

# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER



*Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love.*

- Hamilton Wright Mabie

## Tips for Maximizing Joy this Holiday Season

[hopkinsmedicine.org](http://hopkinsmedicine.org)



For many people, the holidays are a time for joy, festivities, and making memories with friends and family. However, the season can also trigger an array of uncomfortable emotions, ranging from stress and burnout to loneliness and depression. If you're finding it challenging to feel the joy this holiday season, here are a few tips:

- Be selective with planning activities, focusing on those that are most important to you. From endless parties to travel plans, a packed schedule is a common cause of holiday season stress. This year, think about the people you'd most like to spend time with and the activities that are most important to you, and make them priorities in your schedule—giving yourself permission to decline other opportunities.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle. During the holidays, it's easy to overindulge in rich foods, sweets, and alcohol. However, as with other times of the year, moderation is key, and too much of a good thing can compromise both your physical health and mental well-being. Therefore, try to maintain a healthy diet, get adequate sleep, and make time for exercise and other forms of self-care.
- Set a shopping budget. With a barrage of ads and limited-time specials, the pressure to spend money during the holiday season can feel inescapable. However, holiday shopping can quickly lead to buyer's remorse when the bills start rolling in. To avoid the financial "hangover," set a holiday shopping budget early in the season, and consider gift options that may be less expensive but more meaningful. For example, offer someone a home-cooked meal, one-on-one time together, or an afternoon of helping with housework. These gifts carry a minimal price tag, but will show your love and appreciation for someone in ways that most store-bought gifts cannot.
- Ask for help. Many people simply put too much on their own to-do lists during the holiday season, particularly if they are hosting parties or trying to create magical experiences for their families. However, this can cause stress and even anger or resentment. Don't be afraid to ask for help and delegate specific tasks to others—you'll likely find that there are people in your life who will be happy to share in the responsibilities and the process of making holiday magic.

# Toasted Gruyere and Cranberry Cups

foodnetwork.com

## Ingredients:

- One 10-ounce bag frozen or fresh cranberries
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon orange zest plus 1/4 cup orange juice
- 4 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1 cup grated Gruyere cheese
- 48 frozen prebaked phyllo cups or hors d'oeuvre cups
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives

## Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment.
- Mix the cranberries, sugar and orange zest and juice in a small saucepan. Place over medium heat and cook until the cranberries soften and start to burst, 8 to 10 minutes. Set aside.
- Combine the cream cheese and Gruyere in a large bowl with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula until smooth.
- Place the phyllo cups on the parchment-lined baking sheet. Spoon about 1 teaspoon of the cranberry sauce into each cup. Spoon about 1 teaspoon of the cheese mixture on top of the cranberry sauce. Bake until the cups are crisp and the cheese is melted and bubbling, 10 to 12 minutes. Sprinkle with chives before serving.

## Pros and Cons of Buying New Construction vs. an Existing Home

nar.realtor

When purchasing a home, there are many factors to take into account, including the home's price, size, and location. Another consideration you may encounter is whether to buy a newly built or existing home. Each option carries pros and cons, including the following:

### New Construction:

*- Pro:* The latest styles. With a brand-new home, you likely won't have to worry about remodeling anything for many years, as the home should be equipped with the most up-to-date styles and fixtures. This will help you initially save money on renovations and maintenance.

*- Con:* Sparse landscaping. Many builders remove existing vegetation before breaking ground on a new home. Once the home is built, they plant young trees and shrubs that may take years to reach maturity. If you desire the shade and privacy of more established vegetation, you might be facing a significant investment in landscaping.

### Existing Homes:

*- Pro:* Move-in ready. While you can always renovate an existing home to suit your needs and style, you'll also have the option of moving in directly without needing to work with a contractor.

*- Con:* Outdated styles. Whether the home has major systems in need of upgrading, older appliances that are not energy efficient, or styles that are simply outdated, there's a higher chance that you'll need to make changes in an existing home—which translates to greater maintenance and renovation costs.



If you are currently working with another Broker please do not consider this a solicitation.

