

MAKE ROOM @ THE TABLE

News From:
Make Room @ The Table
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For more information contact:

Marcia Slater Johnston
marlajohn@aol.com

Helene Wineberg
hwineber@gmail.com

TABLE FOR ONE THIS THANKSGIVING? HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR A FESTIVE SOLO HOLIDAY

Many holiday traditions may be upended this year because of the coronavirus pandemic and the danger it poses – particularly to older folks. Consequently, a number of older people may forgo traditional celebrations with friends and family and opt for a solitary Thanksgiving to stay safe and COVID-19-free.

Recognizing this possible change of Thanksgiving plans, Make Room @ The Table has put together a list of ways to enjoy the holiday on your own.

Make Room @ The Table also has created a cornucopia of ideas to help people reach out and provide holiday cheer to someone who's celebrating alone.

All of these Make Room @ The Table recommendations take into account the need for mask wearing, social distancing and other appropriate restrictions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. They also include ideas appropriate for a wide range of budgets.

Make Room @ The Table is a Chicago-based Affinity Group focused on developing strategies to alleviate isolation and loneliness among older people.

MAKE ROOM @ THE TABLE TIPS FOR SPENDING THANKSGIVING ALONE

1. Invite someone you know will also be alone to share Thanksgiving dinner via zoom. Talk about the dishes you've made for each course and why you included them on your Thanksgiving menu.
2. Bake some goodies to share with friends during the Christmas/Hannukah/New Year's holidays. Experiment with new recipes. If they are a success, display on social media.
3. Schedule a zoom meal with friends on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving or during the three-day weekend following Thanksgiving. Make that your "holiday celebration."
4. Make a list of people you've been thinking about and call them to say, "have a lovely day."
5. Stream a virtual film you've been wanting to see. Fix a snack that carries out the theme of the movie – a soda if watching Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney or some warm croissants, if watching a French film with subtitles.
6. Dive into a project that you've been meaning to do but haven't had time to tackle.
7. Go through photo albums, diaries and calendars and relive Thanksgivings past when you were not alone and celebrated with friends and family.
8. Take a walk by yourself or go for a ride. Or, ask a friend or neighbor to join you on a socially distanced stroll.

9. Write a note to people you are thankful are in your life. Or, reach out to them by phone, e-mail or text.
10. Curl up in your favorite chair and become absorbed in a book you've been wanting to read.
11. Begin a journal or add to one you already have. Consider starting work on a memoir. Emphasize gratitude and the things in your life for which you are thankful.
12. Attend a virtual religious service.
13. Get tickets to an online play, musical, jazz performance or concert during the three-day weekend after Thanksgiving.
14. Offer to take care of a pet for a friend or neighbor who will be out of town over Thanksgiving.
15. Plan ahead to cook a special holiday dish or entire meal. Or, place an order for Thanksgiving treats from a restaurant or grocery store. Set the table with your favorite dishes. Gather up some brightly colored gourds, autumn leaves or your household treasures to use as a centerpiece -- and dress up in your holiday best.
16. Ignore the holiday and view it as just another day. Stick to your usual routine, take something out of the freezer and chill.

TIPS FOR REACHING OUT TO THOSE YOU KNOW WILL BE ALONE ON
THANKSGIVING

1. Call someone on Thanksgiving you know will be alone on the holiday. Perhaps you can coordinate with others who know the person, to space out calls throughout the day.
2. E-mail someone who's alone on Thanksgiving. Or, send a video greeting from you, and, if appropriate, members of your family.

3. Leave a plant, homemade goodies or a card at the door of a neighbor you know is alone on Thanksgiving.
4. Send a humorous e-card to be delivered on Thanksgiving. Have the personal message on the card reflect your thankfulness that the person is in your life.
5. Make time on Thanksgiving to set up a zoom date with someone who is alone. If feasible, include family members or mutual friends.
6. Set aside a portion of your Thanksgiving dinner for a friend who is observing the holiday alone and deliver it to their door.
7. Screen share a movie or football game via zoom with someone alone ...or, view the football game or movie separately...and text or talk by phone afterward.
8. Send or lend a book you enjoyed or was meaningful and then plan to discuss it with the person by phone or zoom on Thanksgiving or shortly thereafter.
9. Arrange to have a zoom meal...or visit with the person...the day before Thanksgiving or the weekend after. Make your virtual get-together a "holiday celebration."
10. Cook on zoom with friends who will be alone. Make dishes for your Thanksgiving dinners -- or snack treats like pizza or brownies. Then eat some of your concoctions together virtually.
11. Write "letters of gratitude" to friends you know will be alone. Mail them so they will arrive the day before Thanksgiving but write "Do Not Open Until Thanksgiving" on the envelopes.
12. Invite a friend or neighbor who is alone to go for a socially distanced walk on Thanksgiving

13. If someone you know lives alone but has Thanksgiving plans, check in at the end of the day, to make sure the plans came to pass. If the plans fell through, the person will be disappointed and lonely, and will be pleased to have the human contact. If the holiday get-together took place as scheduled, the person will be delighted to have the chance to share details with a friend.

14. See if your Village, Senior Center, House of Worship, or older adult social organization can arrange a virtual dinner on Thanksgiving – or, at least, a zoom gathering -- for folks who'll be by themselves.

15. Have your community organization recruit young people to be holiday pen pals, sending cards and letters – or poems, drawings, and stories -- to older people who are alone on the holiday.

16. Make room at your table virtually. Add a person who is alone to your guest list to dine via zoom with you and your family on Thanksgiving.

If it's too much of a hassle to include someone who's alone for an entire Thanksgiving meal, ask them to log onto zoom and share dessert with your other guests.

Or, invite someone who is alone to a zoom dinner with your family the night after Thanksgiving to join you in giving virtual thanks for holiday leftovers.

Make Room @ The Table is a Chicago-based affinity group of experts in the aging field. MR@TT's Mission is to alleviate isolation and loneliness for older people.