

Fill your week with smiles!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS

Feel extra joyous!

Add last-minute Christmas cheer to your home with a beautiful bouquet featuring pine, classic blooms and bright baubles. The easy how-to: Fill a 6"-tall vase with water. Cut 6 small pine branches and 16 roses to 8" to 10". Add pine branches to the vase first,

forming a soft, rounded mound. Next, insert the rose stems between branches. Remove the cap from five red ornaments, insert a wooden skewer into each and place in the vase. To finish, nestle the vase into a drawstring felt gift bag; tighten drawstrings to secure.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22
BE A LOVER OF SILENCE DAY

Experience aah



Give yourself a break from the holiday hustle and bustle today by finding a quiet corner where you can relax! Savoring the silence will not only bring on calm, it can also soothe pain. So say researchers in the journal *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*. When volunteers were exposed to a hot object on their skin, they reported 26% less pain when they were told to sit quietly and silence their thoughts than when they reacted the way they normally would. Previous research shows that the quiet time shuts down overexcited pain pathways in the brain. Turns out silence really is golden!

Share your miles!

Do you have airline miles to spare? If so, consider donating them to the Fisher House Foundation. The military nonprofit, which also accepts hotel rewards points, will use them to help wounded service members and their families during the recovery process. Visit their website (FisherHouse.org) to learn how to donate.



HELP A HERO!

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21 NATIONAL COQUITO DAY

Raise a glass

Kick back and relax with a *coquito*, or Puerto Rican eggnog. The delicious sip (whose name means "Little Coconut") combines coconut, cinnamon and dark rum for a thick, creamy drink, says Sara Maniez, who shares recipes at LifesLittleSweets.com.

To make Maniez's Coquito: In a blender, add 2 (12 oz.) cans of evaporated milk, 1 (15 oz.) can of cream of coconut, 1 (13.5 oz.) can of coconut milk, ½ cup of sweetened condensed milk, ½ cup of dark rum, 1 tsp. of vanilla extract and ½ tsp. of ground cinnamon. Blend for 1 to 2 minutes. Chill in the fridge. Stir before serving. Pour into glasses and garnish with cinnamon and coconut flakes, if desired. *Makes 8*



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 GAMES DAY

Turn back the clock!

Gather loved ones and play a board game today—it can help keep your mind young, say researchers in *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*. They looked at how 1,091 participants did on cognitive tests every three years starting at the age of 70 and found that those who played board games were more mentally sharp—and

those who started playing more games in their 70s experienced less decline in their thinking skills, particularly ones involving memory, than those who never played. So whether you're already having regular family game nights or looking to learn the rules of a new game, this research shows it's never too late to reap the brain-boosting benefits!



Friedrich Strauss; Getty (3); Adobe Stock (2). Text: Shay Trotter

Start your week
with a
Laugh!



"He had his teeth whitened"

Q What kind of motorcycle does Santa like to ride?

A A Holly Davidson!



"It takes until around March before I get all the Christmas music stuck in my head out"

Kids are **fUNNy!**

We were watching the nativity play at church last year, and we got to the part where the three wise men present their gifts. When it came time for the child to bring forth the frankincense, he bel-lowed, "Frank sent this!"

—R.G., Topeka, KS

A: a candle

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