



## NEWSLETTER

DEC/2025/ISSUE#2

### Scheduled Closed Days:

#### Christmas Holiday

- Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>

#### New Years Holiday

- Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>

#### M.L. King Jr. Day Holiday

- Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>

#### Presidents' Day Holiday

- Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>



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## MAKING MEMORIES THAT COUNT

**BY: MICHELLE COLE, FEC DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**

Christmas can be a tough when your family is struggling financially. There are so many gifts that we'd like to buy and can't, but it really can be the greatest opportunity to build memories that matter. When I think back over my Christmas memories, I don't really remember the gifts that I did or didn't get. I do remember a specific fuzzy blanket that my mom bought me that I knew they couldn't afford, and I still have it to this day, but I don't really remember ANY of the other gifts that they struggled to get me, however, they blessed me with so many special memories that money could never buy.

- I remember drinking my mom's homemade hot chocolate, covered in whipped cream and chocolate sprinkles and cinnamon. We still refer to them as "Niki Specials" to this day, decades after her passing.



- I remember making face ornaments out of construction paper, cotton balls, glue, paint, and the cheapest bulb ornaments my parents could find.
- I remember them sewing a Santa suit and dressing up my uncle to sneak in and play Santa for my younger siblings. My job was to wake them up when he snuck through the door. I was about twelve years old then, and I felt like such a big girl to be in on the conspiracy.

Growing up, we didn't have much. We seldomly got what we asked for, so we seldomly asked for things, or we asked for very reasonable things, like a new pair of shoes. Sometimes that was a little annoying growing up, but now that I've grown up, I understand the absolute magic in those Niki Specials, those cheap ornaments, and that silly Santa surprise. Those are the memories that mattered! They are the memories that helped make me into the mother and grandmother than knew the value of making the most of each season in our lives, no matter how rough those seasons might be. So, whether this year is abase or abound, and however you celebrate as a family, I encourage you to make those memories that count!

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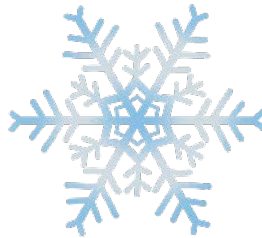
## MAKE IT YOUR SPECIAL FAMILY COCOA...

### Cocoa Ingredients (with healthier options, if available):

- 4 cups Milk (organic grass-fed)
  - ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder (organic or cacao powder)
  - ¼ cup sugar (raw honey ½ of sugar measurement)
  - 2 tsp pure vanilla extract (organic)
  - Mini marshmallows topping (honey whipped cream, see recipe)
  - Sprinkle of cinnamon topping (organic sticks are fun)
1. In a small saucepan, combine milk, cocoa powder, sugar/honey over medium/medium low heat while whisking frequently until warmed.
  2. Whisk in vanilla extract and pour into cups while hot.
  3. Enjoy topping each cup together as a family.

### Honey Whipped Cream Ingredients:

- 2 cups heavy cream (organic)
  - 2 tbsp confectioners' sugar (2-4 tsp honey)
  - 1-2 tsp vanilla extract (organic)
- Combine ingredients in mixing bowl and whip until peaks form.



**I am big on natural/organic options, but tis the season to make the most of the time together!  
Use what you have and enjoy doing it together!  
Soon, they'll be grown up and trying to pass on these special memories with their children!**

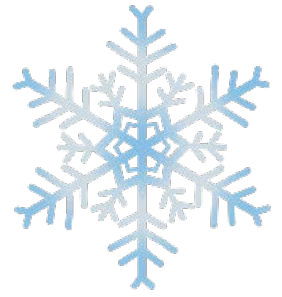


## Gingerbread Salt-Dough Ornaments



### Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup salt
- ½ cup water
- 3 tbsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tbsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cloves



1. Preheat oven to 250° F.
2. Whisk together dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl.
3. Using an electric mixer, slowly add water until combined. Dough should ball together.
4. Knead into a smooth ball, if necessary, and flatten into a circular disk.
5. On parchment paper, roll out dough until approximately ¼ in. thick.
6. Cut dough into shapes with holiday cookie cutters.
7. Keep combining scraps and rolling them out to make additional ornaments.
8. Use a straw or chopstick to make a hole at the top of the ornament for hanging.
9. Gently flip ornaments face down on cookie sheet.
10. Bake at 250° for 2 hours.
11. Paint and let dry.
12. Add a piece of ribbon through the hole to hang.

## Bay Area Christmas Outings on a Budget



- Christmas Performances at Westfield Shopping Center, SF
- Rescue Animal Windows at Macy's, SF (Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> – Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>)
- San Francisco Winter Walk, SF (Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>)
- Union Square Christmas Tree, SF (Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> – Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>)
- Great Dickens Christmas Fair, Daily City (Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> – Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>)
- 22-Foot Gingerbread House at the Fairmont, SF (Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> – Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Christmas in the Park & Drive-Through Holiday Light Show, San Jose, (Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> – Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Annual Lighted Boat Parade at Pier 30 (Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> this Friday, at 6pm)

