

# Over the Fence

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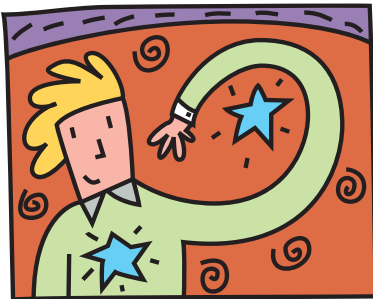


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## Kitchen Tips for an Energy-Wise Holiday

### Oven Tips

The turkey is traditionally stuffed early in the morning and roasted for hours. Since it's a long, slow cook, there's no need to preheat your oven, even when the recipe suggests it. This also holds true for a holiday ham. In fact, unless you're baking breads or pastries, you may not need to preheat the oven at all.

Don't open the oven door to take a peek at what's cooking inside. Instead, turn on the oven light and check the cooking status through the oven window. Opening the oven door lowers the temperature inside—by as much as 25 degrees—which increases cooking time and wastes energy.

As long as your oven is on, cook several items at the same time. Just make sure you leave enough room for the heat to circulate around each casserole and pie plate.

In an electric oven, you can turn the heat off several minutes before your food is fully cooked. As long as the oven door remains closed, enough heat will be stored inside to finish cooking your meal. The same principle applies to your electric range-top—the metal heating elements stay hot even after the electricity is turned off.

If you use glass or ceramic pans, you can turn your oven temperature down 25 degrees, and foods will cook just as quickly.

**DECEMBER HOME WARRANTY TIP:** A fireplace can send your energy dollars right up the chimney! Be sure the flue is closed when you're not using the fireplace.



### Refrigerator Tips

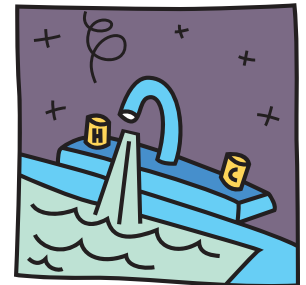
In addition to your stove, your refrigerator and freezer also get a real workout over the holidays. While newer refrigerators are much more energy efficient than older ones, they remain one of the largest energy consumers in your house, often accounting for as much as 15 percent of your home's total energy usage.

Help your refrigerator and freezer operate efficiently and economically by keeping the doors closed as much as possible so the cold air doesn't escape. However, leaving the door open for a longer period of time while you take out the items you need is more efficient than opening and closing it several times.

### Dishwasher Tips

According to research, a load of dishes cleaned in a dishwasher requires 37 percent less water than washing dishes by hand. However, if you fill the wash and rinse basins instead of letting the water run, you'll use half as much water as a dishwasher.

If you opt to use the dishwasher, wash full loads only. If you must rinse your dishes before loading them, use only cold water so you're not running up your energy bill by heating water unnecessarily.



Don't forget to use the energy-saving cycles whenever possible. Dishwashers that feature air power or overnight dry settings can save up to 10 percent of your dish washing energy costs.

For more information and full article visit [www.consumerenergycenter.org/tips/holiday.html](http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/tips/holiday.html)



*LED holiday lights are available in green, gold, orange, red, white and blue in many styles. They're shatterproof, shock resistant, cool to the touch, and are long lasting. An entire string of 70 LED bulbs uses less than 4 watts of electricity.*

[www.consumerenergycenter.org/tips/holiday.html](http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/tips/holiday.html)



## DECEMBER

**December 7th:** National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

**December 20th:** Hanukkah begins

**December 24th:** Christmas Eve

**December 25th:** Christmas Day

**December 26th:** Kwanzaa begins

**December 31st:** New Year's Eve



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*If you are thinking of buying or selling a home in the near future, please call for a personal interview and property assessment with no obligation.*



This is not intended as a solicitation if your property is currently listed with another agent. These materials contain information and articles obtained from third parties. FNHW does not endorse the recommendations of any third party nor guarantee the information provided is complete or correct.

## Selling Your Home Out of Season? A Great Deck Makes a Difference

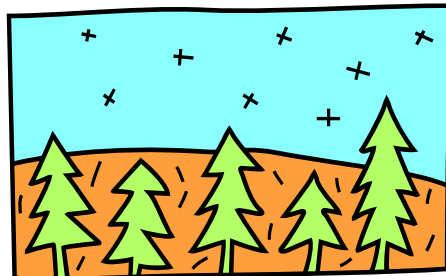
(ARA) While winter may not be the optimum season to showcase your landscaping, there is one improvement you can make that will help you boost your home's outdoor appeal no matter what the season: a deck.

When potential buyers visit your home in winter, they might not be able to envision how green and lovely your backyard will look come spring. But they will be able to see with their own eyes the square footage that a deck adds to your home's living space.

Lighting is one way to boost your deck's appeal. LED deck lighting kits, like those offered by deck manufacturers Latitudes and Deckorators, are both practical and visually appealing. Adding lighting to a deck can be an important safety feature, and also helps create a warm, welcoming mood for evening entertaining.

Another improvement that speaks to both safety and visual appeal are deck railings. Decorative railings with ornate balusters and postcap covers can give a deck a distinctive look for a modest investment.

[www.aracontent.com/PrintSite/Article.aspx?ArticleId=13964](http://www.aracontent.com/PrintSite/Article.aspx?ArticleId=13964)



## Trim a Safe Tree

1. When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant."
2. When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers.
3. When setting up a tree at home, place it away from heat sources. Monitor water levels and keep the stand filled with water.
4. In homes with small children, take special care to avoid sharp, weighted or breakable decorations, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children who could swallow or inhale small pieces.

For full article visit: [www.cpsc.gov/CPSPUB/PREREL/prhtml10/10065.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSPUB/PREREL/prhtml10/10065.html)

## PUMPKIN GINGERBREAD

- 3 cups sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 2/3 cup water
- 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1-1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder

Preheat oven to 350° F (175° C). Lightly grease two 9x5 inch loaf pans.

In a large mixing bowl, combine sugar, oil and eggs; beat until smooth. Add water and beat until well blended. Stir in pumpkin, ginger, allspice cinnamon, and clove.

In medium bowl, combine flour, baking soda, salt, and baking powder. Add dry ingredients to pumpkin mixture and blend just until all ingredients are mixed. Divide batter between prepared pans.

Bake in preheated oven until toothpick comes out clean, about 1 hour.

<http://allrecipes.com/recipe/pumpkin-gingerbread/detail.aspx>