



The Ultimate Christmas Planner



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Welcome

Thank you for choosing The Ultimate My Christmas Planner to help you create stress-free Christmas celebrations. Sometimes Christmas can seem daunting. Presents, cards, cooking, guests, cleaning, and the list goes on. We created this planner to help you simplify your Christmas so you can experience what Christmas is truly meant to be ... a joy-filled celebration with your loved ones.

I invite you to get a cup of tea, take a breath and spend 30 minutes looking through the simple strategies, fun ideas and templates to make your Christmas easy.

Three important notes to remember as you read through this planner:

- 1.** What's important to you is what matters. Fancy Christmas cookies, elaborate parties and impeccable wrapping may be your thing and if it is – great. But if it's not, then please don't spend your time worrying about it. Instead figure out and focus on what makes you smile this Christmas; don't worry about what your neighbour Betty is up to. Really!
- 2.** Don't aim for PERFECT – go for INSPIRED instead! The thought that something has to be perfect can be paralysing. If you want to try something new, give it a go. Whether it's holding a casual Christmas gathering, holiday baking with the kids, or making a centrepiece for the table, success is not whether it looks the same as the Pinterest photo – success is the joy and fun of the experience and the memories you create.
- 3.** Do what works for you. This planner is filled with loads of easy tips to put joy at the top of your list this year, and templates to ensure there is something for everyone; however, EASY is the objective, so choose the templates that work for you.

My personal favourite pages are the Family Traditions and the Holiday Planner which I do each year with my children. (Hint: This list becomes a keepsake to remind me of Christmases past.)

I wish you a relaxed, happy and fun Christmas Day. I hope that with the help of this planner, you can enjoy not only Christmas Day, but can find time to enjoy other activities and your family and friends throughout the Christmas season.

Cheers,
Nicole
Owner, My Christmas



Creating Traditions

Traditions cultivate a sense of belonging and create fond memories and family stories that can be passed along for generations. A tradition can be as simple as decorating the tree together on the same night each year, or as elaborate as a styled Christmas party. Focusing on creating your own unique traditions can be a lot of fun. The key is to decide what kind of traditions you want for your family: traditions remembered for their fun and humour, or more meaningful ones that celebrate spirituality and giving. Or both?



Here are some Christmas traditions you can add to your holiday season.

- Elf on the Shelf can be so much fun
- Advent calendars for the children
- Have the children buy a special tree decoration each year
- Decorate the Christmas tree together
- Watch Christmas movies or listening to Christmas carols
- Christmas baking or card making with the kids
- Cookie (or biscuit) exchange
- Visit Santa
- Christmas Festivals/City Displays
- Have the children leave out a note, and food for Santa and the reindeer
- Choose presents with the children to put under a wishing tree
- Go to a Carols by Candlelight event
- Create the Holidays Bucket list together.



TOP 5 'TAKE IT EASY' TIPS

I enjoy a shortcut. I admit it. I'm not looking to make my life more chaotic than it already is. Of all the information in this Planner, these are my Ultimate Top 5 Tips to help you create a great Christmas season.



1 Take Photos of your Planner

Taking a photo on your phone means you always have your notes and 'to do' items with you when you are out and about. As you update your list simply delete the old photo and upload a new one and your information on hand will always be current.

2 Ask for help.

Whether it is preparing part of the Christmas Day meal, helping with the cleaning up, or simply picking up the kids from school or an activity, If someone offers you help gracefully accept it.

Another way of receiving help is if you can incorporate it in your budget. For example, at our annual Christmas party I always get a couple of teenagers (friend's children) to help with the serving and cleaning up. This way I can enjoy the evening talking with my friends.



3 Break down the task

With some of the bigger Christmas tasks (e.g. setting up the Christmas tree or making a gingerbread house) I break the job down into components. For example, when putting up your tree, set up the tree and lights one day and decorate the following day. When creating a gingerbread house, do the baking one day and the decorating another.

4 Don't like cooking? Then don't.

If you don't like cooking then minimise it. Cake shops, delis and supermarkets have vast ranges of delicious pre-baked Christmas goodies you can choose instead of cooking yourself. When choosing your Christmas Day feast why not buy items such as a pre-stuffed and rolled turkey or chicken rather than doing it all yourself?

5 Minimise the housework.

I know in the ideal world we would all have perfectly clean homes with a place for everything and everything in its place. Well, it doesn't always happen like that. When friends come over they are not there checking out whether there is dust behind the fridge, or a cobweb or two in the corner. They are there to catch up with you and that is all that matters. Try and keep tidying throughout the season but December might not be the easiest month to decide to have a spring clean.

Stress Free Checklist

8 weeks to go

- Confirm Christmas party date and send out invitations.
- If you have a Kris Kringle for gift giving, organise now.
- Update your calendar adding parties, social events and school activities.
- Set your Christmas budget (see budget planner and tips to make this easy)
- Check out your freezer and fridge and start clearing it out. You will need room for your Christmas day feast.
- Start baking anything you can freeze.

6 weeks to go

- Start working on your gift shopping list. List everyone you need to buy for.



- Research your shopping on-line. If you are buying anything from overseas sites you will want to order soon to ensure no delays with delivery.
- If sending cards or parcels overseas, now is the time to send them.



5 weeks to go

- Create your Christmas card list and buy your cards and stamps. (Hint: if you don't have time to send cards, it is ok to choose not to send any).
- Get your Christmas decorations out and check that everything is in order. If you need to replace lights or decorations, do this now.
- Declutter your home, ready for your Christmas decorating.

4 weeks to go

- Put up your Christmas tree.
- Wrap presents as you buy them and put straight under the tree.
- Send Christmas cards.
- Start stocking up on non-perishable food and drinks you see on special.
- Try and complete the majority of your gift buying.
- Make your Christmas cake or pudding.
- Confirm Christmas Day plans.
- Order your meat and seafood for Christmas Day.



3 weeks to go

- If Christmas Day is at your home, make sure you have enough tableware (i.e. plates, cutlery, glasses, table cloth (if using), serving platters, plus Christmas supplies including bonbons, napkins, centre piece, table runner, etc.)

Tip: If you are catering for large numbers it is possible to get lovely quality disposable plates, cups and even cutlery, if required.

- Ensure you are stocked up with drinks for a Christmas party, Christmas Day and the general holiday period.
- The perfect week to bake (e.g. gifts or your gingerbread house).
- When out shopping don't forget to buy batteries for toys.

2 weeks to go

- Re-check your present list and aim to complete. Also check that any items ordered on-line have arrived or follow up if required so there is plenty of time for them to get to you prior to Christmas.
- Do your big clean including outdoor entertaining areas and front door.

Christmas Eve

- Pick up your ordered meat and seafood. (Our market is always so busy it is best to be there early morning).
- Prepare foods that can be made ahead of time, plate them and store in the fridge.
- All nibbles can be put in bowls ready to serve.
- Buy ice and keep drinks cool in ice buckets. (You will need more ice on Christmas Day but this will keep the drinks out of your fridge, leaving room for food).
- Final clean of the home.
- If you are entertaining outside, clean the outside table/s, sweep the outdoor area.
- Make sure your camera/video is charged and ready for the big day.

Christmas Day

- If you are hosting Christmas Day, follow your Christmas Day Planner Template to help take the stress out of when to cook and serve your food.
- Buy more ice and fill ice buckets.
- If entertaining outside, set the table.
- Relax and enjoy this very special day with your loved ones.



Decorating Tips

I love decorating for Christmas! I also prefer to work with “less is more” and focus on a few key areas in y home rather than fill every nook and cranny with Christmas knick-knacks. A wreath on the front door, a simple table display as you enter your home, and a gorgeous Christmas tree are the 3 key areas to decorate. If your Christmas tree is not in your living room (e.g. in a formal lounge) you can also include a tabletop display or a small Christmas tree in the living area. Here are some simple decorating tips focussing on the primary areas of your house. These will make a great impact with little effort:



Tree

- Fairy lights and more fairy lights. If nothing else, make sure your Christmas tree is full of beautiful fairy lights. (Preferably LED so they are safer and use less power).
- When dressing the tree turn the lights on as you put them around the tree. This way you will easily see if there any gaps.
- Check out the My Christmas blog as well as our Pinterest, Instagram and Facebook pages for some simple DIY decorating ideas.

Dining Table

- A table runner with a vase full of baubles is a great festive touch on your dining table, side board or mantel.
- I'm a sucker for fresh flowers. In the lead-up to Christmas, and especially when I have guests arriving, I have a beautiful bunch of flowers that co-ordinate with my Christmas colours. Christmas lilies and red gladioli are a favourite big, showy display. For a smaller display, tightly-packed red roses are a beautiful classic option.





- Alternatively, if I know I'm not going to have the time or money to go to the florist regularly but want something a little more creative than a vase of baubles, I keep a gorgeous centrepiece on the runner throughout December.

Table / Mantle

- If you are adding decorations to a table or mantel, declutter the area first. If you want a little more 'wow' try a green garland with lights wrapped through it. Simple, effective and can be used on a mantel, side table, buffet or staircase.
- Another simple and effective option is a table top tree. Add a few small decorations or leave it plain.

Front Door / Balcony / Garage:

- Want something outside. A large lit wreath is a great decoration for a balcony or the front of a garage. (You could even use solar lights).
- If you want to be really creative, add a lit garland to the front door/porch area.

- Have something lit at your front door. It use to be the Christmas tree in the formal lounge, but now most people have their tree in their living area. A simple lit twig tree is a great option.



VISIT OUR **RETAIL** STORE OR SHOP **ONLINE** AT

427 Canterbury Road
Surrey Hills VIC 3127
Australia

(Open September – December each year)

W www.mychristmas.com.au

T 1 300 551 960

E customerservice@mychristmas.com.au

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