



MARTHA PULLEN'S

Holiday Tips

Download the full holiday recipe sampler from
Martha Pullen's Southern Family Cookbook (F+W Media, November 2012) [here](#).

1. Be Thankful: On Thanksgiving Day, my son John, daughter-in-law Suzanne, and their kids, spend most of the day writing what they are thankful for on small pieces of paper, and sticking them to a board. Of course the turkey, pumpkin pie, chocolate cobbler and **Brown Bag Apple Pie** also get cooked and eaten.

2. Keep it Simple: We have a huge Thanksgiving night dinner with lots of family coming from several different places. Years ago I decided to decorate the house beautifully, but I use pretty paper plates and napkins. I did not like washing dishes until late at night when I used my china!

On Christmas Eve the family comes to our house to open presents around lunchtime. We have **Daddy's Spaghetti**, **Cheddar and Chive Bread**, and **Herbed Onion Bread**. Desert is a **Lemonade Pie**. All of these dishes can be made a week ahead, and frozen.

3. Share the Wealth & Give to Others: My mother always took her **Mammy's Vegetable Beef Soup** and **Basic Cornbread** to people who were sick around the holidays. On Christmas Eve, our church takes trays of Christmas goodies around to nursing homes, and fire and police departments.



4. Cherish Special Decorations: I have a beautiful collection of handmade ornaments that my sewing friends have given me throughout the years. Each year, when Joe and I get the tree up, we ask family members and friends to come by to look at the tree. They always want to talk about the handmade ornaments, many of which have the person's name that made it, and their city or state. Of course I have the handmade ornaments that the children have made and given to me on the tree, in the most prominent places!

5. Serve Traditional Dishes: If I were to tell you the three Christmas cookies that we could not do without it would be **Judy's Pecan Tassies**, **Judy's Peanut Blossoms**, and **Suzanne's Addictive Cream Cheese Crescents**. Mama always made an **Italian Cream Cake for Christmas**, which she served with non-alcoholic eggnog!

6. Love the Imperfections: Joe and I love to go to the Christmas music programs, and plays at several churches during Christmas. Our church has a beautiful concert with four pianos playing at once. I especially love the Christmas plays with little children playing the parts; there's nothing more heartwarming than shepherds in bathrobes and angels in tennis shoes!

7. Make Sure There's Plenty of Food: Our Christmas dinner would not be complete without **Curried Fruit**, **Sweet Potato Marshmallow Casserole**, **Mary's Hash**, **Brown Casserole**, **Ritz Cracker Broccoli Casserole**, and turnip greens! Mama



always made homemade refrigerator rolls, but I usually just do **Martha's Famous Angel Biscuits**, which are much easier and just as good (my family thinks).

Our Christmas Dinner is around 5PM on Christmas night. The deserts are put on two tables. The food is served buffet style. Suzanne always brings several homemade pies, made that afternoon. Joanna brings the sweet potato casserole. My Scottsboro family brings the Yummy Mashed Potatoes and the turnip greens.

I am so tired when everybody leaves I just put the dishes in the sink and go to bed. There is always the day after Christmas to clean up. We just relish the day and want it to last as long as possible.

8. *Make The Day Beautiful:* Joe's mother, as well as my mother, always used magnolia leaves, sprayed either silver or gold, in their Christmas decorations, usually on their mantle. Joe's mother decorated the center of her Christmas table with lots of her prettiest, little figurines; antique water glasses with greenery in each; and more magnolia leaves. On Christmas day all of the gold china, sterling, crystal, and monogrammed linen napkins came out of storage.

9. *Brown Paper Packages, Tied with String:* I have always had lots of gifts wrapped up under the tree. So did my mother. Socks, little dollar store trinkets, and coloring books, in addition to their "real gifts." I get lists and take everyone shopping. When we have purchased their "budget amount" we laugh about how they have "forgotten" everything. They say on Christmas Eve, "Nannie, how did you ever know this was exactly what I wanted?" I just love to wrap, and in the early days would wrap gifts in the funny papers.

10. *Nurture Family Traditions:* John and Suzanne's kids always sleep under the Christmas tree. Two are in college, one in high school, and one in elementary school. They say they will always sleep under the tree.

