

# A Twist on Holiday Celebrations This Year

By Kelli Richards



**G**iven the hand we've been dealt by Covid-19 this year, many of us may need to come up with alternate plans for how we celebrate the Holidays which could find us getting creative - and maybe even establishing some new traditions that last.

Ready or not, the holidays are upon us, and of course it's anything but a normal year. Obviously the pandemic has caused us to do many things differently, let alone the fact that many have been hit hard economically, and all the other wacky things we've been dealing with this year as never before. As a result our plans to gather with friends, family and loved ones in the ways that we've become accustomed to are likely to be impacted in some form or fashion. But that doesn't mean we can't improvise and come up with meaningful ways

to celebrate that can be fun and heartwarming, relaxing and restorative, and maybe even a little less stressful.

## Holiday Decorating

If you enjoy decorating your home for the Holidays (inside and out), nothing should change there. Pull out all your favorite ornaments, lights, table displays – and if you enjoy decorating the tree by all means go for it. If you're of the mood, maybe consider slowing down and making some new ornaments. Personally I have many great memories of simpler times in the past when we made our own ornaments and it was something you could just lose yourself in for hours – exercising your creativity, having fun and creating something personal that may be part of your family tree for years to come. The holidays are a festive time, and it can be such a mood lifter to decorate this time of year. Given the challenges we've been through this year, especially given how much time we've been spending inside, it can be a great exercise to inject a dose of fun and good cheer – and spruce things up in and around your home. So turn on some Mannheim Steamroller (or your favorite Holiday tunes!), light candles, and go for it!

## Interacting with Loved Ones (or Not)!

Some of us are fortunate to have family and friends who we look forward to spending quality time with during the Holidays. However for others holiday get togethers can result in conflicts with family members that aren't as much fun to spend time with. If that's the case, you may be in luck this year given safety considerations with the pandemic because large gatherings (especially indoors) are being discouraged and we're being advised to minimize group size and how long we're spending interacting with others if we do get together. That may wind up being a blessing in disguise for those who find Holiday family get-togethers



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to be a source of stress. You may decide to skip them this year and do your own thing. And for others, for health reasons, it could make sense to distance ourselves this year – BUT we can still have shared experiences with loved ones via Zoom, and make sure they know how much they mean to us.

If you are a gift giver, you can still wrap and exchange gifts ('live' or by mail) as you typically do.

### Fun Traditions & Activities You Can (Still) Enjoy

**Holiday cooking & baking** – whether you love baking and decorating sugar cookies, making a decadent prime rib with all the trimmings, or creating gingerbread houses with the kids you can still do all of that as ever. Maybe you're often on the road and away from home during the Holidays; if instead you're staying home for the first time in years, you can have fun re-discovering the joys of nesting and whipping up some of your favorite dishes which can be quite relaxing and therapeutic (especially if you can enlist someone else to clean up after you)!

**Holiday shopping & wrapping** – some of us get great pleasure in discovering the perfect gifts for our loved ones at holiday time, and still others go all out with exquisite gift wrapping worthy of the finest department stores and boutiques (I know, I have a friend and neighbor who is uber-talented in doing just that; so much so it feels like a crime to unwrap a gift from her!).

**Cut your own Christmas tree with the family** – when I was a kid, it used to be so much fun to drive to a nearby Christmas tree farm in the mountains (or even a local tree lot), drink in the scent of the pine forest, pick out the perfect tree, and take it home to decorate. It was a whole



experience! Nowadays many have opted for fake trees (some of which look pretty good) that don't shed needles and can be recycled year after year, but there's something about the whole 'live' tree experience that the family can do together which I think is kind of a lost art. I have friends who were work colleagues in Silicon Valley and now own a Christmas tree in the Santa Cruz mountains – and they have loyal clientele who have a blast going to the tree each year, enjoying a festive beverage, soaking in the whole environment, and bringing home a fresh tree.

**Drive around and see fun Holiday lights in neighborhoods** – in virtually every city and town there are neighborhoods that seem to really get into the Holiday spirit, and decorate their homes and yards to the nines. It can be so much fun to drive around and revel in the creative ways these neighborhoods express themselves. It's free, heartwarming and uplifting to do.

There are also parks that create stunning holiday displays and charge a per car fee to drive through. These are safe, socially distant activities that have become annual traditions for many.

**Drive-in theaters to watch Holiday movies** – yes, drive-in theater experiences have made a comeback this year and I predict many will show beloved holiday movies so that could be something different to try out this year. Or keep it simple and just stay home, light a fire, cozy up with a loved one, a pet and/or a fuzzy blanket – and tune into your favorite holiday shows in front of the big screen with a glass or a mug of your favorite beverage – and enjoy!

These are just a few ideas on my mind to share; I'm sure you have your own creative ideas and fun traditions (past or present) to immerse yourself in the Holiday experience whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Diwali, Kwanzaa or Christmas. Whatever you do & however you choose to spend the time this year, I wish you a fun, festive and heartwarming season that is most special and meaningful for you and your loved ones.

*Kelli Richards, founder and Managing Director of The All Access Group is the exclusive provider of business consulting, mentoring, and strategic connections editorial in Los Altos Hills magazine. For more information, visit [allaccessgroup.com](http://allaccessgroup.com).*