



News Around The Inn

How To Get Organized

Midwinter is the perfect time to stay warm and work on the great **Indoors**. Are you one of those people who has problems organizing your stuff in your home? Now that you've finally packed away all the holiday decorations (admit it, you still had icicles hanging from the gutters just last week), it's time to declutter and free up more living space.

1. **Start with small jobs.** Your home didn't get messy in one day so don't expect it to get cleaned overnight. Make a list of tasks which take 10 minutes or less to complete and tape it to the refrigerator door. Got 10 minutes to spare? Tackle the next project on the list and mark it off when done. Small tasks done well will help motivate you to tackle the bigger ones next.
2. **Stop clutter at the door.** Prevent books, hats, gloves, etc. from hitting the floor by giving each person in the house a specific box, basket or drawer in a dresser located at the door for them to "deposit" the items that will be leaving with them again in the morning. Nothing ends up on the floor and no excuses for misplaced items.
3. **Identify those hot spots and vanquish them.** The top of the microwave, the kitchen counter, the table in the hall. Put items away, throw out anything that doesn't belong.
4. **Involve the entire family.** Involve your kids by making it easier for them to put things away (lower clothes racks) and give them specific directions with a place to start. Making it fun helps get the job done.

Everybody is busier these days and the need to organize is more intense. It has to be a team effort.

Winter Solstice

The onset of winter weather varies from year to year and from place to place, but December 22, the winter solstice, is considered the first official day of winter. The winter solstice marks the shortest day of the year. The days get longer as winter progresses. In the Northern Hemisphere, it also marks the day when the sun is furthest to the south.

Winter has long been immortalized in art, poetry, and song. For many of us, winter makes us think of frolicking on snowy days and reading by the fire on cold nights—even if we live in a warm place where it never snows!

The winter solstice is celebrated in many nations around the globe with feast and ceremonies which often include candles and bonfires to guide and illuminate the way for the sun to return. Traditional foods served on the holiday often contain seeds; in ancient times the Solstice was also associated with both fertility and harvest. Cooked grains and seeded cakes should be part of the holiday meal.

Meteorological winter is the season having the shortest days and the lowest temperatures. Nighttime predominates the winter season, and in some regions it has the highest rate of precipitation as well as prolonged dampness due to permanent snow cover in such areas. During winter, Blizzards often develop and cause many transportation delays. In meteorology, it is by convention counted instead as the whole months of June, July and August in the Southern Hemisphere and December, January and February in the Northern Hemisphere. No matter the reckoning, winter is the only season that spans two calendar years in the northern hemisphere.

Prepare Your Home For Winter Months Ahead



Although periods of extreme cold cannot always be predicted far in advance, weather forecasts can sometimes provide you with several days' notice. Listen to weather forecasts regularly, and check your emergency supplies whenever a period of extreme cold is predicted.

If you plan to use a fireplace or wood stove for emergency heating, have your chimney or flue inspected each year. Ask your local fire department to recommend an inspector, or find one in the yellow pages of your telephone directory under "chimney cleaning."

Also, if you'll be using a fireplace, wood stove, or kerosene heater, install a smoke detector and a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector near the area to be heated. Test them monthly, and replace batteries twice yearly.

Your ability to feel a change in temperature decreases with age, and older people are more susceptible to health problems caused by cold. If you are over 65 years old, place an easy-to-read thermometer in an indoor location where you will see it frequently, and check the temperature of your home often during the winter months.

Insulate any water lines that run along exterior walls so your water supply will be less likely to freeze. To the extent possible, weatherproof your home by adding weatherstripping, insulation, insulated doors and storm windows, or thermal-pane windows.

If you have pets, bring them indoors. If you cannot bring them inside, provide adequate shelter to keep them warm and make sure that they have access to unfrozen water.

One kind word can warm three winter months. ~Japanese Proverb

Don't Know Beans About Coffee?

Coffee grows in more than 50 countries with warm, humid climates, at altitudes ranging from sea level to 6,000 feet and above. The coffee tree is a shrub with a straight trunk, which can survive for about 50 to 70 years. The first flowers appear during the third year, but production is only profitable from the fifth year onwards. Two main species of coffee are traded commercially: arabica and robusta. The arabica tree produces a fine quality coffee; the highest grades of arabica coffees are sold primarily by gourmet retailers. Arabica beans are delicate and flavorful and sell at higher prices because of their quality and limited availability. The robusta tree, which bears more coffee cherries, is hardier and more resistant to disease. Although generally not found in gourmet shops, robusta beans are often used in the processing of soluble (instant) coffees and popular commercial blends.

Let's take a look at some of the different types of coffee drinks you can order in most coffee houses:

Caff  Latte (caf-AY LAH-tay): Espresso with steamed milk and in some shops, a small cap of foam. It has less foam than a cappuccino.

Espresso (ess-PRESS-o): A 1/2 ounce drink made in by forcing hot water under pressure through finely ground coffee beans. Typically, espresso beans are darkly roasted but this is not a requirement.

Caff  Mocha (caf-AY MO-kah): A term of no small controversy. Depending upon where you are, ordering a 'mocha' might get you a 'latte' or a cappuccino with chocolate syrup or hot cocoa. On the other hand, it might just send the barista thermonuclear -- especially if the word 'mocha' is not on the menu.

Cappuccino (cap-uh-CHEE-no): A shot of espresso with the remainder being 50% steamed milk and 50% milk foam/froth. An alternative description is 1/3 espresso, 1/3 steamed milk, 1/3 foamed milk. But again, this depends very much on the maker. Many places use more steamed milk and less froth. "Cappuccino is essentially a latte topped with milk FOAM."

Caff  au lait: Coffee and heated milk in latte proportions, but using 'regular' coffee (a.k.a. "American filter coffee") instead of espresso.

Iced Cappuccino: A single or double shot of espresso over crushed ice with an ounce or two of cold milk and milk froth.

Iced Espresso: Usually a double shot of espresso over crushed ice, possibly with whipped cream.



Pack the Perfect Bag, First Time Every Time

Tip #1: Roll stuff people won't see. Rolling does wrinkle clothes. Who cares if you have wrinkled underwear, socks, undershirts, and tank tops?

Tip #2: Fold blouses, ties, jackets and pants. You'll want to fold, not roll, these clothes, especially if they are made of silk.

Tip #3: Fold inside out. Suitcase wrinkles will be hidden once you put on the garment, i.e. a blazer.

Tip #4: Stuff your shoes. They take up the most room in a bag so don't let that space go to waste. Stuff them with the socks and underwear you rolled. Saves space and helps retain your shoes' shape.

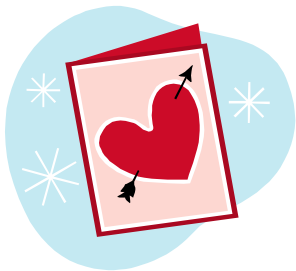
Tip #5: Take trash bags with you when you travel. Great for throwing your dirty clothes in while you're traveling. When you get home, just toss in the washing machine in one easy step.

As a last resort, if all else fails, consider shipping your dirty clothes and shoes home. Leaves more room for souvenirs.



A Gaslight Inn **Gift Certificate** is the perfect way to let someone know just how special they are. It can be purchased in any dollar amount or you may choose to specify a room or suite. Personalize it with your own sentiment. They make a great Birthday, Anniversary or Wedding Gift—or to tell someone how much they are appreciated. It's the right color, right fit and guaranteed to bring a smile to their face.

A History of Valentines Cards



A young Frenchman, Charles, Duke of Orleans, was one of the earliest creators of valentines, called "poetical or amorous addresses." From his confinement in the Tower of London after the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, he sent several poems or rhymed love letters or "valentines" to his wife in France.

The first U.S. made valentines were crafted by a Mount Holyoke College student, Miss Esther Howland. Her father, a stationer in Worcester, MA, imported valentines every year from England. Esther, however, decided to create her own valentine messages. Around 1830 she began importing lace, fine papers, and other supplies for her valentines. She employed several assistants and her brothers helped market her "Worcester" valentines.

As one of our first successful U.S. career women her sales amounted to about a hundred thousand dollars annually—not bad for the 1830's.

In our century we've seen a change from the heavy sentimentality of earlier days to what can best be described as a light touch. Nowadays a valentine usually accompanies a more elaborate gift of candy, flowers, perfume, etc.



Teachers will receive the most Valentine's Day cards, followed by children, mothers, wives, and then, sweethearts. Children ages 6 to 10 exchange more than 650 million Valentine's cards with teachers, classmates, and family members.

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Atlanta (aka Southern) Slang

The deep South is known for its unusual accents and sayings. Atlanta has its own variety of Southern slang, and it's a good idea to brush up on some of the local phrases and nicknames before you visit or move to Atlanta. It is especially important when trying to make sense of the traffic reports in Atlanta, which are full of local slang. Otherwise, you might think Spaghetti Junction is a restaurant, and not part of the local interstate system!



Ya'll: You all, all of you.

Peachtree: If you thought all of those streets named Peachtree was just an urban myth, think again. There are over 40 streets named Peachtree in the Atlanta area. Fortunately for visitors, if someone says Peachtree Street or Road, they should be referring to the artery that goes through the heart of the city.

Sweet tea: Plain old tea in the South. In Atlanta, it's assumed you want sugar in your tea unless you specify otherwise.

Macaroni and Cheese: Classified as a vegetable in the South. You will see it listed on many vegetable plates at various country and soul food restaurants around town.

Fixin to: Getting ready to do something.

Sweetie: Common term of endearment, especially for elderly Atlantans towards younger people.

Hotlanta: Another nickname for the city.

Coke: Used to refer to any soft drink, not just Coca Cola.

The Hooch: Nickname given to the Chattahoochee River.

Three Ways to Relieve Stress

How often do you find yourself saying, "I'm so stressed out!" If you're like many people, such a statement is a part of our everyday lives. Often we don't take the time to relax our bodies and minds, refresh our outlook, and give ourselves much needed time away from the pressures we face on a daily basis. Unfortunately, over time, ignoring the buildup of stress can affect both physical and mental health. Along with draining our energy and decreasing our level of performance, stress can also wear down our bodies, contribute to emotional imbalance, high blood pressure, decreased circulation, headaches, depression, and overall poor general health. Below are a few simple strategies you can bring into your life that can help you free your body and mind from tension.

1. Breathing. Breathing right can help improve your posture and lung capacity, as well as your peace of mind. The great thing about utilizing breathing techniques to decrease stress is that you can use them anytime throughout your day: at work, in your car, on the phone, even waiting in line at the supermarket. The first step to breathing properly is to become aware of how you breathe. Awareness is always the first step to making a conscious change.

2. Express Yourself . Pent-up emotions are a hotbed for stress. Granted, throughout the day when you are feeling certain emotions surface like anger or sadness, the environment you're in may not be conducive to expressing them out loud. You wouldn't want to scream at your boss, "HEY! I DO GOOD WORK HERE AND I DESERVE MORE RECOGNITION! WAKE UP!" But, at the end of the day, when you're in your car or in the house by yourself, who's to say that you can't say exactly what you want as loud as you want. Get in a safe space where others won't hear you, and let it all out in a healthy way that won't hurt yourself or others. Scream at the top of your lungs. Hit pillows. Wave your arms around. Cry. When you experience an emotion and don't want to let it out at the exact moment that you're feeling it, give yourself the gift of expressing it later on. It clears your mind and body of emotional residue and will release the tension that accumulates from trying to hold it in.

3. Get Outside. Even if you're not a "nature person", getting outdoors and surrounding yourself with a natural environment is a wonderful way to release built-up tension. It can help put things into perspective and allow you to take a step away from the stresses you're experiencing. Something as simple as sitting and looking at a tree or walking with bare feet on grass is very healthy for your mind and body. You are living in a beautiful world; give yourself a moment to experience that beauty and melt some stress away by doing so.