



The Zen Home's 'Christmas Doesn't 'Just Happen'' Prep List.

(Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, & Happy Thanksgiving!)

Do note: This has been written with the person who is hosting a festive gathering in mind, but lots of it also applies to everyone. This has NOT been written to presume that an individual must feel the need to take on all of this alone, or indeed AT ALL. It's been written for those of us who want to make the holiday time slightly more special than the rest of the year for ourselves as well, and who know that 'Christmas doesn't just happen' without some prior planning and preparation. DO DISCUSS the tasks at hand and delegate /divide among the people around you so that EVERYONE can have a relaxing and peaceful holiday celebration.

READY? Here we go!

Items you'll probably want to have completed by now:

- Book all party venues / restaurants
- Book grocery delivery slots
- Book Santa's Grotto visits, if necessary, otherwise – just plan for when & where you'll see the big guy.
- Double check arrangements for gatherings – who's going to be where, when and who's staying over.
- Buy holiday cards and begin writing or at least addressing
- Make your gift list (don't forget teachers, service providers, Stocking Stuffers, etc)
- Take inventory of any gifts you've purchased throughout the year
- Investigate any shows or outings you'd like to see or do before Christmas or during the school break.

6 More Weeks (Week of 13 NOV)

- Review tasks above and complete any unfinished items.

TRADITIONS

- Continue to work through your gift list – consider experiential or consumable gifts (less clutter!)
- Start wrapping gifts if you are really keen! **TOP TIP** – if wrapping for little kids, pre-cut those annoying wires and fasteners in the packaging to save you AND the little one frustration upon opening!
- Continue writing cards

DECORATING

- (mostly for Americans) Consider putting your outdoor lights up now, while the weather's not yet frigid!

COOKING / BAKING

- Make sure you have your Thanksgiving turkey ordered or purchased.
- Plan your Thanksgiving meal, if you are hosting, and create a detailed food shopping list.
- Buy your non-perishable items for next week now, and your turkey, if you haven't already.

OTHER

- List here:

5 More Weeks (Week of 20 NOV)

Thanksgiving is this week – Thursday the 24th.

Review all previous weeks' tasks and work on any unfinished items.

GATHERING / HOSTING

Focus on Thanksgiving responsibilities, whether hosting or being a guest

TRADITIONS

Continue to work on gifts and cards.

Prepare your Advent calendar if you do this - Advent will begin on Sunday the 27th.

COOKING / BAKING

Prepare Thanksgiving food needed... plan your shopping so as to avoid supermarkets on Wednesday at all costs!

OTHER

List here:

4 More Weeks (Week of 27 NOV)

This is the first Sunday of Advent (27 Nov)

Review all previous weeks' tasks and work on any unfinished items.

GATHERING / HOSTING

Make sure you have all necessary beds & bedding for overnight guests

Tidy / deep clean your guest room, if needed

Take stock of your chairs and check your crockery & cutlery. Make arrangements to borrow or use disposable

TRADITIONS

Start the advent calendar

Finish all gift shopping (a bold goal, but GO FOR IT!)

Do all in the family have all necessary clothing or costumes for events / shows / etc?

If applicable, review any annual charitable donations you'd like to make.

DECORATING

Take items from storage

Sort and decide what goes where

Donate any unneeded decorative items – the charity shops need them NOW!

Buy (or make!) any new items needed (do the lights all work?)

COOKING / BAKING

Restock the pantry with any baking essentials used up during Thanksgiving

Pre-order Christmas turkey?

OTHER

List here:

3 More Weeks (Week of 4 DEC)

___ Review all previous weeks' tasks and work on any unfinished items.

GATHERING / HOSTING

___ Create a 'busy box' or toy box for any young guests – their parents will ADORE you for it.

TRADITIONS

___ Send international parcels / gifts / cards

___ Send domestic cards too, if they are ready!

___ Wrap gifts

DECORATING

___ Hey, why not put up the tree and decorate?

COOKING / BAKING

___ Start planning your menus, especially if you will be serving multiple meals.

OTHER

___ List here:

2 More Weeks (Week of 11 DEC)

___ Review all previous weeks' tasks and work on any unfinished items.

GATHERING / HOSTING

___ Make guest beds

___ Make sure any airbeds, pumps, batteries, etc, are working.

___ Double-check all travel plans (yours or theirs!)

TRADITIONS

___ Distribute gifts to teachers, service-providers, neighbours, etc.

___ **Make time to put your feet up and relax with your favourite hot drink, please!**

DECORATING

___ If having a real tree, this is probably the week to buy it.

COOKING / BAKING

___ Decide how much and *what* you want to bake – add those ingredients to your shopping list

___ Make a detailed list of all food needed for the big shop next week.

OTHER

___ List here:

1 More Week (Week of 18 DEC)

___ Review all previous weeks' tasks and work on any unfinished items.

GATHERING / HOSTING

- ___ Clean the house: tidy, dust, vacuum. Clean the bathrooms and kitchen on the day of arrival.
- ___ Clean out the fridge.

TRADITIONS

- ___ **You still have your feet up, right?**
- ___ Last minute gift wrapping
- ___ Check the schedule of any religious services you might want to attend

COOKING / BAKING

- ___ Final / Last-minute food shop
- ___ Freezer space and food type allowing, considering part-prepping and freezing items in advance.
- ___ Have fun baking!

OTHER

___ List here:

At this point, let it go!

If it hasn't been done, let it go! If you forgot something, let it go! Usually the very best holiday memories are from when things didn't go exactly to plan. Take the time to simply love and enjoy your people.

*Love and Peace to you this winter –
may you feel rested and rejuvenated moving into 2017.*