse Tree ornaments](#), this [printable nativity set](#) helps your kids bring the birth of Jesus to life!

Print the set in full color, or print a black and white set and color the pieces (individually or as a family). These little characters are in for hours of playtime at our house, and I hope your family enjoys retelling the Christmas story along with us.

[Click here to download or print the paper nativity set.](#)

## 91 :: Photo Booth Props



Shaina from [Food for My Family](#) recently came for a visit—both to hang out and to take family photos for us. Among the many fun things she brought with her were a pack of cardboard mustaches, glasses and lips to use as photo props.

The girls were so excited to play with these, and I decided to make some stencils of my own so that we could create sturdier versions made out of stiff felt rather than paper that gets bent up and ruined.

These would make great photo props for your Christmas card photo, or use them as stocking stuffers!

[Click here to download or print your photo booth templates.](#)

## 92 :: Partridge in a Pear Tree Postcards



I love sending Christmas postcards rather than regular cards because the postage is less expensive and it saves me the extra step of stuffing and sealing envelopes!

These come four to a page, and the design goes all the way to the edge, so if your printer can print to the edge, you'll just need to cut along the middle lines. If your printer adds a margin around the outside, you should be able to easily cut that off using [a portable paper cutter](#) (I use mine all the time, and it's been well worth the \$15 investment!) without losing any of the design itself.

You'll want to print these on 80 lb. paper (or higher) to be sure they're thick enough for mailing.

[Click here to download or print these postcards.](#)

## 93 :: Partridge in a Pear Tree Tags



These gifts tags are available in two different sizes to share with you. The gift tags are one sided, but you can choose from two backs for the square cards. Simply print page 1, flip your paper over and print either page 2 or page 3 for an easy double-sided card!

Click below to print your gift tags:

- [Partridge in a Pear Tree Square Cards](#)
- [Partridge in a Pear Tree Gift Tags](#)

## 94 :: Photo Ornaments



### PRINTABLE PHOTO ORNAMENTS

One of our Christmas traditions is making Christmas ornaments. It's so fun to look back each year and appreciate the previous years' handmade ornaments.

These [printable photo ornaments](#) will help you make some personalized ornaments with your own photos. You can print one of three different bulb images, trim them, cut out the oval in the center, and attach a photo behind each bulb so it shows through on the front.

Or print the coloring book version of the ornaments and let your kids color the bulbs, trim, and add the photos.

The last page of the printable is a backer that you can attach over the photo back to give your ornament a finished look. When you're done, punch a hole through the top and add a loop of decorative ribbon or twine to hang it.

These would be perfect for decorating your tree or as handmade gift tags for Christmas gift-giving. You could even opt to not punch the hole in the top and attach a magnet to the back for a fun refrigerator magnet.

[Click here to download or print the set of photo ornaments.](#)

## 95 :: Popsicle Stick Nativity Puppets



### Supplies:

- [printable nativity puppet set](#) (preferably on cardstock)
- scissors
- glue or double-sided tape
- popsicle sticks
- contact paper (optional)

### Directions:

If you haven't already, start by printing a nativity set onto cardstock, and then cut out all of the pieces.

To make the puppets more durable, seal each cutout between two pieces of contact paper before attaching to the popsicle stick.

Glue each piece to the end of a popsicle stick (most of the pieces match up almost perfectly at the top, with the exception of baby Jesus in the manger and the star).

Be sure to give the glue time to dry before playing with them.

When I shared the [magnetic nativity set I made](#) with Jennifer & Jason, they came up with the fun idea of popsicle stick puppets as another way for kids to interact with the nativity set. To make them easier to cut out and attach to the popsicle sticks, [we made a few changes to the printable](#), and then I created a set of puppets for our family.

I love how these turned out, and my girls were pretty excited to figure out what I was doing so that they could put on their own little puppet shows!

## 96 :: Ribbon Bookmark Cards



*I've seen a few versions of ribbon paperclip bookmarks on Pinterest, and I thought they would make the perfect classroom gifts for my girls to give their friends in our homeschool group. The only problem is that a bookmark with a few ribbons tied on the end—while absolutely adorable when used in a book—is not exactly an easy gift to hand out (or keep track of!), so I created these [“Happy ‘Owl-idays” postcards](#) to hold the bookmarks.*

*I think they turned out so cute, and my oldest had so much fun making these for her friends.*

### Supplies:

- ribbon in a variety of colors (the thinner the better)
- paperclips, plain or colored
- cardstock
- scissors
- exacto knife or razor blade

### Directions:

Print out the [“Happy ‘Owl-idays” postcards](#) on cardstock (they print 4 to a page). Cut them out and use an exacto knife or razor blade to cut the slit for the paperclips.

Cut your ribbon in 5-6” pieces. Tie 3-4 pieces onto the end of each paperclip.

Insert a paperclip into the slit of each postcard.

That’s it—easy, fun and cute!

## 97 :: Santa Letter Templates



Because I know Santa is a fun tradition for many of your families, I made these Santa letter templates for you. Use the [Dear Santa letter](#) for your child to write to Santa (plus it's a great way to figure out what they really want for Christmas *and* get in some letter writing/handwriting practice!) and then use [Santa's Letterhead](#) to write a note back!

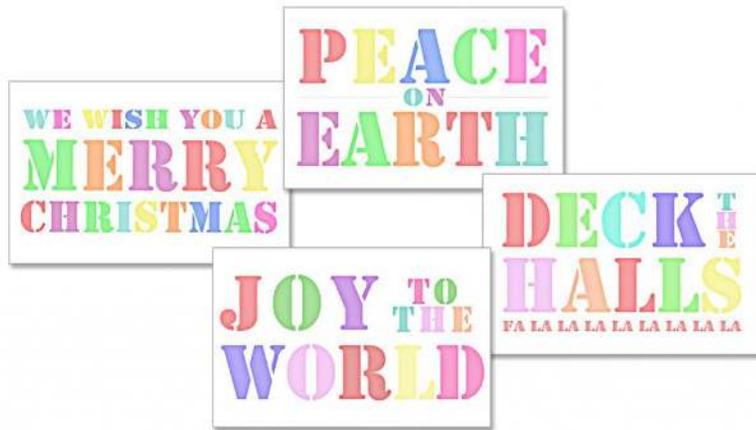
Click the links below to download or print both templates:

- [Dear Santa Letter](#)
- [Santa's Letterhead](#)

First, a confession: We don't really "do" Santa at our house. He's a fun character, but we tend to treat him like Minnie Mouse or Dora or any number of other characters—fun but clearly pretend—and we talk a lot about the historical St. Nick. But Santa doesn't bring the gifts. (Why should he get the credit for our hard work? Ha!)

That said, it's not something I feel especially strong about for other people, just the way our family personally chooses to celebrate, and I have a lot of really great memories of Santa from when I was growing up. Like the year I was *sure* I heard jingle bells and someone on the roof. I don't think my parents went to any great lengths to make me believe, but whatever I heard that night had me I pretty well convinced for many years!

## 98 :: Stencil Cards



When I first planned to make these colorful stencil cards, I was not thinking about how very tedious it is to outline and color in 10-15 letters per card, not to mention trying to get them all aligned just perfectly, etc.

Because my goal for this series is to provide realistic, doable DIY projects, I decided that creating printable cards that you could print and send was better aligned with that goal.

Each of these cards prints on an 8.5×11" piece of paper and can then be folded in half. I'd recommend using cardstock so that they're sturdier, and you can purchase [A7 envelopes](#) for as low as \$11 for a 100-ct. package.

[Click here to download or print the cards.](#)

## 99 :: Subway Art



Looking for a simple printable Christmas card? Here's a fun subway art card I made just for you! Just print, fold and send.

[Click here to download or print the subway art Christmas card.](#)

## 100 :: Thank You Card Templates



Saying thank you when someone helps you or gives you something is one of the simplest forms of that lesson. As children learn to write, this includes expressing gratitude in a written form.

**Yes, we still believe in the power of a good old-fashioned thank you note.**

I can imagine that staring at a blank notecard is fairly intimidating, though, especially for the reluctant writer.

This month we're offering a solution that will help kids say thank you without the battle of writing a long thank you note. These fill-in-the-blank thank you notes give kids a starting point. They simply add the recipient's name(s), what they're saying thank you for, and their own name. Hopefully this make saying thank you a fun task!

[Click here to download or print these fun templates.](#)

## 101 :: Treat Bag Tags



I love to package various homemade treats in cellophane treat bags. They're much less expensive than cookie tins, looks festive, easy to prepare and transport large batches, etc.

My packaging usually includes a pretty ribbon tied around the bag and curled—often with a [hanging gift tag](#) added—but this year I wanted to try something else, so I made these [printable treat bag tags](#)!

To use, print the [treat bag labels](#). Cut out along the solid lines and fold each tag at the dotted lines. Fill your treat bags, align a tag at the top of each one and staple in place. Don't forget to fill out the back of the tag!

[Click here to download or print the treat bag tags](#)

## BONUS :: Make Ahead Breakfasts



*While overnight dishes are my favorite ones to serve on Christmas because they allow me to focus on my family while still serving a delicious meal, they're not just for Christmas morning! Overnight breakfasts are perfect for the entire holiday season, with its extra hustle and bustle, especially travel days and those days with holiday functions (whether you're attending or hosting).*

*Some of these breakfast dishes are assembled the night before and baked in the morning. Some are baked ahead of time. And many can be frozen and then thawed and baked when you're ready for them!*

### Egg Dishes

Making eggs, bacon and toast for our whole clan can be time prohibitive on early mornings, so I am a fan of egg breakfasts that can be made ahead of time. The first casserole below is a family favorite, but I also love filling the freezer with egg sandwiches and burritos that we can pull out, reheat and enjoy as needed!

- [Sausage- or Bacon-and-Egg Casserole](#)
- [Egg Muffins](#)
- [Make-Ahead Egg McMuffins](#)
- [Breakfast Burritos](#)
- [Crock Pot Egg Casserole](#)
- [Baked Egg Cups](#)

### Baked Oatmeal

Baked oatmeal is almost like having breakfast cake or granola bars for breakfast! Prepare the oatmeal the night before and then transfer from the fridge to oven in the morning for a quick and easy breakfast.

- [Cherry Almond Baked Oatmeal](#)
- [Apple Cinnamon Baked Oatmeal](#)
- [Pumpkin Pie Baked Oatmeal](#)
- [Raspberry Baked Oatmeal](#)

### Steel Cut Oats in a Slow Cooker

Our family really likes the texture of steel cut oats, and these easy slow cooker recipes cook all night so that you wake up to a delicious aroma and a warm breakfast!

- [Apple Cinnamon Steel Cut Oats](#)
- [Cherry Almond Steel Cut Oats](#)
- [Pumpkin Pie Steel Cut Oats](#)
- [Banana & Coconut Milk Steel Cut Oats](#)

## Refrigerator Oatmeal

I recently discovered refrigerator oatmeal, also known as muesli, through Monica at [The Yummy Life](#) and let me tell you: this truly does deserve a category of its own. With a combination of yogurt, oats and various flavorings, muesli makes a filling and delicious breakfast or snack!

- [Muesli or Refrigerator Oatmeal \(part 1\) and \(part 2\)](#)
- [Vegan Overnight Oat Parfaits](#)
- [Vegan Overnight Quinoa Cereal](#)

## More Oats

Here are a few more make-ahead breakfasts from versatile oats!

- [Instant Oatmeal Packets](#)
- [Overnight Granola](#)
- [Peanut Butter Granola](#)
- [Carrot Cherry Breakfast Cookies](#)

## Overnight French Toast Casseroles

Baked french toast has a bread pudding-like texture and is the perfect use for bread that's going stale. Assemble these casseroles the night before and then pop in the oven in the morning for a hot and flavorful breakfast!

- [Cranberry-Apple French Toast](#)
- [Baked Pull-Apart Pumpkin French Toast](#)
- [Cranberry-Almond Stuffed French Toast](#)
- [Orange Blossom & Almond French Toast](#)

## Baked Goods

Prepare scones, coffee cakes, cinnamon rolls and other baked goods the day before and serve them either cold or warmed up in the morning, or freeze an extra batch to enjoy later.

Hint: For easy, fresh muffins, prepare your favorite muffin batter, scoop it into cupcake liners and freeze uncooked. Move the cups directly from the freezer to the oven and cook for just a little bit longer than usual for hot muffins without the prep work!

- [Vegan Cacao Nib and Chocolate Chunk Scones](#)
- [Pumpkin Cranberry Scones](#)
- [Pumpkin Pie Coffee Cake with Crumbled Pecan Topping](#)
- [Blueberry Coffee Cake](#)
- [Apple Pie Coffee Cake](#)
- [Pumpkin Cinnamon Rolls](#)
- [Apple Bacon Breakfast Cake](#)

## Fruit & Yogurt

And finally, here are a few more recipes featuring fresh fruit and tasty yogurt for a healthy, refreshing start to the day:

- [Make-Ahead Smoothie Packets](#)
- [Refrigerator Smoothies](#)
- [Fruity Breakfast Burritos](#)

## ABOUT

Mandi Ehman is an entrepreneur, online publisher and author who is passionate about encouraging other women to live intentionally. She's the blogger behind [Life Your Way](#), the author of [Easy Homemade](#) and the founder of [JungleDealsandSteals.com](#). Mandi and her husband have four spunky little girls plus one baby boy, and together they live, work and homeschool on a little slice of heaven in wild, wonderful West Virginia.

### Other digital products available:

#### Live :: Creating a life you love.

On January 1, 2014, Mandi is launching [Live](#), a 12-month course, designed to help you walk through a different area of intentional living each month. With contributors like [Tsh Oxenreider](#), [Crystal Paine](#), [Andrea Dekker](#), [Anne Bogel](#), [Lisa Grace Byrne](#), [Jamie Martin](#), [Meagan Francis](#) and [Sarah Mae](#) sharing their experiences and encouragement each month, this course offers a step-by-step approach that helps you focus on one area of your life at a time to create real, lasting changes and a life you truly love.

#### Easy Homemade

[Easy Homemade](#) features recipes for more than 80 homemade kitchen staples as well as kitchen tips, information about choosing various ingredients, and more. As a self-proclaimed kitchen dunce, Mandi is far from an accomplished chef, but she's found that making things from scratch—even the things we typically buy without even considering that we could make them at home—is actually pretty easy. She's passionate about empowering other busy families to do the same with tried-and-true recipes that can be made with basic ingredients and don't require a lot of time.

#### Life Your Way Printables Complete Download Pack

The [Life Your Way Complete Download Pack](#) includes more than 200 home management printables plus dozens of "pretty" printables for kids and the holidays *plus* free monthly email updates with new printables! Every day we walk around with thousands of pieces of information crowding our brains: birthdays and other important dates, shoe sizes and cleaning schedules, menu plans and bills that are due. With the Life Your Way printables, you're able to get all of the information out of your brain and onto paper so you can free up your mind for things like enjoying your family, rediscovering your creativity and improving your productivity.