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Foreword

A homemade present is always a little bit special. You can find fun objects at flea markets to upcycle, explore the great abundance of nature, or work with beautiful yarns and create something completely new. I have always loved working with my hands. In my work as a journalist, however, I rarely have much opportunity to do the things I enjoy. I started working with photographer Pernilla Wästberg and it turned out we had the same interests – reinventing old things and making personalised presents, not just buying them. We started writing about and photographing our projects. Christmas is the season for arts and crafts, and the number of projects just kept on growing – until it became this book.

You will discover many wonderful Christmas projects in this book, using all kinds of materials and techniques: some are very quick; others take a little longer. Learn how to make indoor and outdoor items, food for the Christmas dinner table or decorations for the Christmas tree. Make gifts and discover new ways to make your home cosier. The projects all have one thing in common: they are fun to do. Christmas crafts are not chores; they are projects to enjoy.

A note on crochet terminology

Crochet terminology is different in the UK and US ('double crochet' in the UK is called 'single crochet' in the US). This book is written in UK terminology, with US terminology given in brackets at the start of each pattern.





Enjoy the Festive Feast!



* You don't need Grandma's dinner service to present your Christmas dinner beautifully. Decorate the table using red, green, brown and white. Set the table with plates in different styles for an original look. Find plates at flea markets or online.

* Make candle lanterns with cake doilies. Place a candleholder in the middle of the cake doily and fold up the edges evenly. Tie a colourful ribbon around. Be very careful that the doily doesn't catch fire. Never leave naked flames unattended.

* Cover Styrofoam or polystyrene balls in moss, winding thin, gold thread around to tie it in place.

* Easy as pie! Little gifts make perfect place cards – two jobs in one.



Do you have guests who would get on well together? Or – be honest now – are there others you would rather keep apart? Carefully considering your table plan can be important! Make your place settings special using elves' woolly hats, gingerbread men, sweets or little parcels as place cards. Your guests will love it.

Find your gingerbread man!

Materials: gingerbread men, icing, greaseproof paper and pins or a piping bag

Icing

1 egg white

A few drops of vinegar

250–300 g (1–1¼ cups) icing sugar

Instructions

1. Mix the ingredients for the icing together to reach piping consistency. Add more icing sugar if the mixture is too runny.
2. If you do not have a piping bag, make a cornet out of greaseproof paper and secure with a pin to stop it unravelling.
3. Fill the cornet with the icing mixture. Cut off the tip of the cornet.
4. Pipe the name of each guest in icing onto a gingerbread man.





More place card possibilities

- * Make small Christmas crackers and add the name of your guest for the perfect place card.
- * Buy small clothes pegs and pots of paint from a craft supplier. Paint each clothes peg and use it to attach a place card to each guest's glass.
- * Santa's elves show guests to their seats. Put a woolly elf hat on each glass. If you don't have time to knit the hats yourself, you can buy knitted fabric ready-made from a craft supplier. Simply cut it to the right size and tie on the name card with a piece of string.
- * If you like things plain and simple, attach a flower and a name card with a piece of string to each guest's cutlery.

- * Vintage Christmas-tree baubles are so colourful they deserve a place at the table. Attach a name card so that your guests can find their seats.
- * Be the perfect host or hostess and welcome your guests with a sweet treat. Especially popular with younger guests, such a tasty place card might encourage them to sit still! Buy ready-made bags or sew your own using transparent fabric. Write the names on the bags using a permanent gold marker or fabric paint.







You could buy a dinner service especially for Christmas, but if you like crafts, why not be inventive? Decorating dinnerware with your own designs is much more fun. We painted on Christmas trees, little men and women, stars and hearts in gingerbread colours.


Festive dinnerware

Materials: plates, nail scissors, transparency film or sheets of plastic, porcelain paint, sponge dauber, scalpel, craft knife or sharp knife

Instructions

1. Carefully clean the plates.
2. Cut out stencils using the transparency film. Copy the figures on page 127 or create your own.
3. Hold the stencil steady on the plate and use the sponge dauber to fill the required area with paint. Paint the figures freehand if you are feeling artistic.
4. Leave the paint to dry. (Follow the porcelain paint instructions.)
5. Remove any paint runs once the paint has dried (some porcelain paints may need to be set in the oven). A small, sharp knife can work wonders.





Vintage saucers are very cheap at flea markets, and upcycling them is a real pleasure. We added candleholder bases to our flea-market finds to make beautiful candlesticks.

Candle saucers

Materials: saucers, candleholder bases from a craft supplier, porcelain glue, candles and decorative ribbon

Instructions

1. Glue the candleholder bases firmly to the saucers. Make sure you use an adhesive suitable for porcelain to ensure that the candle is stable.
2. Put the candle into the base and tie a decorative ribbon around it. Be careful to tie the ribbon below the top of the candleholder base – and always keep an eye on lit candles.





Santa's elves ('tomtes' in Swedish) are a hit at the buffet table. Made from decorated toothpicks, they are easy as pie!

Tomte toothpicks

Materials: toothpicks, red nail varnish, fine marker pen

Instructions

1. Dip the tip of each toothpick into the nail varnish. Stand the toothpicks to dry in a thick slice of bread.
2. Carefully draw eyes and mouths with the marker pen.

TIP!

Use the little elves to serve meatballs, chipolata sausages, canapés, dates, figs or chocolates.

Gingerbread men are excellent assistants when it's time for Christmas baking.

Gingerbread-man pot holder

Materials: 100% cotton yarn (UK: 4 ply, US: sport weight): 2 x 50 g (1¾ oz) balls in brown and a small amount of white

Crochet hook: 3.50 mm (UK: 9, US: E-4)

Crochet instructions: begin every row in chain stitch (ch) except for the increase rows. Increase stitches by crocheting the stated number of ch at the end of the row. Work the next row in double (US: single) crochet (dc), beginning with the second ch from the crochet hook.

Chain 31 stitches

Row 1: turn and work 30 dc, beginning with the second ch from hook.

R 2: work 30 dc. Work 6 ch at the end of the row.

R 3: turn and work in dc from the second ch. You now have 35 dc stitches in the row. Work 6 ch at the end of the row.

R 4: work 40 dc. Work 3 ch at the end of the row.

R 5: work 42 dc. Work 3 ch at the end of the row.

R 6–15: work 44 dc.

R 16: skip final dc stitch = 43 dc. Turn.

R 17: skip final dc stitch = 42 dc. Turn.

R 18–27: work 42 dc.

R 28–43: work in dc, but skip final dc stitch on every row = 26 stitches in row 43.

R 44–48: work 26 dc.

R 49: work 26 dc. Work 10 ch at the

end of the row.

R 50: work 35 dc. Work 10 ch at the end of the row.

R 51–55: work 44 dc.

R 56–67: skip final dc stitch = 32 dc in row 67.

R 68: work 23 dc. Turn.

R 69: work 14 dc. Turn.

R 70–73: skip final dc stitch on all rows = 10 dc in row 73.

R 74: work 10 dc.

R 75: work 10 dc. Work 2 ch at the end of the row.

R 76: work 11 dc. Work 2 ch at the end of the row.

R 77: work 12 dc. Work 2 ch at the end of the row.

R 78: work 13 dc. Work 2 ch at the end of the row.

R 79–82: work 14 dc.

R 83–88: skip final dc stitch in every row = 8 dc.

Fasten off.

Finishing: Crochet in brown round the edges of the gingerbread man. Work 1 dc in every dc stitch and in every row. You might need 3 dc in the corner stitch for the large curved parts. You might need to skip 1 dc in the smaller curved parts. Work 2 rows in brown. Fasten off. Create a loop by chaining 20 stitches, beginning with a stitch in the middle of the gingerbread man's head. Tightly work the final stitch of the loop into the same stitch on the gingerbread man's head. Turn and work 25 dc around the loop. Turn and work 1 dc in every dc stitch in the loop. Cut the yarn and fasten off. Work in slip stitch in white between the two rows in brown around the entire gingerbread man. Hold the yarn at the back and take stitches from the front, 1 slip stitch in every dc. Embroider the text in ch. Weave in all loose ends.

