



# Celebrating

## THE HOLIDAYS ON A BUDGET

Compliments of **RE/MAX**

*The holidays are almost here, and that means the hustle and bustle is soon to begin. As you start planning your celebrations, you might become overwhelmed as you tally up the costs of dinner parties, gifts and decorations.*

*You can still make things merry without breaking the bank. Some of the most creative and meaningful gifts and holiday projects are surprisingly inexpensive. Doing the holidays on a budget might require a bit more planning, but it's well worth the end result: saving money – and your sanity.*

*Here are six ideas for a festive, inexpensive holiday season:*

### **PARTIES**

Can't afford the five-course, sit-down dinner for 15 that you're used to hosting? No worries. You can host a variety of events to celebrate without going broke at the grocery store. Consider a potluck dinner and ask guests to bring a favorite side dish or appetizer to share while you cover the main entrée. Also, you could opt for a simple, single-course party such as wine and fondue, desserts or appetizers.

### **GIFTS**

For large gatherings, have a white elephant or Secret Santa gift exchange. Put a cap on the value of the gifts. These games are fun, humorous and easy without the expense and stress of shopping for each guest. Plus, everyone comes away with a present. If money is tight, opt for buying family presents such as a gift card to a favorite restaurant, movie tickets, a family portrait session or a yearlong zoo or museum membership. Also, your family could agree to buy gifts for the children and exchange cookies or heartfelt cards for the adults.

### **DECORATIONS**

Add a festive ambience to your home for a fraction of the cost with homemade decorations, such as children's artwork, popcorn or cranberry garlands, and pinecones and berries from the outdoors. Have old drinking glasses you're not using? Flip them upside down to use as candleholders and embellish them with glitter or ribbons. Use evergreen clippings to decorate your table or mantles. Take all the cards you've received and arrange them in varying positions on a thick ribbon and hang it on a bare wall – a great conversation piece.

### **TRIMMING THE TREE**

Handmade ornaments add a sentimental, unique touch to your tree. Some ideas include: using images from last year's cards, popcorn garlands, miniature toys, glitter-glued knickknacks, origami and ribbons. Shop around for good deals at thrift/dollar stores, garage sales or online. To save money on the tree itself, browse the Web for artificial trees.



### CARDS

Postage is an unavoidable cost when you mail out cards, but you can save money by making them with scrapbooking paper or purchasing them at discount stores. Photo postcards are a less expensive option, too, and they're easy to create and order. The best part: You don't have to write an individual message on each one.

### SEASONAL ACTIVITIES

Check the newspaper for a list of community events. Many churches, cities or community groups offer free concerts, craft fairs, plays and other fun diversions. The library is a great place to check for events or storytelling. Also, create your own fun at home with a holiday movie night or tree-trimming party.



### 209 Trail Court ... Offered at \$625,000

Ranch-Style home with guest house located on a 2.25 acre hillside cul-de-sac parcel in historic Genoa! The main house has 2691 sq. ft., 3 Bd/2Ba/2 Garage, & has maintenance slump stone exterior. The guest house has 902 sq. ft., 2Bd/1Ba/2 Garage. Front deck overlooks the golf course and valley. Huge country kitchen, brick fireplace and a 600 sq. ft. bonus room for crafts, office of gym. Glorious mountain views and plenty of room to build an RV Garage or pool. MLS # 100013595



### 1283 La Sierra Court ... Offered at \$359,000

Immaculate home in Saratoga Springs on a large cul-de-sac lot. Great split floor-plan with enormous master suite including a gas log fireplace and sunny bath area with whirlpool tub. The residence with 4 Bedrooms, 2.5 Baths & 3 Car Garage is bathed in natural light and has a tremendous amount of storage space throughout. The kitchen features tile counters, island cook-top and breakfast bar in addition to a large dining area with gleaming hardwood flooring. Stucco exterior, dramatic tray ceilings and lattice covered patio. 2534 Sq. Ft. MLS# 100014186

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