

The Gift of the Holidays

HOLIDAYS AT THE WHITE HOUSE 2016



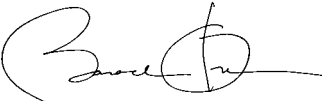


Thank you for visiting the White House! We are pleased to welcome you as we celebrate the many gifts of the holidays.

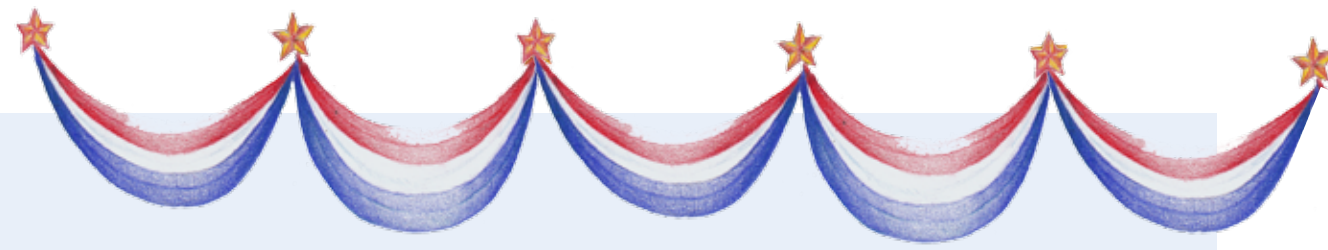
This joyous season is always filled with opportunities to perform acts of kindness and goodwill. Whether by expressing gratitude to a service member, offering a token of appreciation to a teacher, or sharing moments of love and laughter with our neighbors, all of us can extend hands of friendship and reflect on what it means to be a part of our American family. As we look toward a new year filled with renewed hope and possibility, let us take time to share the holiday spirit of generosity and compassion with those we love.

We hope the decorations that adorn the White House bring you the same warmth and delight this season brings us. As a Nation, may we continue to hold this season's spirit close to our hearts in the year ahead.

From our family to yours, happy holidays! We wish you the very best.

 Michelle Obama





EAST VISITOR ENTRANCE AND LANDING

As our country celebrates this wondrous season, visitors are invited to journey through the White House and reflect on *The Gift of the Holidays*. From floor to ceiling, rooms are trimmed with reminders of the bountiful gifts Americans hold dear.

At the East Visitor Entrance, families and friends walk through a ten foot tall, gift-shaped pergola and are warmly welcomed to explore “The People’s House.” Through the doorway decked in crimson ornaments, visitors are invited to traverse a hall draped with festive bows. Representations of the First Family’s dogs, Bo and Sunny, stand on the East Landing, their statues larger than the fluffy friends’ personalities. These rambunctious siblings cannot wait to open their presents nestled nearby in a wooden holiday tree.



EAST COLONNADE AND EAST GARDEN ROOM

An enchanting stroll down the East Colonnade awaits, as crystals hang in the air like snowflakes, ribbons cascade from the ceiling, and rows of trees twinkle brilliantly just outside the windows.

Rounding the corner, the East Garden Room pays tribute to our Nation’s service members and veterans for their gift of service and sacrifice. An American flag display is formed from images of brave military members and their families, and Gold Star ornaments adorn the evergreen that honors the men and women who have laid down their lives for our country. Guests are invited to use the digital devices to send messages of thanks to those currently serving abroad and here at home.

To learn about more ways to thank and support our service members, veterans, and their families, please visit:

www.JoiningForces.gov



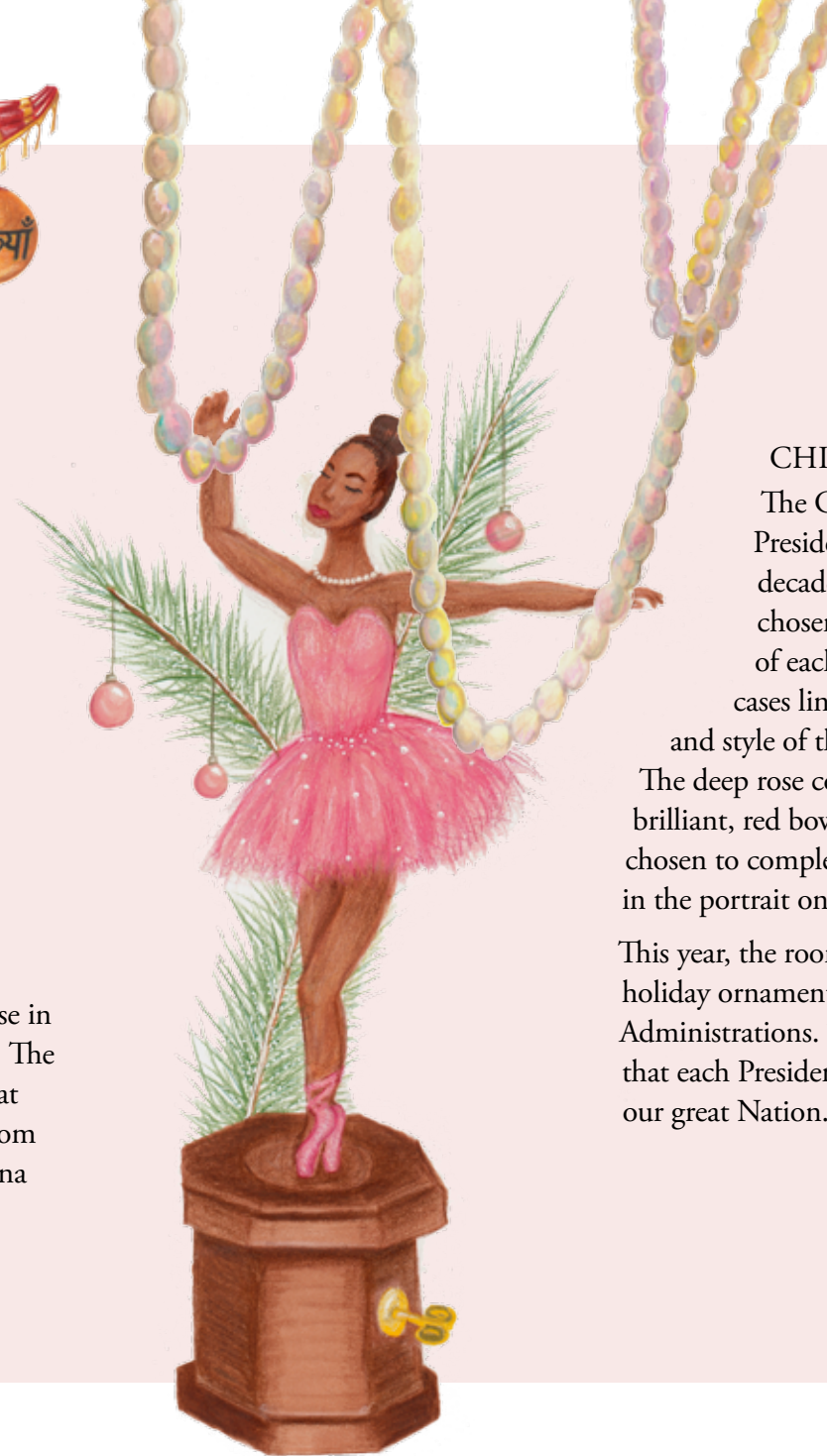


WHITE HOUSE LIBRARY

Throughout the year—and especially during this holiday season—the White House Library is a special reminder of the important gift of an education. A cozy room packed full of treasured books, the Library is adorned with a child’s school supplies; yellow pencils, bright crayons, and paper note cards create one-of-a-kind topiaries with chalkboard pedestals. In the colorful ornaments, the word “girls” is spelled in many languages to recognize the millions of adolescent women around the world who are not in school. Visit www.ReachHigher.gov to learn more about the First Lady’s initiative encouraging young people to attain a higher education and www.LetGirlsLearn.gov to find out more about this Administration’s efforts to improve girls’ education globally.

VERMEIL ROOM

Named for the gold-plated serving pieces that were gifted to the White House in 1956, the Vermeil Room glows with the warmth of pastel pinks and yellows. The color pattern and design complement the beauty of First Ladies’ portraits that line the room, including the visage of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy that gazes from the south wall. Four evergreen trees, decorated with pearl strands and ballerina ornaments, stand softly as a tutu garland graces the mantel.

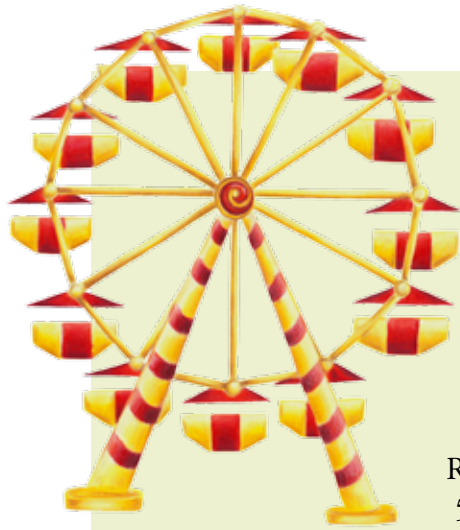


CHINA ROOM

The China Room—once known as the Presidential Collection Room—contains decades of presidential china services chosen by First Ladies. The dinnerware of each President is arranged in glass cases lining the room, reflecting the tastes and style of their respective terms in office. The deep rose color in the cases—like that of a brilliant, red bow tied around a present—was chosen to complement Mrs. Grace Coolidge’s dress in the portrait on the back wall.

This year, the room also displays thirty intricate holiday ornaments, representing former Administrations. These decorations honor the gifts that each President bestowed upon our great Nation.





EAST ROOM

In the winter of 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt invited more than 500 children into the East Room, where they celebrated with Santa

Claus-shaped ice cream treats. Reminiscent of warm memories of seasons past, the East Room is festooned in familiar holiday colors. Grand Ferris wheels glitter atop the four mantels, and ornament columns of burgundy, silver, and gold stand in the windows.

As is customary, the White House crèche is the centerpiece of the East Room. This elaborate display, containing nearly fifty individual pieces, was a gift to the White House from the Charles W. Engelhard Foundation.



The late eighteenth century terra cotta and wood figures, made in Naples, Italy, have been displayed in the East Room during the holiday season since 1967.

GREEN ROOM

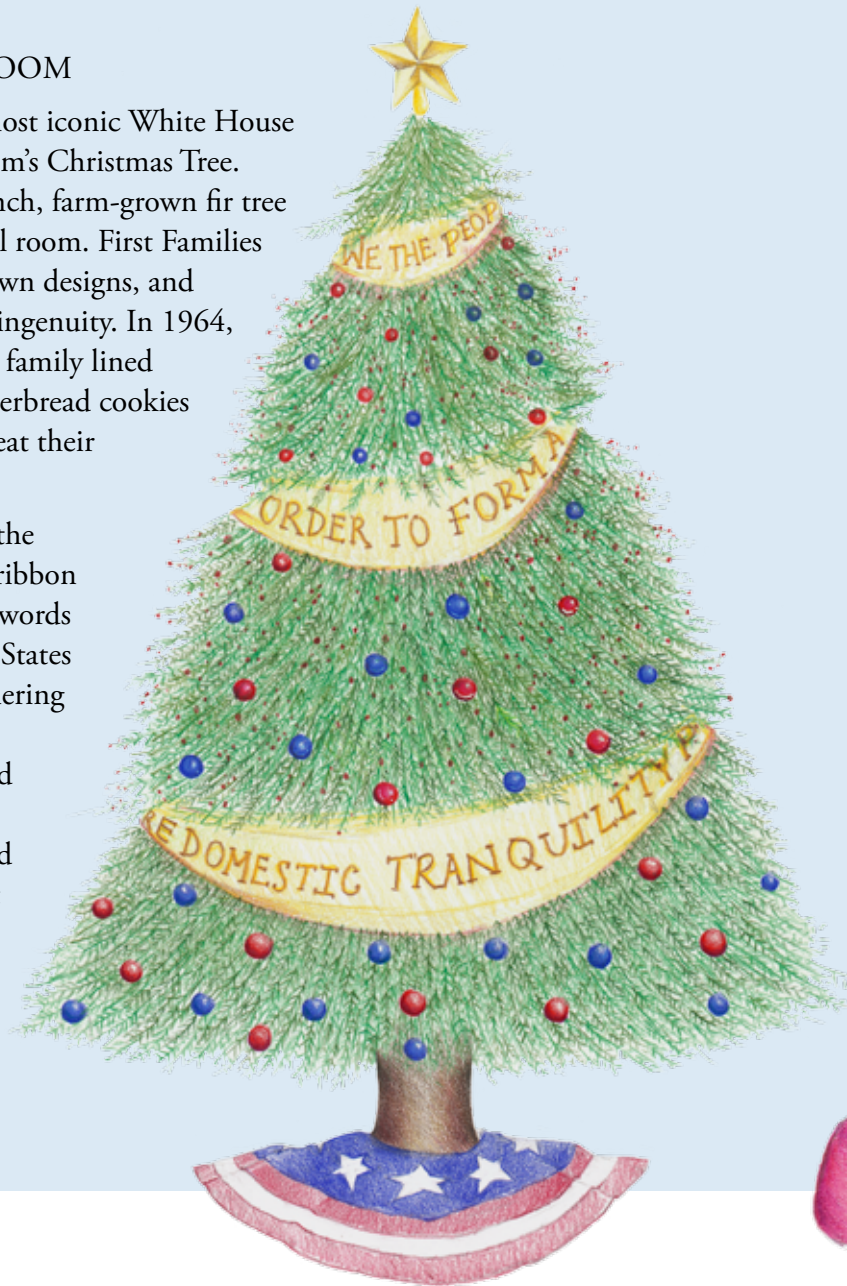
Though it is wintry cold outside the White House walls, the Green Room evokes summer's warmth with a garden of citrus colors. Bursting with bright fruit and scrumptious vegetables, the decorations in the Green Room celebrate the gift of good health and nutritious foods like those in the White House Kitchen Garden. Shimmering gold bees are abundant in the garlands bedecking the room, as no harvest is possible without the buzz of friendly pollinators. Discover more about the White House Kitchen Garden and the First Lady's initiative to empower a healthier generation at www.LetsMove.gov.



BLUE ROOM

Next, guests view one of the most iconic White House holiday images—the Blue Room’s Christmas Tree. Each year, a nearly 17 foot 6 inch, farm-grown fir tree stands in the center of this oval room. First Families ornament the tree with their own designs, and sometimes that requires some ingenuity. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson’s family lined the base of their tree with gingerbread cookies after visiting children tried to eat their ceramic ornaments.

This year’s tree celebrates “We the People,” as it is trimmed with ribbon garland featuring those iconic words of the Preamble to the United States Constitution. The tree’s glimmering ornaments, with images of American families, farmers, and service members, reflect our country united by diversity and strengthened by a shared spirit of hope and optimism.



RED ROOM

With walls cloaked in crimson twill satin, the Red Room features a delectable arrangement of oranges, apples, pomegranates, and of course, cranberries. Traditionally adorned with the maroon fruit, this parlor room features cranberry garland and wreaths in both of the windows. Resting atop a table, cranberries create gift boxes in festive celebration, and placed in planter boxes, two pine trees dressed in ornaments stand in the window frames.

STATE DINING ROOM

The State Dining Room welcomes visitors home for the holidays and celebrates the gift of families as we gather together during this season. Sweet treats and gumdrop candies trim the wreaths and dress the sconces while the topiaries are frosted in snowy white confections. Centered in the room are two 14 foot fir trees, adorned with a collection of colorful ornaments. Circling the trees on layered shelves are 56 gingerbread houses, one for each of the American states and territories.

A holiday favorite, the White House Gingerbread House takes its place at the north end of the State Dining Room. Assistant Executive Chef Hans Raffert built the first White House Gingerbread House in 1969, and since then, the baked architecture project has become a holiday tradition. This season’s house, created by a talented team with White House Pastry Chef Susie Morrison, is made of 150 pounds of gingerbread, 100 pounds of bread dough, 20 pounds of gum paste, 20 pounds of icing, and 20 pounds of sculpted sugar pieces.



GRAND FOYER AND CROSS HALL

In the Grand Foyer, four trees are spaced around the room—a duo of traditional evergreens dressed in ornaments and two of shining metal covered in gold and silver bulbs.

As the tour comes to a close and visitors walk out the north doors, guests are invited to pause, look back, and reflect in the faces of their friends mirrored in the decorative columns. Over the last eight years, the Obama family has welcomed more than four million guests to “The People’s House.” Families, neighbors, and loved ones have come from near and far to celebrate the holidays—sharing in the gift of joyful memories made together at the White House. In all the holiday seasons to come, the Obamas send warm wishes for continued happiness and hope for the new year.



Peppermint Fudge Cookies

3 ½ cups semi-sweet chocolate chips

½ cup milk chocolate chips

1 ½ cups chopped peppermint candy

½ stick soft butter

1 cup granulated sugar

4 eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

¼ tsp peppermint extract

¾ cup all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking powder

¼ tsp salt

1. Melt 3 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips in the microwave on defrost until completely melted and warm to touch.
2. In a stand-up mixer using the paddle attachment, combine the soft butter and sugar.
3. Add the eggs one at a time. Scrape the bottom of the bowl to incorporate.
4. Add the vanilla and peppermint extracts.
5. Sift together the dry ingredients and add to the mixture.
6. Add melted chocolate and combine.
7. Remove from the stand-up mixer and fold in the remaining chocolate chips by hand.
8. Fold in ½ cup peppermint pieces. Reserve the remaining peppermint pieces to place on top before baking.
9. Refrigerate for 10 minutes.
10. Remove from refrigerator and scoop dough onto pan.
11. Press the remaining peppermint pieces into the tops of the cookies before baking.
12. Bake at 340°F for 9 minutes. Turn the pan around and bake for another 3 minutes.

Yields about 45 cookies.



FELT PERSONALIZED STOCKINGS

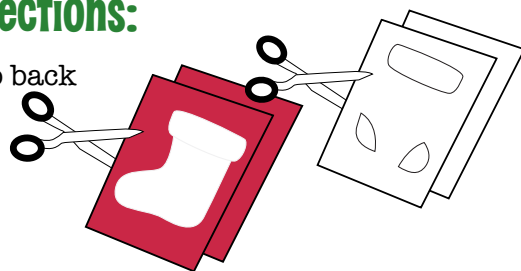
what you will need:

felt squares, 2 red and 2 white
scissors
craft glue
sequins and buttons
self-adhesive decorations
fabric paint pen

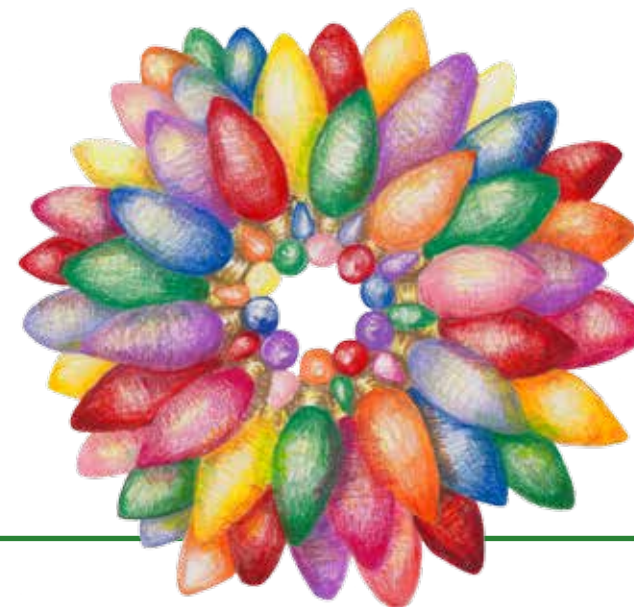


Directions:

1. Place 2 red squares back to back
and cut out 2 stockings.
Place 2 white squares
back to back
and cut 2 cuffs, 2 toes,
and 2 heels.
- 



2. Run glue along the sides of one of the stockings, and press the two together.
3. Glue on the white cuffs, toes, and heels.
4. Glue on decorations.
5. Personalize! Using a fabric paint pen, add name.
6. Use excess felt to create “hanging” loop.



IN APPRECIATION

The White House and the Office of the First Lady sincerely thank the Executive Residence staff, the Rafanelli Events team, and the extraordinary volunteers from all around the country for their work in decorating the White House and preparing for this holiday season. We also thank the talented student artists of the Duke Ellington School for the Arts in Washington, D.C., for their wonderful illustrations in this book.

We invite you to
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