

Holidays are Never What We Expect

Most people have an idealized vision of holidays with their families. We dream the perfect postcard moment with family and friends gathered together, everyone dressed in beautiful clothing, presents stacked high, dishes of food laid out on the table, and the room filled with love and good feelings.	60 119 179 240 299
Reality is never as perfect as our dreams, but the holidays are always memorable. In spite of the best plans, coordinating a holiday event with several generations of family and friends can be taxing. With busy schedules and the tendency to overcommit, the meal will most likely be eaten in shifts,	359 418 478 538 598
with only a third or less of the group sitting down at any given time. This is probably for the best since holiday meals are always professional affairs planned and produced by amateurs. No normal kitchen is designed for the perfect holiday meal typically envisioned by the hostess: 20-pound	658 714 773 832 891
turkey, 10-pound ham, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, sweet potatoes topped with marshmallows with toasty, browned peaks, freshly-baked rolls, and several varieties of pies, including pumpkin and pecan, for dessert. An entire army of professionally-trained chefs could not produce this feast in	951 1012 1072 1132 1192
the typical American kitchen with a single oven, but we will surely try. With the first round of overdone tidbits from the oven—usually dry mashed potatoes and extra crispy sweet potatoes—paired with a quickly-tossed limp lettuce salad to appease the hungry masses, reality begins to set in. Often,	1252 1313 1372 1430 1489
as the early seating of guests pick cautiously at the ends of their dinner, the small children will topple the precarious piles of presents in the living room, either in their attempt to peek at the packages or in their attempts to escape the family pet, be it playful puppy or crotchety	1549 1601 1660 1719 1778
cat. A critical eye to the guests will also confirm that the matter of proper attire for a family holiday has not been addressed. Some will be wearing their Sunday best, while others grabbed whatever grubby t-shirt and jeans were lying in the corner that morning. Even if all the guests were	1838 1807 1954 2014 2070
present at the same time, what would a photo of this motley crew really look like? As with any familial event, holidays are a reflection of our daily reality. If we embrace the chance for togetherness, with all of our imperfections, we will happily look forward to the next holiday, and another opportunity to do better.	2130 2190 2247 2306 2365 2390