

# Merry christmas

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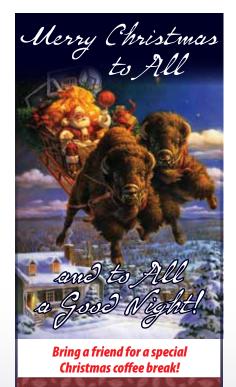


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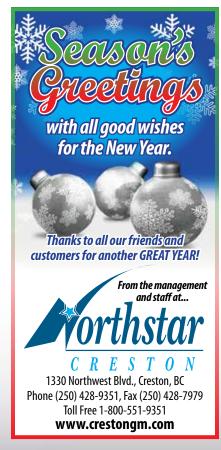
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### Sue's Clotheslines raising funds for Christmas hampers

STORY AND PHOTO BY BRIAN LAWRENCE I Love Creston Editor

n what has become a Christmas season tradition, Sue's Clotheslines will donate this month to the Creston Ministerial Association's Christmas hamper drive, and the cheque isn't likely to be a small one.

In the last four years, the store has donated \$9259.76 to the hampers, and expects to add over \$4,000 to that total this year. Raising those funds takes a lot of time and effort — including two days to decorate the store, and a year of gathering auction and sale items so why go to the trouble?

"The fact that someone gets a Christmas dinner and doesn't go to bed hungry," says owner Sue Thomas. "Sometimes, situations put people in a place they want to get out of but can't." The Christmas hamper program, which annually provides hampers filled with food, books, toys and more to over 400 families, costs about \$20,000 each year, with any additional funds used throughout the year, assisting community members with expenses including dental, medical and utilities.

Seeing the need, Thomas and store clerk Irene Kusiak began fundraising by selling crafts in 2013, donating \$480 that year and \$700 the next. The next year, they added the silent auction, and the store began matching other funds raised throughout the year, for a total of \$3,311.56 in 2015 (\$1,315 from the auction, and \$933.28 matched by the store) and \$4,788 in 2016 (\$2,085 from the auction, and \$1,076.50 matched by the store).

This year's auction, which ran Nov. 13-25, raised \$2,490, and fundraising through other means will continue until Dec. 2, at which point Sue's Clotheslines will match that amount, which totalled \$675 on Nov. 25.

Many of the silent auction items are clothing, about \$4,000 of it provided by Thomas's suppliers. Local businesses and organizations have also donated to a few gift packages.

"We want to promote what we have locally," says Thomas, who has owned



her store for 15 years. "There are a lot of people who don't even know what there is in the valley."

An orchard basket included local honey and asparagus, and an "out and about" basket had a night's stay at Ainsworth hot spring, golf passes and Footlighters Theatre Society tickets. Thomas and Kusiak collected all year to create a gardening basket.

"Any time we saw something, we bought it and stuck it in a basket," she says. "And Morris Flowers helped with that, too."

While the auction is running, bids are placed in the store window, and some bidders keep a close eye on the numbers.

"If they see that their bid is down, they come in and up it right away," she says.

To donate funds throughout the year that the store matches at Christmas, customers can purchase pocketbooks and crafts, or donate their spare change to Heavenly Cents (an inverted umbrella above the counter). For this holiday season, Sue's is also offering snowmen as a fundraiser.

Fundraising all year is a way to keep the Christmas spirit going strong — and seeing how much effort they put into decorating the store, it's no surprise that Thomas and Kusiak love that spirit.

"It makes everyone smile," Thomas says. "Unless you're Scrooge — and he got turned around — it's a happy time of year.

"I collect snowmen and you don't see an unhappy snowman. It definitely brings the good out in people." ■



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With all good wishes for the New Year.





### Christmas

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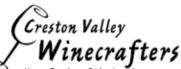


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# Surviving the Holidays with Herbs

#### TILIA BOTANICALS

The joy of Christmas is almost upon us, but unfortunately all that "joy" can sometimes have a downside. Fortunately, herbs can help bring the joy back when this happens!

From digestive upsets and hangovers to overexcited kids to stress, anxiety and depression to colds and flu — herbs can support your body to make it through the holiday season in a happy and healthy way. There are some great herbs that are readily available and wise to have on hand over the holiday season.

Chamomile is an excellent choice, as is lemon balm, as both are great for stress, indigestion, flatulence, headaches and hyper kids. Lemon balm also helps with nausea and is a natural antidepressant. They can be used either alone or in combination and they make a great tea for the season. We love these herbs so much that we created a tea using them (along with rose petals) called Honey Bunny Tea, great for kids, as well as adults, because it settles the stomach, balances energy levels and calms the nervous system.

Peppermint, fennel seed, anise seed and dandelion root all can help with digestive upsets and to support the liver if you have overindulged in rich foods or alcohol. A tea with any of these herbs taken a half-hour before a meal may help prevent flatulence, stimulate appetite and support digestive function after the big turkey feast.

Soothing herbs like marshmallow root, slippery elm and oat straw will

ease the burning of indigestion, as will meadowsweet and chamomile, both of which help to balance stomach acid. Slippery elm, in particular, can be a lifesaver at this time of year. It is an amazing herb for everything from sore throats to indigestion, heartburn, diarrhea and constipation.

Ginger is a delicious warming herb that is excellent for dealing with indigestion and nausea, boosting immune function and generally keeping you healthy. It is great with some lemon, as it will help to clean out lymphatic blockage that can happen with overindulging. Lemon is a lymphatic cleanser, and ginger works to open the vessels to move the waste material out. It is awesome at the first sign of a cold. Drink two to three cups right away and then a cup every three to four hours after that.

With alcohol, fatty food and the abundance of sugar at Christmas, our liver and pancreas can take a beating, and chicory root or milk thistle seeds can be used to protect the liver and support digestive function. With all those yummy sweets everywhere at Herbs can support your body to make it through the holiday season in a happy and healthy way.

this time of year, our poor blood sugars don't know what hit them! Herbs such as fenugreek, cinnamon, oats and Siberian ginseng can all support the body's insulin/glucose levels.

Every year, people get together and invariably someone is there coughing and sneezing sharing their "gift" with others. Putting a pot of water on the wood stove (or in a crock pot without the lid on) and adding either the herb or essential oils of thyme and sweet orange can make a huge difference. They both kill airborne microbes and boost immune function.

So from all of us at Tilia Botanicals, we wish you a happy, healthy holidays and a wonderful 2018! ■





### **Eliminate Holiday Indigestion** BY MAYA SKALINSKA Master Herbalist, **Registered Herbal** Therapist

he holidays are here, and we're busy baking and cooking all our favorite holiday treats. Unfortunately, a lot of those treats can bring us as much pain as pleasure, with bloating, gas and indigestion. The good news is that it all can be avoided with the help of some simple herbs and spices.

Holiday meals give us trouble due to several factors:

•Food combinations, mainly carbohydrates and proteins. Both need different agents, body parts and mediums to properly break down and assimilate the nutrients;

 Drinking large amounts during meals. It dilutes the stomach juices and enzymes needed for proper digestion;

•Eating too fast. Digestion starts with chewing our food, which in turn gives signals to the rest of the digestive system to prepare to break down the food for absorption; and,

•Overeating, which not only taxes our digestive system, but slows it down, causing more problems, such as acid reflux.

All of the above results in fermentation in the stomach and small intestine, producing carbon dioxide, hydrogen and organic acids, which manifest as painful gas and bloating.

It's hard to change the traditional holiday food combinations, but it's easy to add some amazing herbs and spices to help us along the way. One of my favorites for this is fennel seed. Crush two teaspoons of the seeds, add one cup of boiling water, cover and steep for 10 minutes. Fennel tea is great before or after your meal.

A spice tea after your meal will speed up digestion. Grate a chunk of ginger root, add two teaspoons of cardamom,

one or two teaspoons of coriander seeds, cinnamon for taste and one to two cups of boiling water, cover and steep for 10 minutes. Alternatively, peppermint tea will work in a pinch. For those that have chronic heartburn, avoid the spice and peppermint tea.

Herbal bitters are also powerful digestive aids, taken before meals. They are great for those suffering from heartburn as they ensure faster stomach emptying. I recommend bitters by Niramaya Herbal Remedies. This formulation has saved many guts over the years.

I also want to mention the problem with choosing antacids for digestive complaints. Antacids neutralize the acids in the stomach, preventing proper digestion and interfering with absorption of nutrients, which leads to continued indigestion. I see this in my own practice with many of my clients with digestive issues. Antacids also contain aluminum compounds, which cause constipation,



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and calcium carbonate, which causes a rebound effect where the stomach produces more acids than before, once the antacid effect has worn off. This results in heartburn, so more antacids get taken, and a vicious cycle begins.

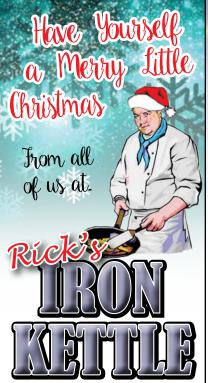
So chew your food slowly, try not to overeat and save that drink till after your meal. And don't forget about the wonders of fennel seed, spice teas and bitters to help your gut break down and assimilate your favorite holiday treats. Wishing you all healthy and happy holidays! ■

Maya Skalinska is a master herbalist, and a registered herbal therapist, offering iridology, herbal medicine, nutrition consultations and flower essences in Crawford Bay and at Vital Health in Creston.



Wishing you all the joy, hope and wonder of the season.





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I would like take this opportunity to wish all the residents of Area C and the Creston Valley, a safe, happy and prosperous Holiday Season and all the best for 2018.







I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the residents of Creston Valley a Happy Holiday and all the best in the New year!





### **BLOSSOM VALLEY SINGERS**

The selections for the 2017 Blossom Valley Singers Christmas concert feature creative reworkings, surprising renditions and truly jazzy selections brought into full colour by the Creston Community Band. The choir has been working hard to deliver an energetic, enthusiastic celebration of Christmas that will have audience members dancing in their seats at the Prince Charles Theatre Dec. 8-10.

Audiences can hit the floor with the big band "Gettin' in the Mood for Christmas", be amazed at the stylistic revamp of the old favourite, "Let it Snow", and clap along to the spiritual



**BLOSSOM VALLEY SINGERS** The Blossom Valley Singers performing at the Prince Charles Theatre.

"In the Christmas Spirit". There will be a joyful blend of all the songs that are dear to many hearts in the festive "Rejoice". Not to be forgotten are the classics, sung like never before with the showstopper, "A Classic Christmas". The magical "Believe" from the hit movie, *The Polar Express*, will bring back childhood memories, and hills will be alive with the Appalachian-inspired "Angel Band". The fields will sparkle in the night with a haunting art piece, "Snow".

Also joining the Blossom Valley Singers is the Creston Youth Choir, daring the audience to hear 26 favourite carols in three minutes. Try to keep up! The lovely Key Of She choir will offer a selection of truly inspiring music: the haunting "Ring Silver Bells", the beautiful "Breath of Heaven", a rousing rendition of " 'Tis the Season: A Christmas Madrigal" and the soulful "Mary Did You Know?"

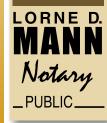
Guest performers include Megan Bibby delighting on the fiddle, and Kelly Mehrer inspiring childhood memories with "The Night Before Christmas", the quintessential holiday piece.

As always there will be intermission refreshments by donation provided by the Trinity United Church and a fun sing-along to really get the audience in the mood for Christmas. ■

Tickets are available at Black Bear Books and from choir members.

Wishing you a Beautiful Holiday Season





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Merry Christmas

This holiday season we would like to thank all those who made our success possible.



# **Avoid Post-holiday Financial Stress**

The holiday season can be expensive. With entertaining, choosing the perfect gifts, and additional travel, will your wallet take a hit? Even if you do find some great bargains, credit card interest rates can quickly eat up savings from discounted prices if you carry a balance.

Reduce financial stress in the new



year by following these tips:

1. Set a budget for gift spending before you start shopping — one for each person on your list, as well as a total limit for all gifts.

2. Plan to pay the total amount owing on your credit card by the due date to avoid interest charges. If this is not possible, pay as much as you can.

**3.** If you expect to carry a balance, consider switching to a line of credit, which usually carries a lower interest rate. A low-interest credit card is another option to consider.

**4.** Avoid taking cash advances on your credit card, as you will be charged interest immediately.

5. Check your monthly statement carefully and report any unauthorized transactions to your credit card company immediately. This is especially important in January, since credit card fraud occurs more frequently during the holiday season.

Wondering how long it will take to pay off your credit card balance if you only make the minimum monthly payment? Find out using the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada's credit card payment calculator at www. canada.ca/money.

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Season's Greetings 2017

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### Perfect Tender Roast of the Holiday Season

Looking for a tender and juicy roast recipe to serve? Look no further than this milk-braised pork shoulder recipe. It includes dry vermouth which is also referred to as white or French vermouth. If you can't find it, opt for a dry white wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio.

### **Milk-Braised Pork Shoulder**

Prep time: 20 minutes; cook time: 1 hour, 10 minutes; serves: 8.

### Ingredients:

- 15 pearl onions, root ends trimmed
- 1 •2.2 lb/1 kg) boneless pork shoulder roast, trimmed and tied at 1-inch intervals
  - 1 tsp salt
  - 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
  - 2 tbsp pure first-pressed canola oil
  - 2 cloves garlic, peeled
  - 2 bay leaves
  - · 2 sprigs fresh thyme
  - 1 small onion, thinly sliced
  - 1/2 cup dry vermouth
  - 2 cups homogenized milk
  - 1 tbsp PC Dijon prepared mustard
  - 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
  - 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley



### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (160°C). Bring small saucepan of water to a boil. Add pearl onions; return to a boil. Cook 30 to 60 seconds. Transfer with slotted spoon to bowl of ice water to chill. Drain and peel off skins. Set pearl onions aside.

2. Sprinkle pork with salt and pepper. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium heat. Add pork and cook turning often until browned all over; about 10 minutes. Transfer to large plate. Set aside.

**3.** Heat same Dutch oven over medium heat. Add pearl onions and cook, stirring occasionally until golden; about 5 minutes. Transfer with slotted spoon to small bowl. Set aside.

4. Smash garlic with flat side of chef's knife. Heat same Dutch oven over medium heat. Add garlic, bay leaves, thyme and sliced onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add vermouth and cook, stirring and scraping up browned bits from bottom, until liquid is reduced by half; about 3 minutes. 5. Return pork to Dutch oven. Add milk; bring to a gentle simmer. Cover and transfer to oven. Bake, flipping pork once, until instant-read thermometer inserted in centre of pork reads 160°F (71°C); about 40 to 45 minutes.

6. Discard bay leaves and thyme sprigs. Transfer pork to cutting board; cover loosely with foil. Let rest 15 minutes.

7. Meanwhile, transfer milk mixture to blender and add mustard. Remove plastic stopper from blender lid; cover lid with kitchen towel. Purée until smooth. Return to Dutch oven and stir in pearl onions. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until thick enough to coat back of spoon; about 10 minutes. Stir in lemon juice.

8. Thinly slice pork and arrange on large serving platter. Spoon milk mixture over top. Sprinkle with parsley.

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# Showstopper Dessert of the Holiday Season

Every year, there is always one hero recipe that leaves your guests craving for more. This holiday, whip up this rich and delicious brioche pudding that features a soft and buttery sweet loaf made in France that is hand-braided before baking for European-style flavour and flair.

"Toasting the brioche in the oven is a key step to the recipe. It helps to dry out the bread, which makes it even better at soaking up the custard for a moist, cake-like texture," says Tom Filippou, executive chef for President's Choice Cooking School. "To make this more indulgent, serve it with vanilla bean ice cream or freshly whipped cream and garnish with a sprinkling of dark chocolate shavings."

Wishing Everyone a Peaceful Holiday and New Year from allof us at Valley Community Services and the Therapeutic Activation Program for Seniors.

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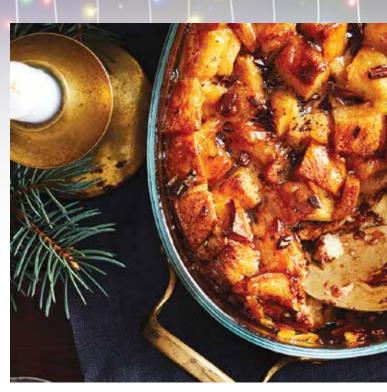
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### **Chocolate Orange Brioche Bread Pudding**

**Prep time:** 15 minutes; **cook time:** 1 hour, 15 minutes; **cool time:** 20 minutes; **serves:** 12.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 loaf PC brioche loaf, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 8 large eggs
- 1 1/4 cups homogenized milk
- 1 cup 35% whipping cream
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tbsp grated orange zest
- 1/4 cup fresh orange juice
- 1 tbsp orange-flavoured liqueur
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt

• 1 pkg PC dark chocolate with candied orange peel, finely chopped

- 2 tbsp PC pure orange marmalade
- 1 1/2 tsp water

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spread brioche in single layer on parchment paper-lined large baking sheet. Bake, stirring once, until golden; about 10 minutes.



2. Meanwhile, whisk together eggs, milk, cream, granulated sugar, brown sugar, orange zest, orange juice, liqueur, vanilla, cinnamon and salt in large bowl until well combined.

**3.** Spread a third of the brioche in bottom of a 9-cup (2.25-litre) casserole dish and sprinkle with a third of the chocolate. Repeat layers twice with remaining brioche and chocolate. Pour egg mixture over top, gently pressing down on brioche mixture to moisten.

4. Cover with foil; bake 35 minutes. Uncover, bake until puffed, golden brown and set in centre, about 30 to 35 minutes, covering with foil if top begins to overbrown.

5. Stir together marmalade and water in small bowl; brush on bread pudding. Let cool 20 minutes.

Per serving: Calories 270, fat 15 g (8 g of which is saturated), sodium 190 mg, carbohydrates 27 g, fibre 1 g, sugars 21 g, protein 7 g.

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Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a wonderful Holiday and a Happy New Year!

From all of us at....



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