

REAL SIMPLE

TO DO...OR NOT TO DO?

That is the question you need to ask yourself about the tasks and tips on the previous pages. Start by deciding which holiday traditions are meaningful to you and which ones have outlived their relevance. (Is midnight Mass spiritually uplifting enough to offset the morning-after fatigue? Is an evergreen garland wrapped around the banister worth the effort, or would a wreath be just as cheery?) To help you navigate the season, *Real Simple* has created a master shopping checklist with everything you need to help get a jump on the holidays. Tick off (✓) whatever you already have in the house, cross out what you don't need, and add what's missing in the blank spaces provided. Don't you feel better already?

give

BUYING IN BULK

- Terra Medi Extra Virgin Olive Oil (\$10, Crate & Barrel, www.crateandbarrel.com). How many holiday parties did you go to last year? Add three to that number to serve in a pinch.

STAMPS

- shop.usps.com

HOLIDAY CARDS

- Or go to www.snapfish.com to order photo postcards.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

clean

CLEANING STASH

- Clorox Disinfecting Wipes, Method Lavender All Purpose Wipes, or your favorite brand

STAIN-FIGHTING KIT

- Sponges
- Woolite
- Talcum powder or cornstarch
- Rubbing alcohol
- Shout spray
- Eyedropper
- Vinegar
- White paper towels

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- _____
- _____
- _____

organize

HOLIDAY BINDER

- Binder, dividers, plastic sleeves, three-hole punch, glue stick

PLAYLIST

- Christmas albums

KID KIT FOR CAR

- Juice boxes or bottled water
- Granola bars, nuts, Cheerios, Fruit Roll-Ups, pretzels, or candy
- Books, comic books, coloring book, drawing pads, colored pencils or crayons, video games

- _____
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decorate

LIGHTS

- Christmas lights, bulbs

HOOKS

- Ornament hooks

MANTEL DRESSING

- Pillar candles (\$3 to \$8, www.cocoononline.com)
- Greenery for mantelpiece

CENTERPIECE

- Apples, nuts, etc.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

feed

SPICY CHOCOLATE COOKIES

- Flour (1½ cups)
- Unsweetened cocoa powder (¾ cup)
- Cinnamon
- Cayenne pepper
- Unsalted butter (1 stick)
- Brown sugar (1 cup)
- 1 large egg
- Vanilla extract

BRUSCHETTA HORS D'OEUVRES

- Cherry tomatoes (½ pint)
- 1 bunch thyme
- Olive oil
- 1 loaf French bread

COUNT TABLEWARE

- Buy any needed flatware or dishes.

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- _____
- _____
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This checklist can be reprinted at www.realsimple.com/todo