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Celebrate Winter Solstice with Hygge

The practice of "hygge" (pronounced hoo-gah) hails from Denmark and is a cultural practice that embraces feeling warm, cozy and safe. In fact, the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen claims that it is because of Danes' adherence to everything hygge-ly that they are rated as the happiest country in the world.

Hygge is celebrated by doing simple things such as lighting candles, baking, or spending time at home with your friends and family. Hygge goes into overdrive over winter solstice and the Christmas holiday, so December is an ideal time to embrace this lovable tradition. Start by doing the following:

LIGHTING: The foundation of good hygge is lighting. Avoid overhead lighting and opt instead for table lamps with warm light bulbs, candles and a fire in the fireplace. If you don't have a real fireplace, there are numerous cozy electric fireplaces that mimic the real thing and also emit heat.

FOOD: You probably already know that danishes originated in Denmark. That's because Danes adore pastry, cakes and chocolate. Basically anything considered "comfort food" will be good "hygge food." And don't forget coffee, tea or mulled wine, which are essential hygge staples when it comes to drinks.

DECOR: When you think hygge decor, think simple and comfortable. Furniture will veer towards soft and rounded with clean, non-fussy lines. It will be made from natural materials like wood or wool. Plush throws and sheepskin or animal skin throws are popular. Accent pieces featuring stones, driftwood and ceramics are the decoration of choice. Anything that is vintage and/or homemade takes center stage.

RELATIONSHIPS: The practice of hygge has as its foundation the importance of spending leisurely, quality time with small groupings of friends and family. The mood is friendly, low-key and casual. Equality in conversation and demeanor is held in high esteem. Boasting, bragging, showing off and bringing up overly contentious topics is not hygge. But having a potluck, cooking and cleaning together, and playing long rounds of board games is definitely hygge.

WHAT'S IN A WORD? The word hygge comes from a 16th century Norwegian term which means to comfort or console. And as you might have already guessed, it is related to the English word "hug." Hygge is associated with relaxation, indulgence, and gratitude, and is considered a part of the Danish national character. It's likely most of us would agree that the world needs more hygge. Fortunately, winter is the best time to jump on the hygge bandwagon and brighten up your winter days.

December Calendar

December 7 - Pearl Harbor Day

December 14 - Hanukkah Begins

December 21 - First Day of Winter

December 25 - Christmas Day

December 31 - New Year's Eve

Homeowner Tips



How to Clean Your Disposal

Sprinkle baking soda and about two squirts of dish liquid into the garbage disposal. With a small brush, scrub the inside of the garbage disposal, including around the rubber gaskets. Turn on the water and the disposal and flush thoroughly for a few minutes. For another quick fix, make vinegar ice cubes and feed them down the disposal. After grinding, run cold water through the disposal.

6 Ways to Bring Biophilic Design to Your Home

Biophilic means connecting with nature and other living things. The term is derived from the word "biophilia" and centers around everything that is natural.

#1- PLANTS: Use indoors plants as a design feature throughout your home. These will also help keep the air in your home clean.

#2- WINDOWS: Let the outdoors in by keeping your windows free and clear of obstructions like blinds, shutters and shades. Use sheer curtains instead. If you don't have many windows, use mirrors to open up your space.

#3- INDOOR/OUTDOOR CONNECTION: If

possible, incorporate sliding glass doors throughout your home.

#4- NATURAL PATTERNS: Choose wallpaper with plant designs, or earthy or green tones for wall colors. Opt for stone or marble for countertops, and choose wood or wood-like LVT for flooring.

#5- NATURAL DECORATIONS: Choose materials such as wood, leather, stone, ceramic, and sheepskin or animal skin.

#6- ORGANIZATION: Use a variety of baskets throughout your home to organize and hold household items like magazines, keys, toys, extra pillows, blankets, and so forth.



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Comfy Chicken Pot Pie

INGREDIENTS

4 chicken breasts boneless, skinless
1 yellow onion chopped
1 1/2 cups carrots chopped
1 1/2 cups celery sliced
1/4 cup Italian parsley chopped
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp oregano
1 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
8 oz chicken stock
21 oz cream of chicken soup

1 1/2 cups peas frozen
1 1/2 cup corn frozen
16.3 oz refrigerated biscuits 8 count

DIRECTIONS

Place chicken breasts in a large slow cooker. Add onion, carrots, celery, parsley, paprika, oregano, salt and pepper. Pour chicken stock and chicken soup over top. Stir mixture on top of chicken, cover crock pot and set to cook for 8 hours on low or 4 hours on high heat. Forty minutes before time is up, shred the chicken in the pot with two forks. Layer the uncooked biscuits on top and allow to cook until finish time is reached. (Serves 4-6 people.)

