

MAY



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"Happiness held is the seed; Happiness shared is the flower."

- John Harrigan

Planning the Perfect Mother's Day

Your mom is unparalleled. Your children's mom is incomparable. Your stepmom, mother-in-law, foster mom, grandma, or aunt who is always there for you – each is one of a kind. And we celebrate each of them uniquely.

Some will serve Mom breakfast in bed and finger-painted greeting cards; some will take her to brunch after church. Some moms will meet at the park with their whole extended families, and some will have a sweet phone call across the miles.

Whether it's a crazy day filled with chasing toddlers or a quiet spa day or just another day, a tiny bit of planning makes all the difference. Here are a couple of ideas to help you make sure Mom feels loved and appreciated this Mother's Day.

Do The Planning

Whether you're making reservations and inviting everyone to brunch, giving gifts, or having activities with the kids, make arrangements ahead of time and take care of all the details. It will feel good to know you thought of her and made an effort. There are tons of times when mothers handle all the plans, order all the things, call all the people, and sort all the details, but we're trying to do something nice for Mom, not make extra work for her. Whatever preparations are needed, handle them.

Do The Chores

Speaking of not making extra work for Mom, plan to pick up some of the work she might normally do - especially if you have small children. If the kids cook or make crafts for Mom, she'll appreciate it even more if she doesn't have a huge mess to clean up later. For older kids, any extra chores they could help with are great – housework, yard work, garden prep, or detailing her car are wonderful gestures.

Do Something She Will Love

It's easy to default to flowers and cards, and if she loves it, that's great. But if Mom really needs a break, arrange alone time for her. If Mom would love to go out with the whole family, plan a trip to the zoo or the museum. If she loves sentimental gifts, get her personalized jewelry or art. If she loves personal touches, make her a memory jar, write her a letter, or make art for her. Every mother is unique, do something she will appreciate and love.

Lemon Cream Cheese Bars

allrecipes.com

Ingredients

- Cooking Spray
- 2 (8 ounce) packages refrigerated crescent roll dough (such as Pillsbury® Recipe Creations®), divided
- 2 lemons, zested and juiced, divided
- 2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons white sugar

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish with aluminum foil and coat with cooking spray.
2. Unroll 1 crescent roll dough; press into the bottom of the prepared baking dish, stretching to the edges
3. Mix together lemon juice and 3/4 of the lemon zest in a large bowl. Beat cream cheese and 1/2 cup sugar into juice-zest mixture with an electric mixer until smooth and creamy; spread over crescent roll dough in the baking dish.
4. Unroll remaining crescent roll dough and place over cream cheese mixture, stretching to the edges. Brush melted butter on top. Mix together 3 tablespoons sugar and remaining lemon zest in a small bowl; sprinkle over melted butter.
5. Bake in the preheated oven until top is golden brown, about 30 minutes. Allow to cool for about 20 minutes.
6. Lift dessert from the baking dish using foil; transfer to a cutting board. Cut into squares, leaving on foil. Return dessert to the baking dish and refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour.

Air Conditioning Repair and Replacement

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Depending on your climate, air quality, and use, a well-maintained air-conditioning unit could last between 10 and 20 years. HVAC technology, refrigerant, and efficiency have advanced quite a bit in the last decade, so if your unit is more than 10 years old, you may want to consider whether replacing it with a newer model is the right choice for you. It may also be time if your unit needs frequent repairs, doesn't cool the house like it used to, or seems to cost more to operate every year.

You can ask your HVAC technician for more information the next time they're performing your annual check-up.

Regular maintenance is important to keep your AC unit running efficiently and cooling properly, as well as to extend its life span.

Some signs to call your HVAC tech include:

- **Strange noises** – loose belts may be a simple fix, but a failing motor is a costly repair and may be a sign it's time to replace your unit.
- **Bad smells** – if it smells musty or moldy, or like refrigerant when you turn on your air conditioning, get it looked at right away. It's not worth the risk of introducing bacteria or fungus around your house, risking everyone's health.
- **Frozen coils** – a potentially blocked coil or refrigerant leak needs to be taken care of right away to avoid further damage.
- **Shutdowns** – if the unit stops working or if it runs without cooling, the unit could be overheating, which is a sign that something isn't working right.
- **Failure to cool** – if your unit just can't keep the house cool anymore, or if it's humid inside despite running the AC, if some areas of the house are cool while others are not, or if the unit isn't responding to the thermostat correctly, call your HVAC tech to find the problem.
- **Electrical issues** – any signs of electrical damage, like loose connections, frayed wires, or visible burn marks are dangerous and can lead to fires in your home.
- **Increased energy bills** – if you're scratching your head trying to figure out why your energy bills keep going up when nothing seems to have changed in your power usage, it could be pointing to an increasingly inefficient air conditioner.

An air conditioning unit is a major cost for a homeowner, and you'll want to have any of these issues addressed by a qualified HVAC technician as soon as possible to protect your investment as well as your home, family, and utility bills. When it's time to replace your unit, your HVAC tech will be a great source of expertise on the newest technology and the perfect unit for your needs.



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