

Ultimate CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

WITH A BIT OF PLANNING, PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS DAY CAN BE A BREEZE.

TWO MONTHS BEFORE

1. Decide your Christmas menu. The sooner you lock it in, the sooner you can create a shopping list to work through.
2. Travelling for Christmas? Make sure all accommodation, fares, etc are booked. Make an appointment to have the car serviced in time for any long drives. Organise any supervision of pets while you are away.
3. If you're feeling creative, start making any cards or gifts.
4. Make Christmas cake and/or puddings.
5. Brainstorm present ideas and write up your gift list.

ONE MONTH BEFORE

1. Time to decorate! Put up your tree and any other festive lights and decorations.
2. It's party time. Treat yourself to some new clothes or accessories so you can celebrate in style!
3. Send Christmas cards. If you're sending cards/gifts overseas make sure you send them in time. Check at your local post office or call Australia Post on 13 13 18.
4. Order any meat or seafood for Christmas lunch. Decide what drinks (including non-alcoholic options) you'll need and buy these.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE

1. Finish all your Christmas shopping – don't forget to pick up a few "emergency" gifts to give any unexpected guests!
2. Take a look at what extra things you may need for the Christmas meal. Decide your theme, and buy (or source from family or friends) any additional cutlery, crockery, glassware and tableware.
3. Check the recipes you'll be making to ensure you have all ingredients and equipment.

ONE WEEK BEFORE

1. Finish all your Christmas wrapping.
2. Prepare any outdoor areas for entertaining and give the house a good clean. Ensure you have adequate bed linen and towels if you're having guests stay with you over the Christmas season.
3. Don't forget the music! Fill up your iPod with a playlist of festive tunes, or check out the vast array of CDs available at this time of year.
4. You don't want to miss out on capturing the festive spirit. Clear as much memory on your camera as you can so there's plenty of room for happy snaps, and keep the batteries charged!
5. Christmas is for giving, so make a donation of money, food, or toys to your favourite charity.

ONE DAY BEFORE

1. Do as much food preparation as you can. For example, marinate any meat, make desserts, etc.
2. Buy any fresh flowers.
3. Assemble any toys or other presents which need to be put together.
4. Santa's coming, so put out some treats for him and his reindeer!

ON THE DAY

1. If you're doing a roast, ensure you've got plenty of time to cook the meat to perfection.
2. Don't overwork yourself. Get everyone to pitch in preparing the meal and tidying up. Kids can help with simple jobs such as hulling strawberries or collecting discarded wrapping for recycling.
3. With all the preparation you've done, you should be able to enjoy a stress-free day with your loved ones. Merry Christmas!

TIP

Enjoy yourself!

While there is a lot to do at this time of year, don't forget to have fun. Make time to relax and treat yourself, it's your Christmas too!

