



Christmas Countdown Checklist





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Six Weeks Before (Beginning of November)

Make a master gift list.

You may not have every detail filled in, but at least make sure you list everyone you'll need to buy for, and think about what they'd like. That way you can pick up things as you see them, rather than running to the mall at the last minute. Have your children give you their wish lists.

Make a budget.

Set a ballpark figure for how much you can spend on gifts—it will help you stay grounded when the shopping gets frenzied.

Start Christmas shopping in earnest.

Yes, you may already be picking things up here and there, but the more you buy ahead, the better—especially if you'll be mailing gifts. If you have big-ticket items (like electronics) that go on sale the day after Thanksgiving, you may want to brave the crowds on Black Friday—you could save substantially.

One Month Before (Directly After Thanksgiving)

Do any online shopping.

Order gifts now so you have lots of time to wrap them once they arrive.

Wrap gifts as you buy them.

Not only will this keep little eyes from finding out what Santa is bringing, it will save you time on Christmas Eve.

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Take stock of your decorations.

Get out your lights, ornaments, wreaths, and lawn ornaments. See if anything is broken and needs to be replaced. Is it time for an update? Find fun, festive [holiday decor](#) ideas here.

Take stock of dishes and glasses.

Make sure you have the serving platters and wine glasses you'll need for parties or special meals, in time to buy more, if necessary.

Start addressing holiday cards.

It can take a while, depending on how long your list is.

Three Weeks Before (First Week of December)

Mail cards.

If you're too busy to get them addressed and mailed during the first week of December, consider putting them off until after the holiday rush. People generally enjoy getting a card a few days late, when things have slowed down and they actually notice the mail.

Buy a live tree.

This is a good time to get your tree, if you want it to stay fresh and retain its needles through Christmas. Same goes for fresh greenery or garlands.

Decorate!

You may be one who decks the halls as soon as the Thanksgiving turkey carcass has been tossed. That's fine, too, but by the first week of December, it's time to get the house looking festive. Find [holiday decorating ideas](#) here.

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Finalize menus.

If you'll be serving the holiday meal make sure you know what you'll be cooking and what family members will be bringing. Start a master grocery list.

Order a turkey or ham.

Or whatever else is the centerpiece of your holiday meal—you don't want to get caught short.

Two Weeks Before (Second Week of December)

Make sure out-of-town presents are mailed.

Try to have gifts in the mail by December 10.

Shop for nonperishable items.

Buy alcohol and any canned goods or pantry staples you'll need.

One Week Before

Deep clean your house.

You'll enjoy those decorations even more if the floors are clean and the kitchen is organized. One important task: Clear out your refrigerator. Toss old leftovers to make room for big dishes and ingredients that'll be piling up closer to the holiday.

Buy batteries for children's toys.

If you haven't stocked up while Christmas shopping, make sure you have all the accoutrements necessary for that handheld video game or remote-controlled car.

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Three Days Before

Shop for fresh ingredients.

Hit the store for the last-minute vegetables or fruit you need for meals.

Set the table.

So you use those gold-rimmed goblets only once a year? Enjoy them! Go ahead and set the table. Make it even easier on the big day by putting a sticky note on each platter that states what dish you plan to serve on it. (That also allows people to help you without asking 12 times.)

Two Days Before

Start cooking.

You've probably socked away some things in the freezer already, but now's the time to prep main courses and make anything that can sit for a couple of days.

Buy fresh flowers.

Whether they are for a party or a family meal, fresh flowers should always be purchased two days in advance. Blooms have time to open up, and they'll still be lush and fragrant.

The Day Before

Recharge the batteries on your camera or video recorder.

You don't want to miss the reaction on a little one's face because the battery ran out during the school pageant the week before.

Finish last-minute wrapping.

And assemble toys that will be surprises from Santa.



Finish cooking, and make a timeline for the next day.

Decide when you'll be feasting, then count backward to determine when to put the turkey (or ham or roast beef) in the oven and what else needs to be cooked.

Sit back and relax.

Enjoy your family and friends and relish the traditions you share.



About Annie



Annie is a mother of two who has always loved everything about organizing. She used it as a coping mechanism while attending nursing school and put her talents into practice when she needed to contend with masses of paperwork as a Critical Care Nurse.

Annie uses her assessment, communication, and planning skills to develop a Critical Care Plan to conquer clutter. Her passion and knowledge has turned many homes and offices into beautiful, functional spaces! She prides herself on her ability to use the items her clients already possess to create functional, attractive organizational systems. Any unwanted items she removes from her clients' homes are properly disposed of, or recycled. All donations are taken to local charities where they can be claimed by someone in need.

With several qualifications under her belt, Annie brings her years of experience to help you bring order and peace to your life. She continues to stay on top of the latest developments.

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