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## How To Prepare For The Holidays Now September 30th, 2016 | Stephanie Dore

We know it's hard to believe, but the holiday season is just around the corner. There's much to look forward to: spending time with family, endless holiday parties, spontaneous snowball fights, and best of all, gift-giving (and receiving). With all that shopping headed your way, it's never too early to start prepping for the season. Here are some of our favorite ways to get holiday-ready without the headache, so all you have to think about is making the most of your moments.

### **Make a List (and Check it Twice)**

Let's be real, lists are your lifelines. Start by making one of everyone you want to buy gifts for or send a card to. Thinking about who (and what) will make the list now ensures you don't miss them later.

### **Don't Be Hard to Shop For**

Are you a hard-to-please giftee? Is picking out the perfect present tough for those who love you? If so, make your own wish list! There's bound to be at least one person who will just come right out and ask what you want and you'll have a wish list at the ready. Or take the subtle route and share your wish list with a few friends to get word back to your significant other about that sparkly something you've been eyeing.

### **Balance Your Budget**

It's easy to forget about your budget this time of year, but giving doesn't have to go overboard. It really is the thought that counts so don't go broke over a gift you can't really afford. Set a budget now and stick to it.

### **Shop Early**

We save up some of our best deals for the holiday season. Our prices are always great, but our Black Friday and Cyber Monday offers are truly incredible. Sign up now for newsletters and get early access to the best deals.

Also: Buy your giftwrap early. Sure, waiting to the last minute means you can get that awesome Justin Bieber-in-a-Santa-hat print that proves hilariously ironic at the office party, but in all honesty, #adulting means making the

wrapper look just as good as the gift it contains. Want to go the extra mile? Show how much you care with Paper Guru's amazing Japanese giftwrapping tutorials.

### **Start Nesting**

The holidays mean visits from friends and family. Having your space guest-ready early means you won't have to hide the clutter on the fly. Gather a few extra seats, add some coat hooks, and make sure you've got someplace to stash those muddy winter boots. And consider adding some festive decorations as soon as October hits. Nature-inspired decorations-gourds, flowers, cedar boughs-are an easy way to transition from fall to winter without it looking cheesy or tired.

### **Plan Your Parties**

Start practicing your cocktail mixing and holiday recipes early. There's nothing worse than a first-time recipe fail when you're feeding the whole brood. Have your favorite eggnog, spiced cider, or bubbly cocktail down pat, and keep the bar and fridge stocked for last minute guests. Then stick to what you're good at. If you want to try a big, festive recipe, make sure you've nailed it at least once before the special occasion. But if you're prone to burning water, outsource the stuffing and find a local baker of the perfect pie.

### **Mind Your Manners**

Being a guest is just as common as being a host during the holidays, so be ready for impromptu invites by stocking up on host/hostess gifts. You don't arrive empty handed or have to scramble for a bottle of convenience-store bubbly.

Find out what Colin Cowie's go-to hostess gifts are (and other fantastic holiday tips) [here](#).