



Holiday
Decorations

Global Traditions

Take your holiday crafting global this year by tapping into diverse cultural traditions.

Incorporating global holiday crafts into your celebrations this year can enrich your own traditions while recognizing the heritage of your family members, friends and fellow community members. Experience the joy and beauty of learning from different cultures, strengthening connections and creating unique decorations that will make your home warm and wonderful this holiday season.

SCANDINAVIAN WOVEN HEARTS

Scandinavian woven hearts, also known as Swedish paper hearts or Danish woven hearts, are traditional paper ornaments often associated with Christmas. Originating in Sweden and Denmark, these woven hearts are deeply rooted in Nordic traditions.

Making these ornaments involves weaving narrow strips of paper to form a heart shape, usually using red and white paper strips, though color variations have emerged over time. These woven hearts are associated with love, warmth and hospitality and in Scandinavian households are commonly found adorning Christmas trees, windows and mantels.

MEXICAN PAPEL PICADO

Explore the vibrant Mexican

tradition of papel picado as a holiday decoration. It is a form of folk art that involves the intricate cutting of colorful paper to create elaborate designs and patterns. It is commonly associated with important holidays such as Dia de los Muertos and Christmas.

Papel picado can be traced back to when Aztecs and other indigenous groups in Mexico used cut paper designs for ceremonial purposes. Over time, this art form evolved and became deeply ingrained in Mexican traditions.

Start with stacks of colorful tissue paper or papel de china

and then fold the paper multiple times to create several layers. Carefully cut it with chisels, knives or special punches, designing it carefully to result in symmetrical patterns and intricate details.

Traditionally the designs feature elements of Mexican culture based on the occasion

or region. During Christmas, nativity scenes or images of poinsettias are common.

INDIAN RANGOLI DESIGNS

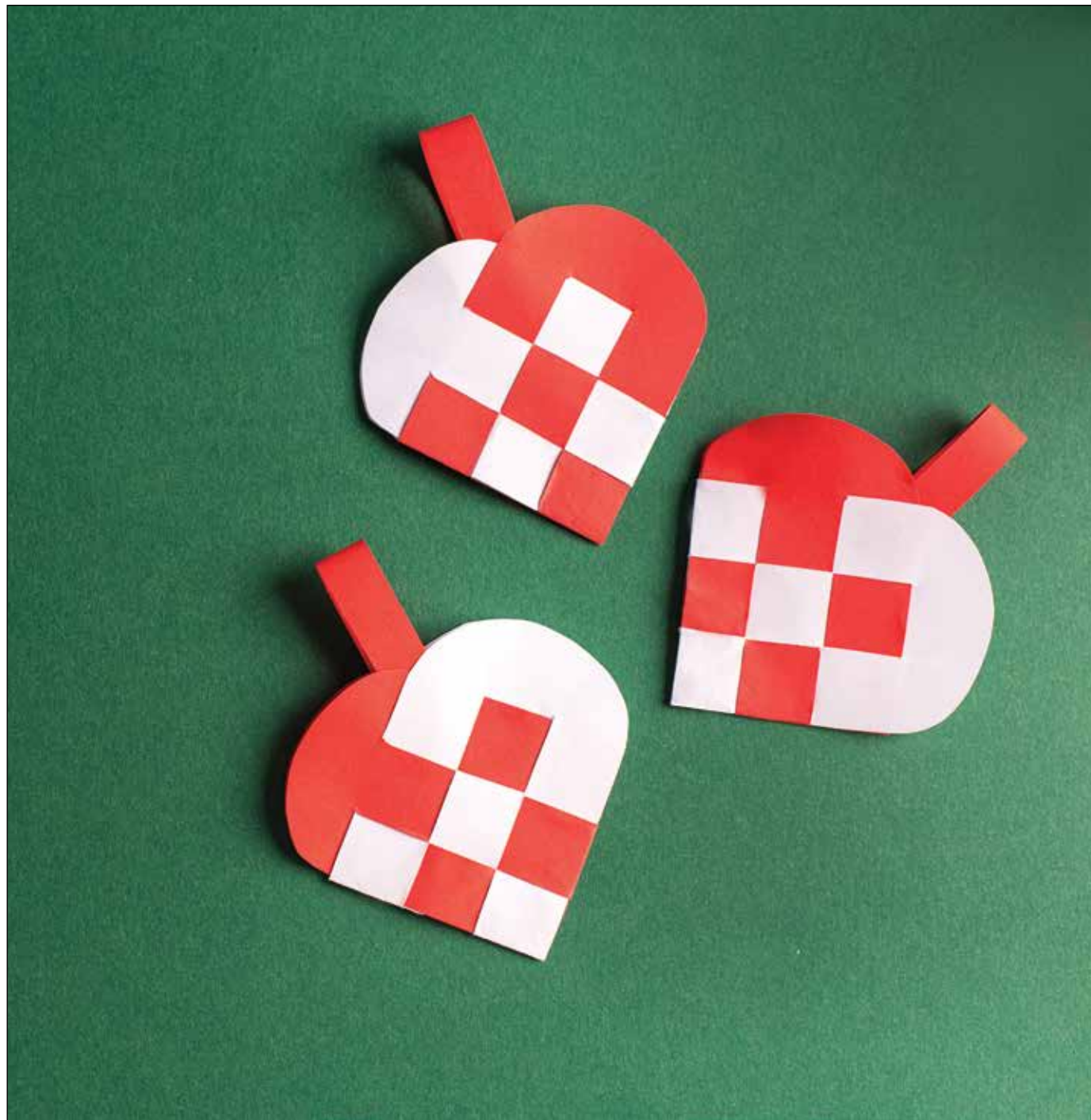
The Indian art form of rangoli involves creating intricate designs on the floor using colored powders, rice or flower petals. Deeply rooted in Indian culture and spirituality, rangoli is often created for festive occasions and holidays such as Diwali.

Rangoli designs are characterized by their geometric shapes, symmetrical patterns and use of vibrant colors. They are thought to bring good luck, prosperity and positive energy. Rangoli designs are often inspired by nature, mythology and religious symbols. Common elements include peacocks, lotus flowers and elephants.

To create a rangoli for your home, draw the outline of the design on the ground or floor. The design can be simple or highly intricate depending on your skill and creativity. Once the outline is drawn, you fill it in with colored powders, rice or flower petals.

OTHER IDEAS

Continue your tour around the world as you decorate your home. There are many holiday craft ideas springing from nearly every culture. Explore such things as Japanese origami ornaments, African-inspired beadwork ornaments, Chinese paper lanterns or German straw stars.



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Creative Holiday Décor

A table's décor helps set the tone for holiday gatherings.

Meals are an important part of holiday traditions, the place where families and friends gather to connect and create memories. Contribute to the celebration by laying a visually appealing dining experience through creative tablescaping — also known as the art of dressing a table.

While the use of the word tablescaping is a fairly new trend—one that has people entering competitions and showing off their creations on social media—the idea is an old one. It's all about setting your table in a way that honors your guest, the meal and the occasion.

THEMES

Picking a theme can spark creativity as well as giving your table a look to delight your guests. It's a way of expressing your personality and taste.

Consider different themes such as rustic, winter wonderland or elegant gold and silver. Use napkins and centerpieces to bring the chosen theme to life.

Using vintage china and tableware can contribute to the table's charm while adding a touch of nostalgia and elegance.

Another place to get started can be your tablecloth. Build off the design and colors of the tablecloth and choose elements that complement it.



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ELEMENTS

Handmade place cards can add a personal touch to your table. Create unique and customized place cards by using materials and techniques such as calligraphy, cut paper, origami, pressed leaves or small ornaments. Not only do these place cards express your creativity, but they can help make your guests feel special.

Create a personalized table setting for each guest.

Incorporate elements such as customized name tags, small gifts or favors or personalized messages to make each place setting unique and thoughtful. You can even print photos of each guest and make them into a personalized ornament or a placemat.

One trend that is likely to continue is the use of edible centerpieces. Incorporate fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs or flowers as centerpieces. This can add visual appeal,

serve as conversation starters or even contribute to the ingredients of dishes served during the meal.

You don't have to blow your budget while engaging in inventive tablescaping. Incorporate shopping at thrift stores and garage sales with do-it-yourself elements. Make your own table runners, craft candle holders or centerpiece arrangements and repurpose everyday items for a unique and sustainable touch.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Balance creativity with practicality when designing holiday table décor. Leave space for serving dishes and room for guests to eat and converse. Place the comfort of your guests as a higher priority than the décor.

Keep things simple. You will have a lot going on and you don't want tablescaping to be a stressful activity. Put out as much in advance as you can.

Add Dazzle and Magic

Illuminate your home this year with unconventional outdoor holiday lighting, moving beyond traditional stringed lights.

With new technology transforming the lighting industry, you have the potential to create a dazzling and unique touch to holiday decorations using creative alternatives.

LED PROJECTIONS

LED projections can transform the exterior of your home into a captivating visual display. The variety available means that you can customize them to tell your own creative story. Projection options include snowflakes, Santa Claus, flying reindeer, menorahs and other festive patterns.

Once you set a projector up, you can point it at your house and create effects such as falling snow. You can also purchase a variety of video scenes and DVD projection content to plug into the projector.

These work best when projected against a flat surface, but with a little bit of creativity and multiple projectors, you can use them on trees or other landscaping elements.

ILLUMINATED PATHWAYS

Illuminating your sidewalks, driveways or backyard paths to guide visitors or fami-



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ly members through your home during the holiday season is festive and increases their safety.

There are many ways to achieve a charming ambiance including solar-powered path lights, LED strip lights or lanterns. White is always a popular choice, but so are festive

holiday colors or effects that are made to look like candles or luminaries. Avoid actual flames unless you are there to supervise them the entire time they are lit.

LASER LIGHT SHOWS

Laser light shows have gained popularity in recent

years, expanding beyond the basic concept of LED projectors. The more powerful laser projectors can create dynamic and vibrant displays, projecting patterns and colors onto the exterior of your home or garage.

These projectors are noted for their ease of setup — no

more spending hours climbing on ladders to hang and rehang lights to get just the right effect. They typically come with remote controls and timers so you don't even have to go outside in the snow to change up the look of your lighting display.

THEMED LIGHT INSTALLATIONS

Themed light installations can add a touch of whimsy and personality to your holiday décor. They can combine many traditional elements with new lighting technology.

Examples can include oversized ornaments, lighted reindeer or snowmen or even synchronized light shows set to music.

These installations are filled with DIY possibilities and the opportunity to let creativity shine. Most people have their own favorite holiday icon, whether bells or stars or specific characters such as the Grinch or the Nutcracker toy soldier. Search through local stores to find lighted holiday elements that fit your theme.

If you are hesitant about creating your own display, there are many local professionals who will come out and hang lights for you based on the look, theme and design you want.

Unconventional outdoor lighting goes beyond the ordinary and elevates the festive atmosphere of the holiday. Explore these unconventional ideas and unleash your creativity to illuminate your home this year.

Outdoor Items

Natural materials can bring beauty and warmth to your home during the holiday season.

One evergreen theme for decorating your home involves incorporating natural elements into your holiday décor. It's a choice that fills your house with elegance while also being affordable as you can find decorating elements in your own backyard.

Natural materials create a cozy and inviting atmosphere. You can use evergreens, flowers, fruits, acorns, leaves, branches or pine cones.

Not only do natural materials provide warmth and make your house look great, but they also contribute to a more eco-friendly and sustainable décor as you are using organic elements that bio-degrade and don't have to consume fuel being delivered from halfway around the world.

IDEAS FOR NATURAL DESIGNS

There are many different ways to incorporate natural elements into your holiday décor.

Create wreaths using a combination of fresh greenery, pine cones and dried flowers. Craft garlands using twigs, leaves and berries, intertwined with fairy lights for an enchanting effect. Use pine cones as place card holders or tree ornaments with personal-



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ized names or messages.

Decorate with dried citrus slices, cinnamon sticks and herbs to add aromatic and visual appeal. Incorporate natural elements into table set-

tings, such as using leaf-shaped coasters or wooden serving platters. Hang bundles of dried herbs or spices in doorways or near the fireplace to create a fragrant ambiance.

TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Gather materials from your own backyard. Look for pinecones, branches, leaves or berries that can be incorporat-

ed into your decorations. Visit local parks or forests and get permission to collect fallen branches, twigs or interesting natural elements like acorns or dried seed pods. Support your local farmers or nurseries by purchasing fresh greenery from them.

Apply a clear sealant spray to natural elements such as pinecones or dried branches to preserve their appearance and prevent them from deteriorating. You can also preserve leaves or flowers by pressing them between heavy books or using a flower press to maintain their shape and color.

Select a prominent area, such as a fireplace mantle or dining table to arrange your natural elements. Mix textures and colors to add visual interest and depth to your arrangements. Combine your outdoor elements with other decorations such as ribbons, ornaments or candles.

Arrange your décor in varying heights and sizes to create balance and harmony. Use larger items as anchors and fill in with smaller pieces.

Keep your organic decorative pieces hydrated. Mist or spritz fresh greenery with water to maintain freshness and keep them from drying out. Keep flammable items away from direct sunlight, heating vents or open flames. This will also help keep them from wilting. Watch for signs of insect or pest infestation.

Embrace the beauty of nature this season and infuse your home with the warmth of organic materials.

Embrace Vintage Items

Vintage holiday décor can capture the charm of bygone eras while evoking nostalgia in those who are celebrating.

This decorating choice emphasizes the allure of vintage-inspired color schemes, classic motifs and the joy of reviving retro aesthetics during the holiday season. It's designed to bring a warmth and charm to your home throughout the holiday season.

VINTAGE ORNAMENTS

Make this a year-round project by searching for vintage ornaments in garage sales, local antique stores, local thrift stores, flea markets and online marketplaces. Talk to family members to see who might have family heirlooms stashed away in their attics that could make good holiday décor.

Some top online sources include Chairish, Etsy, Ebay and Poshmark.

Vintage ornaments often have chipped paint and less glitter than in their original form. They usually aren't shiny and because they were hand/mouth blown they often have imperfections and are asymmetrical. Common vintage shapes include balls, bells, teardrops, birds, mushrooms, candles, teardrops and balloons. They also usually have a silver metal cap on top where the hooks are inserted for hanging.



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ANTIQUE COLLECTIBLES

Holiday-themed antiques can serve as a focal point for your holiday décor. Perhaps you have pieces that have been passed down through the generations or maybe you found the perfect item at a garage sale or local antique shop.

Some common holiday antiques can include vintage figurines, nutcrackers, snow globes, a rocking horse, a holiday-painted end table, menorahs or music boxes. Set smaller items on mantles or in a dedicated display cabinet while furniture-sized pieces can take

center stage in living rooms or in front of windows.

Retro-Inspired Ambiance

Explore ways to infuse a retro-inspired ambiance throughout your home. You may want to pick a particular period or even provide a trip through time with different periods in

different rooms.

Vintage-inspired color schemes include pastel tones, silver and gold accents or rich jewel tones. Classic holiday motifs include candles, snowflakes, reindeer or retro-style Santa Claus figurines.

DIY VINTAGE DÉCOR CRAFTS

While you'll likely first think of antiques and collectibles when it comes to retro decorating, you can make your own in the style that you are seeking. This lets you express your creativity and personalize your décor to have the exact look that you envision.

Consider making homemade ornaments, wreaths or garlands using vintage materials such as old book pages, lace or vintage fabric scraps.

VINTAGE-INSPIRED WRAPPING

The gifts you strew throughout your house and under the Christmas tree or menorah will contribute to the look your home has during the holidays. If you're going for a retro look, then tap into the beauty of vintage-inspired gift-wrapping techniques.

Create ways to use brown kraft paper, twine, vintage lace or retro-style gift tags to achieve a nostalgic look. If you aren't sure how, check Pinterest or visit a local boutique store that supplies craft paper and ask the owner for advice. Revive the art of adding handwritten notes and personal touches to your gift wrapping.

Eco-Friendly Ideas

Counteract the traditional effect the holidays have on the environment by adopting eco-friendly practices.

The production, transportation and disposal of such items as plastic ornaments, synthetic Christmas trees and single-use wrapping paper contribute to waste generation, resource depletion and greenhouse gas emissions. While the making of artificial trees requires the use of non-renewable resources, the demand for real Christmas trees has led to deforestation.

RECYCLE AND REUSE

Find creative ways to incorporate recycled materials into your holiday décor. Make ornaments from recycled paper, create wreaths from repurposed materials or use glass jars as candle holders. Doing this can reduce waste and give new life to items that would otherwise be discarded.

Explore the concept of upcycling, which involves transforming old or unused items into new and useful decorations. Repurpose items like wine corks, tin cans or old fabric to create unique and eco-friendly holiday décor.

ENERGY-EFFICIENT LIGHTING

Opting for energy-efficient LED lights for your holiday decorations brings numerous



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benefits. LED lights consume significantly less energy compared to traditional incandescent bulbs, helping you save on electricity costs and reducing your environmental footprint.

Moreover, LED lights have a longer lifespan, ensuring that they can be used for multiple holiday seasons without the need for frequent replace-

ments. Another advantage is that LED lights produce minimal heat, reducing the risk of fire hazards.

When selecting LED lights, look for those with the ENERGY STAR label. Consider using LED lights to illuminate both indoor and outdoor spaces. For indoor decorations, incorporate LED string lights into your Christmas tree or

use them to adorn stair railings, mantels and windows. Outdoors, use LED lights to outline the roofline, wrap around trees or create a festive pathway.

REUSABLE GIFT WRAP

This year, make it a challenge to wrap as many gifts as you can in reusable gift wraps. These can include fabric gift

bags, reusable cloth wraps or recycled paper wraps. Get creative and use glass jars, baskets, hand-painted boxes or use the gift itself as part of the wrapping.

Options like this reduce waste and you can re-use them in future gift-giving occasions.

ECO-CONSCIOUS CHRISTMAS TREES

Real and artificial trees each have their pros and cons. Real trees are a renewable resource that can be grown on tree farms, helping to support local economies and carbon sequestration. If you go with a real tree, look for those grown using organic or sustainable farming practices and not those that contribute to deforestation. After the holidays, recycle your tree through community tree recycling programs or by mulching it for use in your garden.

Another eco-friendly option when it comes to real trees is to choose a potted tree that can be replanted after the holidays, allowing you to enjoy its beauty for years to come. Potted trees are often available in nurseries or garden centers and can be a sustainable alternative to cut trees or artificial ones.

If you prefer an artificial tree, choose one made from recycled materials and plan to use it for multiple years to maximize its eco-friendliness.

By adopting eco-friendly practices, we can reduce our ecological footprint.

Smart Home Devices

Technology has its hand in everything we do today, even decorating our homes for the holidays.

Every year, we are seeing more people using technology to enhance the holiday atmosphere and create a modern, convenient and immersive experience. This trend has been bolstered by the constant supply of new devices and ways to use them, gadgets that often come out just before the holidays. Nor do you have to spend a fortune to create a digital wonderland.

LIGHTS AND MUSIC

One of the popular new trends are voice-controlled lighting systems made up of smart bulbs or smart light strips. The systems are versatile and convenient, able to be easily integrated into holiday decorations. You can change lighting colors, adjust brightness or create dynamic lighting effects with simple voice commands.

Smart home devices can create synchronized music and light shows. Once the domain of professional lighting designers, smart devices such as speakers and smartphone apps make it possible to create synchronizing lighting effects with holiday music playlists.

Interactive digital displays are becoming part of people's home holiday décor. You can



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use them to display festive images, animations or personalized messages. Devices include smart screens, digital picture frames or projection systems. An advantage is that they can be easily customized and updated to match different holiday themes or specific occasions.

Smart holiday ornaments and decorations that can be integrated with smart home ecosystems have begun to emerge. Search out your local

stores for such things as programmable LED ornaments, app-controlled animated figurines or interactive ornaments that respond to touch or motion. Many of these can add a layer of fun, whimsy, interactivity and excitement to traditional holiday décor.

INTEGRATION

Two reasons for the surge in popularity of tech-driven decorating are their increased safety and energy efficiency.

Features like timers, motion sensors and remote-control capabilities can conserve energy and ensure the safety of holiday decorations. Many enable you to monitor and control devices remotely, which provides peace of mind when away from home during the holiday season. No more turning around halfway to grandma's house because you can't remember whether you blew out the candles.

Choose smart devices that

are compatible with your existing smart home ecosystem. Follow the setup processes manufacturers recommend to connect and configure your devices. Once the devices are set up, let your creativity and personality guide you in combining technology and traditional holiday elements. The key is to experiment and find the right balance between technology and tradition, creating a unique and memorable holiday experience.