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- **4.** HOMETOWN CELEBRATIONS ACROSS THE NATION
- **6.** CRANBERRY BARBECUE MINI MEATBALLS
- 8. WINE CORK HOLIDAY WREATH-DIY
- **10. CINNAMON ORNAMENTS**
- **12.** HOLIDAY CHRISTMAS LIGHTS PROJECT: LIGHTS & ORNAMENTS IN GLASS BOWL
- 14. STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING

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CINNAMON STICK CHRISTMAS TREES

Supplies needed:

- · Long cinnamon sticks
- Assorted ribbon
- Scissors
- · Glue gun and glue
- Twine

Cut six pieces ribbon into lengths of 9-10 inches each.
Tie the six pieces of ribbon around a cinnamon stick, starting at the top and working towards the bottom. A simple knot will do. Leave a little room between each ribbon.

With scissors (grownups can help!), start at the top ribbon and cut down at an outward diagonal. Your ribbon should be longest at the bottom. Repeat on the other side. Cut desired length of twine for your hanger. Make a loop with the twine and secure ends to the top of your "tree" with a drop of glue. Tie a small bow with a piece of extra ribbon and glue over the ends

Let dry and hang on the tree!

of your twine loop.



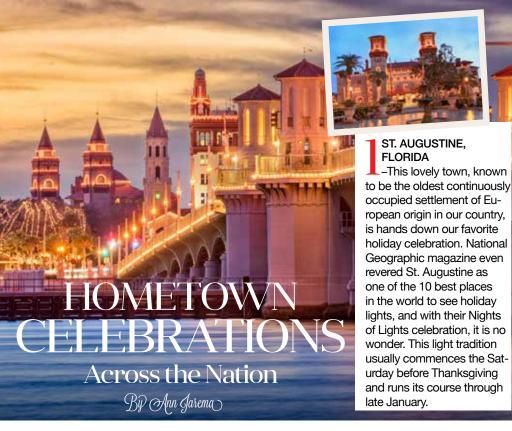
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IF YOU LOVE TO TRAVEL AND LOOK FORWARD TO GETTING INTO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT EVERY YEAR, WHY NOT COMBINE YOUR TWO PASSIONS? EVERY YEAR, SMALL TOWNS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES GET THEIR HOLIDAY ON WITH CELEBRATIONS THAT ARE SURE TO DELIGHT EVEN THE SCROOGES AMONG US. CHECK OUT THIS LIST FOR SOME OF OUR FAVORITE HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS ACROSS THE NATION.

DURANGO, COLORADO -If you loved the 2004 film The Polar Express" or the book that inspired it by Chris Van Allsburg, then this town will make you want to shout "All aboard!" Durango provides you with your very own "Polar Express" experience complete with chefs, a hobo, the conductor, the Hero Bov. Billv. elves. and Santa himself. Enjoy hot chocolate while listening to the story on your way to North Pole. And look forward to a personal visit to your train car from Santa!

ASHEVILLE, NORTH
CAROLINA – While your
Christmas adventure may
begin in Asheville, it certainly

won't stop there. Several of the surrounding towns, all inspired by Norman Rockwell, get into the spirit too. Plan to stop through Forest City, Bryson City, Hendersonville, Dillsboro, Beech Mountain and Banner Elk, Sylva, Saluda, Waynesville, Rutherfordton, Brevard, Morganton, and the Biltmore Village to take in the numerous charming streets, light displays and holiday shopping.









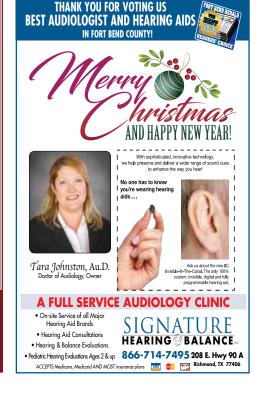
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ith the holiday season just around the comer, it's time to start thinking about how to adom your home to help you celebrate. If you have used the same old decorations year after year, now is the time to make something new! And if you have enjoyed a bottle of wine over the past few months or years, you may have corks sitting around. Of course, if you don't have any spare corks lying around, you can make a trip to your nearby restaurant and ask them if they can hold any corks for you over the coming weeks. You might even get lucky and they'll have some sitting around for you. If this doesn't work for you, most craft stores carry cork by the bag, which makes it easy to make a large project like this one.

In just a few hours, you can have your very own wine cork wreath ready to hang over the mantle, on the front door or anywhere in your home. And not only do these wreaths look great on display, they make great gifts too.

To get started, collect the following supplies and ensure they are within arm's reach in your crafting comer. If you don't have a favorite crafting place, you can easily set up shop in your kitchen, laundry room, garage or anywhere that provides you the space to work easily.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- 14" Styrofoam wreath
- 20 mini glue sticks and a mini hot glue gun
- 6 to 7 yards of ribbon (color of your choice—we suggest red)
- 2 ft ribbon for bow (color of your choice – we suggest red)
- X-ACTO knife or similar craft-type cutting device (a straight chef's knife will also suffice)
- 4 ft brown craft paper
- 1 bottle tacky glue
- 100 satin crafting pins (to adhere the thin ribbon for decoration)
- 100-140 wine corks







DIRECTIONS:

- Ocover your foam wreath with the craft paper using tacky glue. Think of this in the same way you wrap a wrist or ankle with an Ace bandage. Continue until the entire wreath is covered with craft paper. One layer of craft paper will suffice.
- Taking your X-ACTO knife, clip the ends of each cork at a small angle. Perfection isn't necessary here. In fact, the variability will create some interesting dimension for your wreath. Note, if you are going for a red wreath or want to create a unique look, consider inconsistency on

which end of the cork to snip. You may want to showcase the natural red from a red wine on some of the cork ends, and then have a more cork-look to the others.

- ② Laying your wrapped wreath flat on your work space, and using your hot glue, start gluing the corks around the middle of the spine of the wreath. (The glue goes on the angled portion of the cork). Keep adding rows until you have worked all the way around your wreath, in multiple rows.
- 4 Add your embellishments and other desired decorations with the craft pins. Twisted bows or bursts of ribbon bundles coming from in between the corks create a lovely look and help to break up the monotony of the corks.
- S Add your ribbon to the top or bottom front of the wreath (this is truly up to personal preference).
- Allow your wreath to dry overnight. Once dry, add a hook or an additional segment of looped ribbon to the top back of the wreath, to create ease in hanging. This is a personal preference as well, as some prefer to hang the wreath simply by the wreath itself, without using a hook.

Voila! Your wreath is ready to help you welcome the holidays!







WHAT COULD BE BETTER THAN HAND-MADE ORNAMENTS THAT MAKE YOUR HOME SMELL LIKE CHRISTMAS? KIDS WILL LOVE GETTING TO CUT OUT FESTIVE SHAPES FOR CINNA-MON APPLESAUCE ORNAMENTS AND CHOOSING RIBBON PATTERNS AND COL-ORS FOR CINNAMON STICK CHRISTMAS TREES, PERFECT CHRISTMAS SCENT. PERFECT CHRIST-MAS CHARM.

CINNAMON APPLESAUCE ORNAMENTS



Supplies needed:

- ½ cup applesauce
- ½ cup ground cinnamon, plus some for dusting
- 1 tsp school glue
- Rolling pin
- · Festive cookie cutters
- Spatula
- · Baking sheet
- Twine or ribbon

Mix the applesauce, ground cinnamon and glue. The dough will be very sticky! Sprinkle some cinnamon on the surface where you want to roll out your dough. Shake some cinnamon on the rolling pin, as well. Roll out dough until it's about ½ inch thick.

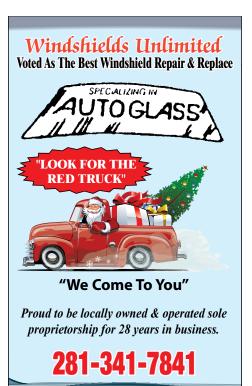
Use festive cookie cutters to cut out ornaments. Make a hole near the top of the ornament. A pen or a straw works great for this. Make the hole a little bigger than you think it needs to be. It will shrink in the oven.

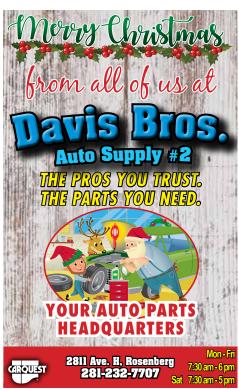
Using the spatula,

carefully transfer ornaments to the baking sheet (great time for grown-ups to help!). Bake at 200 degrees Fahrenheit for 90 minutes, or let air dry for several days... if you can wait! Once completely set and cool, string twine or ribbon through the hole and hang on your tree!









Does Santa need a hiding place?



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CHRISTMAS SEA-SON TENDS TO **BRING OUT THE BEST IN MOST OF** US, AND IN MANY CASES, GETS US IN THE MOOD TO DECORATE AND **CREATE NEW WAYS** TO SHOWCASE THE BEAUTY OF THE SEASON, IF YOU WANT TO CREATE A GREAT COUNTERTOP OR MANTLE PIECE FOR THE HOLIDAYS. USING ITEMS YOU LIKELY HAVE READ-ILY AVAILABLE AT HOME, LOOK NO FURTHER, THIS **ELEGANT AND FUN** CHRISTMAS LIGHT ORNAMENT BOWL IS EASY TO PUT TOGETHER, AND EVEN MORE FUN TO ARRANGE.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A string of Christmas lights (color of your choice). If you plan to put your project within the vicinity of an outlet and your cord will be discreet, electrical lights are just fine. But, if you will not be able to access an outlet or if you want to keep your cord more hidden, head to your local home improvement store to pick up a string or two of battery-operated lights.
- 2 A large glass bowl.
- 3 Ornaments those with shiny or reflective metallic surfaces are recommended. DO NOT use cloth or flammable ornaments for this project.
- 4 Snow fluff (optional)
- Craft paper roll (optional)
- Arrange your bowl at its intended destination.

NOW THAT YOU HAVE YOUR SUPPLIES READY TO GO, THE NEXT PART IS FUN AND EASY.

If you will be using snow fluff, you may wish to lay down a few sheets of crafting paper underneath.

- Place one end of your Christmas lights at the bottom of the bowl (make sure that the plug or the battery mechanism are not placed in the bowl... keep that end out).
- Start positioning your ornaments inside the bowl, one by one, making sure to adjust the Christmas light strand within the bowl (but not necessarily around each ornament as the goal is to keep the cord from being visible).

- Sprinkle snow fluff around the bowl and place a few ornaments haphazardly on the snow fluff, to create the look of a bowl spilling over.
- Position the rest of your lights so that the cord comes out the back side, or wherever it will be least visible.
- Test your lighting to ensure that your ornaments reflect when the lights are turned on. Reposition your ornaments if needed, to create the maximum effect.

Now, step back and take a look at your project, and smile. You did it!









TOFFEE PUDDING

By Amanda Bochain

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 3/4 cup butter
- ½ cup corn syrup
- . 6 dates, pitted, chopped
- 1 cup granulated white sugar
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 3/4 cup warm water
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- ¾ cup flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Place ½ cup of the butter, corn syrup, white granulated sugar and 1 ¼ cup of the heavy whipping cream in a saucepan and bring to a boil over low heat. Cook for about 40 minutes, stirring frequently, until the sauce is golden brown. Remove from the heat and pour through a strainer to remove any pieces that formed during cooking. Set the sauce aside to cool.
- 2. Add the dates and water to a

- separate small saucepan and cook over low heat, simmering for about 15 minutes. During this time, the dates will absorb most of the water.
- Place the dates in a food processor along with any remaining liquid and blend until smooth.
- 4. Add the remaining ¼ cup butter and brown sugar to the bowl of a stand mixer and beat on high speed until the butter is light and fluffy. Scrape down the sides of the bowl several times to ensure all the ingredients are well combined.
- Add the egg, date puree and vanilla extract to the bowl and blend until incorporated.
- **6.** Add the flour, salt, baking soda and baking powder and mix again until a smooth batter forms.
- 7. Grease 6 ramekins with butter or baking spray then scoop the batter into the ramekins. It is okay if the batter comes to the top of the cup!
 8. Place the ramekins on a sheet

tray and bake for 20 minutes in a

preheated 350 degree oven. Once

- baked, remove from the oven and let cool slightly.
- 9. Use a small serrated knife to trim the top of each cake so that it is flat and level with the top of the ramekin. Unmold the cakes gently then slice each cake in half horizontally.
- 10. Scoop about 1 tablespoon of the sticky toffee sauce into the bottom of each ramekin then place the bottom halves of the cakes back in the ramekin. Scoop another tablespoon of the sauce on top of each cake then place the top halves of the cakes back in the ramekins as well. Pour another tablespoon of sauce over the ramekins and then return the cakes to the oven for another 10 minutes.
- 11. Once the toffee sauce is bubbling, remove from the oven, cool for about 5 minutes and then unmold (use a knife to go around the edges of the ramekin if needed). Serve the toffee pudding with any remaining toffee sauce, whipped cream or ice cream. Enjoy!









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