

Every item on this page was chosen by a Town & Country editor. We may earn commission on some of the items you choose to buy.

10 Tips for Getting Through the Holidays Stress-Free

Annie Falk, the entertaining expert and author of *Palm Beach Entertaining* and *Hamptons Entertaining*, shares her suggestions for avoiding the tensions that inevitably arise this time of year.

DEC 21, 2015



1. During the holidays we are all time-starved. If you have your heart set on hosting friends but the idea of a sit-down dinner has you stressed, consider a cocktail party. It is much easier to plan and execute, shorter in duration, and—with a help-yourself bar and stationary hors d'oeuvres buffet—you can maximum time with guests, which is the whole point of the party. In this case, less really is more!



JERRY RABINOWITZ

2. Waited too long to get your holiday cards ready? Consider sending out a New Year's greeting instead, or create a [digital greeting](#). Either way, you'll achieve the goal of letting loved ones and cherished friends know you are thinking about them this holiday season.

3. There are always a few last minute invitations to great holiday parties you don't want miss, but who has time to run out for a hostess gift? Buy or make multiples of one hostess gift and keep them on hand. I make and freeze a few pecan pies from [Palm Beach Entertaining](#) and a few of my [Chocolate Chip Apple Cakes](#)—both freeze well, make great hostess gifts, and they're perfect for pot lucks, too. I also keep several of my favorite soy candles from [The Pure Candle](#) on hand: Merry, Cheers, and Peace, which is exactly what I'm seeking this time of year. It's great to have a supply of cocktail napkins for guests, but sets of the whimsical designs created by August Morgan make terrific hostess gifts!



4. The tree is up but the thought of decorating it seems daunting. One of my friends hosts a tree-trimming party here in Palm Beach and it's one of my favorite gatherings of the season. She designates a color scheme and guests are asked to bring an ornament in the chosen color and dress in accordance with the theme. One year it was ice blue, another silver, and this year was gold. Everyone places their ornament on the tree and it's completely decorated before cocktails are over. As a guest, I love it because I know I've given my friend exactly what she wanted for the holidays.

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

5. If the imposed calendar of the season doesn't work for you, create your own. My family and I move our Christmas celebration to a day in December that is mutually convenient for everyone and it's the best thing we've ever done. We get our shopping, decorating, and feasting done early and it leaves more time for friends and extended family as the 25th draws near. It is such a treat to have a day of down time, family time, and a celebratory dinner all to ourselves. We started this tradition because we often travel during the holidays and hauling gifts around became more burden than joy.

6. Research shows that experience rather than objects have a strong link to happiness, so why not create some new traditions? Host an ugly sweater party, go ice skating, organize a cookie swap, or deliver toys in a Santa suit to a local orphanage. For several years my family and I volunteered on Christmas Day. Our most memorable Christmas was spent in Vietnam where we organized a holiday dinner for the staff and residents of an orphanage. We took everyone to a terrific restaurant and presented the children with new coats and computers after the dinner. It is one of the fondest and most joyful Christmas memories we share.



JERRY RABINOWITZ

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

7. If you are hosting several parties, it can be a chore to replenish fresh flowers. Rather than a traditional floral centerpiece on the dining table, create a holiday scene with ornaments, gingerbread houses, or a collection of seasonal trinkets you've gathered from your travels.

JERRY RABINOWITZ



8. Give your chandelier a holiday update by wrapping the arms in evergreen garland or, if it's in an entryway, hang mistletoe from the center to encourage a little holiday romance.

9. If your dining table is extra long once you've added the leaves, **drape it with a fabric remnant** instead of a tablecloth. It is one of my favorite ways to add color, texture, and a special touch to any table.

JERRY RABINOWITZ



10. Last but not least, give yourself the gift of mindfulness. It's easy to rush through the simple pleasures of the season without stopping to appreciate them. When putting up the tree, take a moment to enjoy its fragrance. Turn on some festive music when trimming the tree or wrapping gifts and enjoy a glass of hot cider or spiced wine. It will put you in a holiday mood and serve as a reminder that these are not mindless tasks, but joyful celebrations. There are so many traditions we all feel obligated to uphold, just say no to the non-essential and truly embrace and enjoy those that are important to you. Take a deep breath and remember to cherish every moment, they only happen once.


WATCH NEXT

MORE FROM LEISURE

Book This Luxe Winter Trip Now
FROM TOWN & COUNTRY FOR TCS WORLD TRAVEL

Gay Like Me: How Richie Jackson Wrote His Book

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

Ad 

Industry Respected Degrees

WGU [Apply Now](#)

Lori Loughlin and Mossimo Giannulli List Home

Can Sports Bars Ever Be Classy?



Season 5 of The Crown Will Be the Show's Last

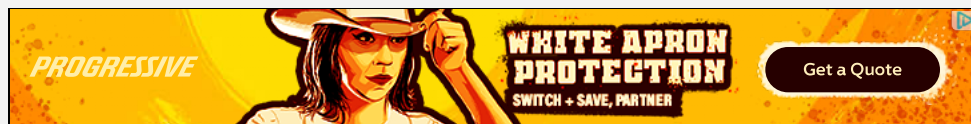
The Best Super Bowl Ads of All Time

A *Hamilton* Movie Is in the Works

Imelda Staunton to Play the Queen in 'The Crown'

26 Super Bowl Party Cocktail Recipes

The Weekly Covet: Winter Getaway



LEISURE

HOW—AND WHY—CELEBRITIES GET JEWELRY FOR FREE

AERIN LAUDER SHARES 7 TIPS FOR A STRESS-FREE YET ELEGANT HOLIDAY SEASON

YOUR HOLIDAY PARTY BEAUTY SURVIVAL KIT

10 TIPS FOR LOOKING GOOD WHILE RUNNING A MARATHON

HOW NANTUCKET GETS DRESSED UP FOR THE HOLIDAYS

20 MOVIES TO SEE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Newsletter

Subscribe

Other Hearst Subscriptions

About Us

Press Room

Giveaways

Contact Us

Digital Editions

Advertise Online

Give a Gift

Customer Service

A Part of Hearst Digital Media

Town & Country participates in various affiliate marketing programs, which means we may get paid commissions on editorially chosen products purchased through our links to retailer sites.

©2020 Hearst Magazine Media, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Privacy Notice](#) [Your California Privacy Rights](#) [Interest-Based Ads](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Site Map](#)

Do Not Sell My Info