

Make it! Decorating for the Holidays with Handmade and Natural Décor

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Educational Objectives

- Participants will learn new ways to create holiday décor for their home.
- Participants will save money and conserve their holiday budget by using found or inexpensive items for décor.
- Participants will find an inexpensive creative outlet during the winter months.

Intro

The holiday season provides many opportunities to try a new craft or decoration idea. This lesson will focus on handmade and budget-friendly options for people of all ages and traditions. Come participate in this hands-on activity and learn how to make crafts and decorations for the fall and winter months while not breaking the bank.



Dried Oranges

Dried oranges are not only economical but also very much back in style as a decoration. They are a simple way to make garland, decorate gift boxes, add pizzazz to your tree as ornaments and even use for stovetop potpourri or ciders. Make sure to dry them fully and properly to ensure they won't mold. It's a great way to create coziness and save money. Additionally, with supervision during the slicing process, it is a great way to involve kids, too. They can help lay out orange slices and even help with stringing them.

Salt Dough

Salt dough ornaments are an age-old tradition that is super affordable and super fun! Although making salt dough ornaments and decorations is a perfect activity for kids, it also can be elevated to use as artistic gift tags, ornaments and décor. Salt dough can be stamped, painted, molded and more! Let your artistic side show without breaking the bank. When properly dried, salt dough ornaments can last decades.

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Garland and Fresh Greens with Pinecones

If you want a true throwback and inexpensive way to make all the garland you need – make a popcorn garland! All you need is embroidery floss (or even waxed dental floss), needle, scissors and unbuttered popcorn (and shellac, if you want to it last longer). Make sure you pop your own plain popcorn to avoid flavor or salt residues. To make it more festive, you can even add cranberries. Take time to string your popcorn garlands – you can make it an activity while watching a holiday movie! Garlands can be used on trees, mantles and around windows inside. While these usually only last the season, you can make it a tradition of stringing popcorn garland each year.

Fresh greens are the perfect budget-friendly accent to make any home cozier around the holidays. Many of our everyday decorations can become Christmas or winter décor simply by adding holly, boxwood or pine. Add in natural or painted dried flowers and seed pods for accent pieces. As the days get shorter, we tend to spend more sedentary time indoors. Foraging for greenery is a great way to get back outside for a little sunshine and exercise when we need it the most! What else do we love about greens? They aren't sitting in storage the rest of the year! When it's time for cleanup the greens can be composted, used for fires or taken back to the woods to decompose.

Pine boughs are a staple foraged Christmas decoration in our house. When trimming your tree, save the bottom branches for the foundation of the boughs. I like to start with pine and add in boxwood for texture, followed by juniper or holly for a little color. Green zip ties blend in perfectly and are an easy way to hold it all together. Pick out your favorite ribbon to finish them off. I put boughs under the windows and even on the mailbox post. If you have any old sleds or ice skates, they make the perfect winter complement to fresh pine boughs!

Bringing greens indoors is a great way to fight off the dark days of winter. I like to use ground pine, holly, eucalyptus and rosemary for indoor decorations. The rosemary and eucalyptus smell fresh and dry nicely for extended periods of time. The ground pine provides volume, and the delicate holly berries are a perfect pop of color. Use these greens to spruce up grape vine wreaths, advent wreaths or create a mantle display with candles or lights.

Pinecones are another fun, budget-friendly winter decoration. Fill up antique baskets with cones, a few springs of greenery, battery operated fairy lights and a red ribbon for a quick and cozy indoor or outdoor display.

Do you have a fireplace that no longer works or is used? Christmas is the perfect time to show it off! White birch logs, pillar candles and/or Christmas lights are a perfect way to add cozy without the actual fire. Add some greenery to the mantle for the finishing touch.

Papier Mache Piñata

Papier-mache piñatas are fun, cheap and easy to make. You can create many holiday shapes. For Halloween or Thanksgiving, you can make a pumpkin; for Christmas, you can make an ornament.

All you need to make a papier-mache piñata is some newspaper, flour, water, salt, a balloon and paint.



Equipment/Tools

Bowl

Whisk or spoon

Materials

1 part all-purpose white flour

2 parts water

Salt (optional)

Combine the flour and water in a large bowl and stir it well. You want the mixture to be thin, with a consistency similar to pancake batter.

Tip: Consistency depends on your preference. However, if it's like a paste, then it's too thick—add more water or flour as needed until the mix is runny like white glue.

Continue to mix until there are very few lumps left. Use a whisk or a hand-held blender to remove any remaining lumps.

Add salt (optional).

Use the papier-mache glue immediately for a project or store the paste in a covered bowl or jar in the refrigerator for a few days.

References

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