

The Winter Booklet

by Sarah Kress

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Dear Reader,

Thank you for downloading *The Winter Booklet*. I hope you will find inspiration here for appreciating this surprisingly rich season.

Traditions for celebrating the seasons are important because they interrupt our every day routines and encourage us to anticipate heart-warming activities that are familiar to us, but that are out of the ordinary. For those of us who live in cities and who work indoors, it can be challenging to notice all the natural changes that take place in nature as the months pass. Without holidays and traditions to celebrate these changes, it's hard to distinguish memories from years past. In this way seasonal celebrations help to prevent the feeling that life is escaping us.

Winter traditions can be as simple as hanging a wreath on the front door, or as grand as taking a vacation to Hawaii every January. If escaping to a tropical paradise is not an option, there are plenty of affordable activities which can be enjoyed at home during the cold months.

Your feedback about the content of this ebook is very important to me. I would also enjoy hearing about your favorite winter traditions. To contact Sarah's Writings, LLC please send an [email](#), or fill out a feedback form below.



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Thanks again,
Sarah Kress, Managing Member

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Activities

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[Outdoor Activities](#)

Having a snow ball fight
Making snow angels
Building igloos
Hanging bird feeders and bird treats
Hanging wreaths and bows and Christmas lights
Snow shoeing
Skiing
Snowboarding
Ice skating
Sledding
Sleigh riding
Caroling
Window shopping

[Indoor Activities](#)

Decorating the house and the Christmas tree
Roasting chestnuts
Making a fire
Watching holiday movies

Lighting a menorah
Playing dreidel
Going to see a holiday play or ballet such as The Nutcracker
Going to church or temple
Wrapping presents
Cooking holiday treats
Playing holiday music
Making crafts
Reading holiday stories

Winter Music (CDs)

1. Frank Sinatra Christmas Collection. Frank Sinatra.
2. The Christmas Song. Nat King Cole.
3. Let It Snow. Michael Buble.
4. White Christmas. Bing Crosby.
5. December, Piano Solos: 20th Anniversary Edition. George Winston.
6. The Four Seasons, Violin Concerto by Antonio Vivaldi.
7. Christmas Glory from Westminster (2000). Andrea Bocelli, Richard Griffith.
8. Songs of Angels- Christmas Hymns and Carols. Robert Shaw Chamber Singers.
9. O Come All Ye Faithful: Christmas Carols at King's College, Cambridge.

Movies

Adults:

Fargo

Groundhog Day

Misery

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

Family:

Ice Age

Batman and Robin

A Charlie Brown Christmas

A Christmas Carol

The Christmas Gift

A Christmas Story

Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas
Frosty the Snowman
Home Alone
It's a Wonderful Life
Miracle on 34th Street
The Muppet Christmas Carol
The Night Before Christmas
The Nightmare Before Christmas
The Nutcracker
Prancer
Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer

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Winter Crafts

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Gingerbread Ornaments

3/4 cup applesauce
3/4 cup ground cinnamon
1/2 Tbsp. cloves
3 Tbsp. white craft glue
Wax paper
Rolling pin
Thread
Pencil

Mix the ingredients in a bowl and then roll the dough out on a piece of wax paper so that it is 1/4 of an inch thick. Cut out shapes, then poke a hole at the top of each shape with the end of a pencil. Allow the ornaments to dry for 2-3 days, then string a loop of thread through the hole of each ornament to hang them.

Cookie Ornaments

3 cups flour

1 1/2 cups salt
3 Tbsp oil
1 1/2 cups water
Pencil
Acrylic paints
Paint brushes
Thread

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees Fahrenheit. Mix the ingredients in a bowl until it becomes a thick dough. Roll the dough out on a sheet of wax paper until it is 1/4 of an inch thick. Cut out shapes and then poke a hole at the top of each shape. Arrange the cookies on a cookie sheet. Bake them in the center of the oven for an hour, or until they're golden around the edges. Allow the cookies to cool until they are hard before painting them and tying a loop of thread through the holes to hang them.

Dried Orange and Lemon Ornaments

Slices of oranges and lemons

Cut thin slices of an orange and lemon and set the slices on screens to dry for 3-4 days. The slices can also bake at 150 degrees for 3-4 hours with the door slightly open.

Cranberry and Popcorn Garland

1 or 2 bags of fresh cranberries
1 large bowl of popped popcorn
fishing line or several small boxes of dental floss
1 large needle

Cut a manageable length of fishing line or dental floss to thread the needle with before tying the line at the end. Alternate the cranberries and popcorn or do entire garlands of just cranberries and just popcorn.

Paper Snowflakes

Several coffee filters
Scissors

Fold the coffee filters in half, and then fold them in half again so that each one looks like a triangle with a rounded side. Cut out holes and squares along the straight edges of each triangle, and then unfold each one to reveal the snowflakes.

Christmas Candles

White, round candles of various heights
Circle cut-outs of old Christmas cards
Holly leaves and berries
Hot glue gun

Glue the circle cut-outs of old Christmas cards onto the face of each candle, and/or hot glue the holly leaves and berries around the base of each candle.

Recycled Christmas Card Ornaments

Circle cut-outs of old Christmas Cards
Yarn, thread or string
Craft glue
Paint brush
Sparkles

Cut out circles from old Christmas cards by tracing the bottom of a small or medium sized glass onto the face of each card. The circles must be the same size. Lay half of the circles face down on a table and then brush craft glue onto the back of each one. While the glue is wet, lay a loop of thread or string onto each one so that the loops are outside the circles and the ends are on the glue. Lay the remaining circles on top of the sticky circles so that the colorful sides are up. At this point the circles can dry or the edges can be decorated with sparkles.

Christmas Card Garland

Circle cut-outs of old Christmas cards
A long piece of yarn, thread or string
Paint brush
Craft glue

Cut out circles from Christmas cards by tracing the bottom of a small or

medium sized glass onto the face of each card. The circles must be the same size. Lay half of the circles face down in a row on a table and brush the backs with craft glue. While the glue is still wet, lay down the long piece of string across all the circles. Place the remaining circles on top of the sticky circles so that the colorful sides are up. Let the garland to dry before hanging it.

Beaded Snowflakes

Small and medium sized clear and light blue beads

Needle nosed pliers

20 and 24 gage copper wire

Hot glue

String or thread for hanging

Cut three 4 inch pieces of 20 gage wire, and arrange the pieces on top of each other so that they all intersect in the middle. Spread out each arm of the snowflake so that they are equal distances apart. Secure the shape of the snowflake by dripping a dab of hot glue onto the middle intersection of the three pieces and allow the glue to set. Next, string three or four small beads onto each arm. After doing so, use the pliers to twist a 6 inch piece of 24 gage wire onto all of the arms so that it forms a circle around the apex and above the first row of beads on each arm. String beads on this piece of wire before twisting it onto each individual arm. String beads onto the remaining length of the snowflake arms and then twist the end of each arm to finish the snowflake. Attach a loop of string or thread to one of the arms to hang the snowflake on the tree.

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Winter Foods & Drinks

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[Winter Foods](#)

Chestnuts

Carrots

Brussels Sprouts

Beet Root

Shallots

Pomegranates

Pecans

Walnuts

Turnips

Grapefruits

Rutabagas

Kale

Oranges

Leeks

Radicchio

Lemons

Radishes

Cauliflower

Mussels

Duck
Goose

Appetizers

Roasted Chestnuts

½ pound firm, medium to large sized chestnuts

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Carve an “X” on the side of each chestnut with a knife and then arrange them on a baking sheet. Roast them for 25 minutes, or until they are tender. Remove the nuts from the oven and let them cool just long enough so that the skins can be peeled before eating.

Spiced Nuts

½ cup water

1 cup packed brown sugar

1 Tbsp curry powder

1 tsp. chili powder

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. white pepper

1 pound toasted walnuts

Toast the walnuts in a 300 degree oven for 5-10 minutes. In a saucepan, boil the water and sugar to 260 degrees Fahrenheit (hard ball stage). The syrup has reached hard ball stage when a drop of syrup turns hard after dropping it into a glass of cold water. Quickly add the nuts and stir them until they're coated. Transfer the nuts to a sheet of wax paper to cool.

Caramel Popcorn

1 large pot of popped popcorn

2 cups roasted peanuts

2 cups brown sugar

½ cup light corn syrup

1 tsp. salt

2 sticks of butter

½ tsp. baking soda

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease one or two cookie sheets. Combine the peanuts with the popcorn in the pot and then pour the mixture onto the cookie sheets. Combine the brown sugar, corn syrup, butter and salt in a saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat while stirring. Once the mixture boils, stir it for 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat, and stir in the baking soda. The mixture will become foamy. Immediately pour the mixture over the popcorn and peanut mixture and stir everything around. Bake the mixture for an hour, making sure to stir the popcorn around every 20 minutes. Remove the popcorn from the oven and allow it to cool before storing in containers.

Warm Drinks

Buttered Rum

2 cups brown sugar
1 stick of butter
½ tsp. salt
2 cinnamon sticks
4 whole cloves
1 tsp. nutmeg
2 cups rum
whipped cream

Add all the ingredients in a slow cooker (except the rum and whipped cream) and cook on low, covered, for 2-3 hours (or until heated). Before serving, add the rum and spoon the mixture into mugs, then top the drinks with whipped cream.

Holiday Eggnog

1 dozen eggs
1 ¼ cups sugar
½ tsp. salt
2 quarts whole milk
1 cup dark rum
2 Tbsp. vanilla extract
1 Tbsp. ground nutmeg
1 cup heavy cream, whipped

In a soup pot, whisk the eggs, sugar and salt. Slowly add 1 quart of milk and heat the mixture on low, making sure to stir the custard for 20 minutes or until it is a thick syrup consistency. The custard should be hot but not boiling, or it will curdle. Pour the custard into a large bowl and mix in the rum, vanilla extract, nutmeg and the rest of the milk. Refrigerate the eggnog until ready to serve. Before serving, fold the whipped cream into the eggnog for a fluffy festive drink.

Cookies

Almond Cookies

2 hard boiled eggs

1 raw egg

1/3 cup butter

1/3 cup sugar

1 Tbsp. milk

3 Tbsp. sliced or crushed almonds

1 cup flour plus more for dusting

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Remove the yolks of the boiled eggs and mash them with the butter until creamy. Add the sugar, the raw egg yolk, milk and flour. Mix the ingredients until the dough is stiff enough to roll out on a floured surface. Cut shapes with cookies cutters and arrange them on a buttered cookie sheet. Brush the cookies with the raw egg white, and sprinkle them with sliced almonds. Bake them until golden, about 10 minutes.

Caraway Cookies

3 cups all purpose flour

3/4 cup sugar

1 stick of butter

1/4 cup of milk

2 Tbsp. caraway seeds

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. In a large bowl, mix the flour and sugar and caraway seeds. In a small bowl, melt the butter and then mix in the milk. Slowly incorporate the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients. Knead

the dough and then roll it out on a floured surface. Cut out diamond shapes and arrange the cookies on a buttered cookie sheet. Bake the cookies until golden but still soft in the middle, about 10 minutes. Remove them from the oven to cool.

Gingerbread Cookies

1 cups all purpose flour
1 Tbsp. baking powder
1 Tbsp. ground ginger
1 Tbsp. nutmeg
1 Tbsp. allspice
1 Tbsp. cinnamon
1 stick of butter, softened
¾ cup molasses
1 cup packed brown sugar
½ cup water
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Decorative frosting

Mix the butter, molasses, brown sugar, water, egg and vanilla until smooth. Gradually stir in the dry ingredients, until they are completely absorbed. Divide the dough into 3 balls and flatten them until they're about an inch thick. Wrap them in plastic wrap and refrigerate them overnight. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough until it is only ¼ inch thick. Cut out shapes with cookies cutters and place the cookies 1 inch apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake the cookies for 10-12 minutes. When they're done, they will still be soft. Remove the cookies from the baking sheet and place them on a wire rack. Once cool, the cookies can be decorated with frosting.

Pfeffernusse

2 cups sugar
4 large eggs
3 ½ cups all-purpose flour
2 Tbsp. grated orange peel
1 tsp. ground cinnamon

1 tsp. ground allspice
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. lemon extract
½ tsp. ground cloves

In a large bowl, with mixer at low speed, beat sugar and eggs until blended. Increase speed to high; beat until creamy. Reduce speed to low; add flour, grated orange peel, cinnamon, allspice, baking powder, lemon extract, cloves and beat the mixture, occasionally scraping the bowl with a rubber spatula, until well combined. With lightly floured hands, shape dough into 4 balls; flatten each slightly. Wrap each in plastic wrap and freeze 1 hour or refrigerate overnight. Dough will be very sticky even after chilling. Preheat oven to 400. Grease a large cookie sheet. On well floured surface, with floured rolling pin, roll out 1 piece of dough into a 10 inches by 6 inches rectangle, keeping remaining dough in refrigerator. With floured pastry wheel or sharp knife, cut dough lengthwise into 6 strips, then cut each strip crosswise into 10 pieces. Place cookies, about ½ inch apart, on cookie sheet. Bake cookies 8-10 minutes, until lightly browned. With wide spatula, transfer cookies to wire racks to cool. Repeat with remaining dough.

Desserts

Mincemeat Pies

1 ¼ pounds of roast beef
¼ pound suet
Apples, peeled, cored and minced (3 cups)
1 cup currants or dried cranberries, finely chopped
½ cup sugar
½ cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon salt
2 tsp. cinnamon
2 tsp. nutmeg
2 tsp. allspice
¼ cup brandy
2 cups apple cider
Pastry dough
Melted butter for brushing

Slow cook the roast beef for 2 and a half hours. Add the suet and cook for another ½ hour, or until the meat can be shredded and minced. Transfer the meat to a large bowl, add with it the minced apples, chopped currants, white and brown sugar, brandy, apple, cider, salt and spices. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Cut out small squares of pastry dough and place a spoonful of the mincemeat mixture on one side of each. Fold the pastry dough over the mixture and pinch the edges shut to form small pies. Pierce a fork through the side of each pastry pie for steam to escape. Brush each pastry with butter. Arrange the pies on a cookie sheet and bake for 45 minutes, or until golden brown.

Christmas Fudge

2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
1 ounce sweet chocolate
1 jar (7 ounces) marshmallow crème
4 ½ cups sugar
2 Tbsp. butter
12 ounces evaporated milk
¼ tsp. salt
2 cups chopped roasted walnuts

Combine the chocolate chips, sweet chocolate and marshmallow crème in a large bowl. Add the sugar, butter, evaporated milk and salt in a skillet, and bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat. Cook the syrup for 4 and a half minutes exactly, stirring constantly. Pour the hot mixture over the chocolate mixture, and stir them together along with the roasted walnuts. Spread the fudge into a buttered serving dish and let it cool before cutting it into squares.

Cinnamon Fudge

3 cups confectioner's sugar
½ cup coca powder
½ tsp. cinnamon
½ cup butter
¼ cup milk
1 ½ tsp. vanilla extract
1 cup chopped roasted walnuts

Butter the serving dish that the fudge will be poured into. In a bowl, combine the sugar, cocoa and cinnamon. Heat the butter and milk in a medium saucepan over medium heat. When the butter melts, stir in the vanilla. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the sugar and walnuts. Pour the fudge into the serving dish and refrigerate for an hour before cutting it into squares.

Peanut Brittle

1 cup white sugar
½ cup light corn syrup
¼ tsp. salt
¼ cup water
1 cup peanuts
2 Tbsp. butter, room temperature
1 tsp. baking soda

Butter a cookie sheet and place it in a warm oven. In a large saucepan over medium heat, bring the sugar, corn syrup, salt and water to a boil. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then add the peanuts. Place a candy thermometer into the mixture so that it does not touch the sides of the pan. Keep stirring until the temperature reaches 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Remove the mixture from the heat and immediately stir in the butter and baking soda. Quickly pour the mixture onto the warm cookie sheet and tip the cookie sheet all around until the brittle covers it in a thin and even layer. Let the brittle cool before breaking it into pieces.

Ginger Bread Cake

½ cup white sugar
1 stick of butter
1 egg
1 cup molasses
½ cup orange juice
½ cup sour cream
2 ⅔ cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ tsp. baking soda
1 Tbsp. cinnamon
1 Tbsp. fresh grated ginger

1 Tbsp. cloves
½ tsp. salt
1 cup hot water

Frosting:

8 ounces (2 packages) cream cheese, room temperature
1 stick of butter, room temperature
2 cups confectioner's sugar
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1 Tbsp. orange liqueur

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Butter a baking pan and dust it with flour. In a large bowl, cream the sugar and butter. Beat in the egg and add the molasses. In another bowl, sift the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger and cloves. One cup at a time, add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients. Stir in the hot water and pour the batter into the baking pan. Bake the bread for 1 hour or until a fork comes out clean when inserted into the middle. Once cool, prepare the frosting by creaming the cheese, butter, vanilla, orange liqueur and sugar with a mixer. Frost the top of the ginger bread cake.

Fruментy (Figgy pudding)

½ cup butter
½ cup vegetable shortening
1 cup granulated sugar
3 large egg yolks
1 cup milk
2 Tbsp. rum
2 apples, peeled, cored and finely chopped
2 pounds dried figs, ground or finely chopped
1 lemon peel, grated
1 cup chopped nuts
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. ground cloves
¼ tsp. ground ginger
1 ½ cups dried bread crumbs
2 tsp. baking powder

3 large egg whites, stiffly beaten

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit. Butter a baking dish or pudding mold. Cream the butter and sugar and add the egg yolks, milk, rum, apple, figs, and grated lemon peel. Add the nuts, spices and bread crumbs and mix thoroughly. With a mixer, beat the egg whites until they are stiff and then fold them into the pudding mixture. Pour the pudding into the baking dish or pudding mold. Place the baking dish or pudding mold in a baking pan on the middle oven rack. Fill the baking pan with boiling water to steam the pudding for 4 hours, replacing the boiling water every hour.

Candied Orange Peel

Peels from 5 large naval oranges, sliced

2 1/2 cups sugar

1 1/2 cup water

1/4 tsp salt

Candy thermometer

Bring the orange slices in a saucepan of water to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer them for 10 minutes. Boil 1 and a half cups of water with 2 and 1/2 cups of sugar until the syrup reaches 230 to 234 degrees Fahrenheit. Add the orange strips to the syrup for 15 minutes, then reduce the heat and simmer the orange peels for an hour, or until the syrup has been absorbed. Remove the slices and let them cool. Roll them in sugar with a dash of salt and dry them on a layer of waxed paper overnight. The candy pieces should be dry on the outside but moist and chewy on the inside.

Meats

Apple-Ginger Glazed Ham

1 fully cooked smoked whole ham (14 pounds)

1/2 cup apple jelly

1/4 tsp. ground ginger

fresh herbs for garnish

Preheat oven to 325. Remove skin and trim some fat from ham, leaving about 1/4 inch fat. Place ham on rack in large roasting pan. Bake ham 2 hours

30 minutes. After ham has baked 2 hours 30 minutes, prepare glaze: in small saucepan, combine apple jelly and ginger and heat to boiling over medium-high heat; boil 2 minutes. Brush ham with some glaze. Bake ham 30 minutes to 1 hour longer, brushing occasionally with remaining glaze, until meat thermometer inserted into center of ham registers 140 degrees (15 to 18 minutes per pound total cooking time). When ham is done, transfer to a warm large platter; let stand 20 minutes to set juices for easier slicing. Garnish with herbs.

Beef Rib Roast with Creamy Horseradish Sauce

1 3-rib beef rib roast, small end (about 7 pounds), chine bone removed
 3 Tbsp. whole tricolor peppercorns
 1 tsp salt
 Creamy horseradish sauce.

Preheat oven to 325. In medium roasting pan, place beef roast, fat side up. In a mortar with pestle, crush peppercorns with salt. Rub peppercorn mixture over roast. Roast beef until meat thermometer inserted into center registers 140. About 20 minutes per pound. Internal temperature will rise to 145 upon standing. Or, roast to desired doneness. When beef is done, transfer to warm large platter and let stand 15 minutes to set juices for easier slicing.

Meanwhile, prepare creamy horseradish sauce. Sauce: in small bowl, mix 1 jar prepared white horseradish, drained, ½ cup mayonnaise, 1 tsp. sugar, and ½ tsp. salt. Whip ½ cup heavy or whipping cream; fold into horseradish mixture. Makes about 1 2/3 cups.

Vegetables

Ginger and Carrot Soup

½ stick butter
 1 Tbsp. olive oil
 12 large carrots, peeled and sliced
 Two 6-inch ginger roots, peeled and minced (about ¼ cup)
 2 large garlic cloves, minced
 6 cups vegetable stock
 1 cup cream
 Fresh rosemary, marjoram, and lavender

Cheesecloth and string

Heat the butter and olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Sauté the garlic and the ginger for a minute and then add the stock and carrots. Bring the soup to a boil and then reduce the heat to a simmer. Slowly stir in the cream. Contain the fresh herbs in a bag of cheesecloth tied with string, and then put the bag in the soup. Simmer the soup for about a half an hour, and then remove the herb bag before blending the soup in a food processor. Transfer the soup back to the pot on the stove to reheat before serving.

Roasted Brussels Sprouts and Beets with Blue Cheese Dressing

10-15 small Brussels sprouts with firm outer leaves
2 medium sized beets, trimmed of leaves, peeled, and chopped
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
½ cup crumbled blue cheese
½ cup sour cream
1 garlic clove, minced
Ground salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Slice the Brussels sprouts in half and arrange them on a baking sheet with the peeled and chopped beets. Drizzle the veggies with 2 Tbsp. olive oil and then roast them for about 30 to 45 minutes, or until they are tender on the inside and slightly crispy on the outside. Remove the veggies from the oven to cool. In a small bowl, add the crumbled blue cheese, sour cream, salt and pepper, and minced garlic. Mix the ingredients together and then add a little water until it reaches a desired consistency. Serve the veggies warm and drizzled with the blue cheese dressing.

Mashed Sweet Potatoes and Rutabagas

1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
1 pounds rutabagas, peeled and chopped
¼ stick butter
Salt and pepper to taste

Add the peeled and chopped vegetables to a saucepot of water and then bring it to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover the pot and simmer the contents for about

a half an hour or until the roots are very tender. Drain them and then return them to the pot. Add the butter and salt and pepper before mashing.

Leek, Potato and Chive Soup

4 large russet potatoes, peeled and chopped
4 leeks, white parts only, thinly sliced
5 cups vegetable stock
1 cup cream
¼ cup minced chives
Salt and white pepper to taste

Add the sliced leeks and the chopped potatoes into soup pot and cover them with the stock. Bring the soup to a boil, then reduce the heat and cover for 30-45 minutes, or until the veggies are very tender. Add the chives and then puree the soup in a blender or food processor. Return the soup to the pot on the stove. Slowly add the cream and spices while reheating it before serving.

Sautéed Radishes

2 Tbsp butter
2 Tbsp. olive oil
10 small red radishes, stems removed, rinsed and sliced
1 Tbsp. white sugar
½ Tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 Tbsp. fresh, chopped dill
Salt and pepper

Heat the butter and olive oil in a skillet over medium. Sauté the radishes until they are cooked to a desired tenderness. Add the sugar, vinegar and salt and pepper to the pan and then stir the radish slices to coat them before serving.

Cauliflower Soup

2 Tbsp. butter
¼ cup all-purpose flour
½ tsp. salt
2 cups cream or milk
4 cups chicken broth
1 head cauliflower (2 ½ pounds), leaves removed and chopped

1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
½ cup grated cheddar cheese

Melt the butter in a soup pot over medium heat. Stir in the flour and salt for 2 minutes, and then add the broth. Add the cauliflower and heat the soup to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover the pot, and simmer the soup for about 30 minutes. Blend the soup in a food processor or blender, and then return it to the pot. Slowly add the cream or milk while reheating the soup, as well as the mustard and cheese. Keep stirring until the cheese has melted and the soup is smooth.

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Holidays

(December, January and February in the U.S.)

Imbolc or Samhain

Imbolc is a Celtic holiday which celebrates the waning of winter and the hope for spring. It is a very ancient tradition which honors the Goddess Brigit, and is celebrated in the U.S. on February 1st.

Hanukkah

Jews begin this eight day celebration on the 25th day of Kislev of the Hebrew calendar. Traditionally, a gift is given on each night of Hanukkah. This holiday is also called the Festival of Lights. Jewish families light eight candles during this holiday which sit in a candle holder called a menorah.

Christmas

Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25th, a day that is called Christmas. This holiday has also become a secular tradition centered around the myth of Santa Claus and his gift-giving on Christmas.

Kwanzaa

Americans with African heritage celebrate this holiday from the 26th of December to the 1st of January. Kwanzaa is about celebrating the culture that Africans brought with them to America, and about keeping the knowledge and traditions of African culture alive.

New Years Day

This holiday begins at midnight on January 1st, which is the first day of the year on the Gregorian calendar. Countries which use the Gregorian calendar celebrate New Years Day with parades and fireworks.

Chinese New Year

Celebrated at the end of winter in late January or Early February, Chinese New Year is all about parades and fireworks. Each year is associated with one of the twelve animals in the Chinese zodiac.

Groundhog Day

Supposedly started by the Romans and then introduced to America by German immigrants, Groundhog Day is about the tradition of predicting long winters and early springs by the shadow of a groundhog who leaves his burrow on February 2nd. If the groundhog sees his shadow, six more weeks of winter is expected.

Valentine's Day

This holiday has evolved from a religious day about honoring early Christian martyrs, to a day about celebrating love and exchanging love notes called Valentines. Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14th.

Martin Luther King Day

Martin Luther King Junior was the leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S.. The importance of his work and his memory is celebrated on the third Monday of January.

Presidents' Day

Originally started to honor George Washington's birthday, Presidents' Day now honors all of the presidents who ever served the United States, and is celebrated on the third Monday of February.

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Home & Garden

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Home To-Do List for Winter

1. Set up holiday decorations around the home and yard.
2. Create a holiday shopping list.
3. Organize closets and storage spaces.
4. Donate worn clothing and household items.
5. Clean behind appliances such as the stove, fridge, washer and dryer.
6. Send holiday cards to family and friends.
7. Collect new holiday recipes.
8. Organize books, CDs, DVDs, and other collections. Donate some of the items.
9. Update inventory records of household items and take pictures of

expensive items.

Garden To-Do List for Winter

1. Brush snow off branches to keep them from breaking.
2. Replenish water supplies in bird baths twice a day during freezing temperatures.
3. Continue hanging and filling bird feeders.
4. Add more mulch to the garden beds, including vegetable beds where root vegetables are growing, and over dormant roses.
5. Draw out a diagram of the garden beds and planting areas.
6. Write a month by month plan of gardening tasks for the coming year.
7. Order seed starting supplies, as well as seeds, in January.
8. Begin growing seeds indoors in February in mild or warm climates.
9. Build new compost bins, and stir existing compost piles.
10. Replenish supplies of soil amendments.
11. Build a cold frame box or repair an existing one.
12. Donate any garden utensils that are beyond repair and replace them.
13. In February in mild or warm climate areas, prepare vegetable beds for cold season crops.

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