

## Keeping It Simple This year...Really!

By Michelle Calvert



As I first began thinking about my holiday plans, sometime around Halloween, I decided that I am going to keep it simple this year. Have you ever planned for more simplicity? Does it work for you? Me either. I always—always—get caught up in the lure of the season: the chill in the air, the lovely sparkling lights, the fun gift ideas, the trims, trinkets and traditions.

They are intoxicating to me. I lose my self-control somewhere between the Charlie Brown Christmas special and my kids' school programs.

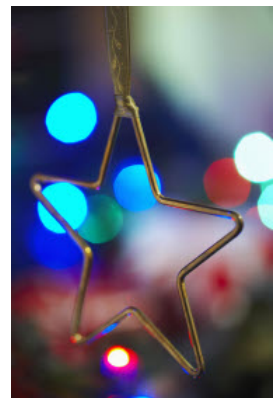
This year, however, it will be different. I will stick to my vow of simplicity. How do I know I can do it?



Because I've finally hit that age where all the "stuff" just feels like "needless stuff." I'm more excited than ever for Thanksgiving dinner with my family, decorating my home for a meaningful Christmas and keeping a simple, simple attitude towards giving and cooking. Aahhh, the stress is gone already!

Here's wishing you a **Merry "little" Christmas.**

And don't worry, the stuff will all be available next year if you decide to step it up again.



# A Great Christmas Website

To help you find simple ways to make Christmas special, visit <http://www.northpole.com>.

Parents, grandparents and teachers will find this website to be a great resource. There are fun and educational games, a way to write to Santa, holiday ideas and lots of great recipes.

Here is one recipe that would be fun to make with the children in your life.



## Christmas Mice Cookies

Makes 4 dozen - Anonymous

1/2 cup margarine, softened  
1 cup creamy peanut butter  
1/2 cup packed brown sugar  
1 large egg  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
peanut halves  
1 (2.25 ounce) jar red cinnamon candies  
4 yards of thin red licorice, cut in 3-inch pieces.

Beat margarine and peanut butter at medium speed with an electric mixer; gradually add sugars, beat well. Combine flour and soda, gradually add to creamed mixture, mixing well. Cover and chill at least 2 hours. Shape dough into 1 inch balls; taper one end of each ball to form a tear-drop shape. Press one side flat. Place flat sides on ungreased cookie sheets with cookies 2 inches apart. Press in sides of dough to raise backs of mice. Gently place 2 peanut halves in dough for ears. With wooden toothpick, make 1/2 inch deep hole at tail end. Bake at 350 degrees for 9 minutes, remove cookies from oven. Place cinnamon candies for eyes and bake an additional 1-2 minutes or until brown. Remove from oven, insert licorice tails and cool completely on baking sheets.



# Why We Love Florida...

Florida is known around the world for its balmy weather. The state's mild winters have made it a haven for vacationers. Although summers can be long and hot, showers provide much appreciated relief during the rainy season. Coastal areas also experience gentle breezes during the summer. As our winter guests know, moderate temperatures December through March make Florida a favorite destination.

In case you have ever wondered which season is best for visiting the Boardwalk, the following facts and figures will help you figure out that there is never a bad time to come to the beach.



## Florida's average annual temperatures:

### Summer:

80.5 (F) degrees (26.9 C) (North Florida)  
82.7 (F) degrees (28.2 C) (South Florida)

### Winter:

53.0 (F) degrees (11.7 C) (North Florida)  
68.5 (F) degrees (20.3 C) (South Florida)



**The six-month hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30** and Floridians have learned to be ready when a storm threatens the area. The 2007 hurricane season was very mild compared to the previous two years.

## Other Interesting Florida Facts:

Number of people who move to Florida each day - 1,000

Number of major commercial airports - 19

Number of international airports - 12

Number of deepwater ports - 14

Miles of sand beaches - 1,200

Miles of coastline - 1,800

Number of golf courses - more than 1,250

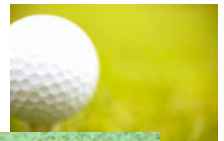
-Florida has more golf courses than any other state

-Palm Beach County has more golf courses than any other county in the country

Number of hotel rooms in Florida - more than 370,000

Number of campgrounds - 700 (100,000 campsites)

Number of people who camp in Florida each year - 6 million



There is no official designation of a "State Motto". The motto "In God We Trust" is widely used but has never been formally adopted by the Florida Legislature.