

*Magic,  
Wonder,  
& Joy*

HOLIDAYS at the WHITE HOUSE  
2023





*The 2023 White House holiday theme is inspired by how children experience this festive season: completely present in the beauty and bounty around them, their senses alight, with hearts open to the “Magic, Wonder, and Joy” of the holidays.*

*In this season of reflection and goodwill, we hope you will embrace your inner child and delight in simply being present with those you love.*

*It is a time for our senses to awaken—for each of us to smell the aroma of favorite family recipes, to hear the warmth of a dear friend’s voice, to see the glow of lights and decorations, to taste the sweetness of candies and treats, and to feel the quiet stillness and strength of faith.*

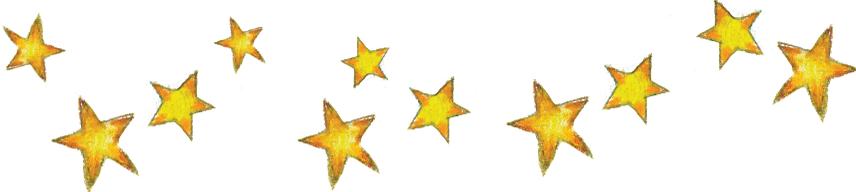
*We hope you enjoy the holidays at the White House—“The People’s House,” your house. May the memories made here remind us all of the blessing that is our Nation.*

*Happy Holidays,*

*for Jill*

# WELCOME to the WHITE HOUSE

*Each room and design element throughout the White House holiday display encourages you to embrace your inner child, indulge your senses, and delight in the “Magic, Wonder, and Joy” of the season.*



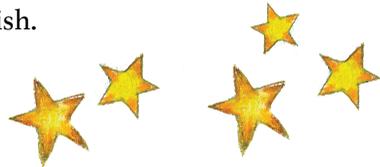
**G**uests enter the East Wing of the White House under the festive branches of an enchanting and magical Christmas tree. The decor invites visitors to summon joyful memories of childhood at the holidays: lying under the Christmas tree and gazing up with wonder, marveling at the twinkling lights, and feeling the soft pine needles above. Holiday candy and sweet treats of the season float overhead in both the East Wing Lobby and East Colonnade, reminding children and families of the delicious flavors of the holidays.

The East Wing of the White House was expanded to its current form in 1942, and includes the Office of the First Lady. Outside the windows of the East Colonnade is the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, which was dedicated by First Lady Claudia “Lady Bird” Johnson in 1965.

The first Christmas tree featured inside the White House is adorned with wooden Gold Star ornaments that are engraved with the names of fallen service members.

The Gold Star tree honors the heroic men and women of our Nation’s military who have laid down their lives for our country, those who are Missing in Action, and the families who carry on their legacies. May God bless our troops and their families.

The marble arches of the Ground Floor Corridor are sprinkled with holiday messages sent from Americans across the country to the President and First Lady. Letters to Santa Claus are magically flying in and out of vintage mail boxes, ready to be sent to the North Pole with a stamp and a wish.







## LIBRARY

The Library honors the tradition and magic of bedtime stories during the holiday season. Golden moons and shimmering stars are suspended above, with treasured holiday storybooks throughout the peaceful scene. Santa and his sleigh are seen through the window, flying past a full moon on his way to the White House.

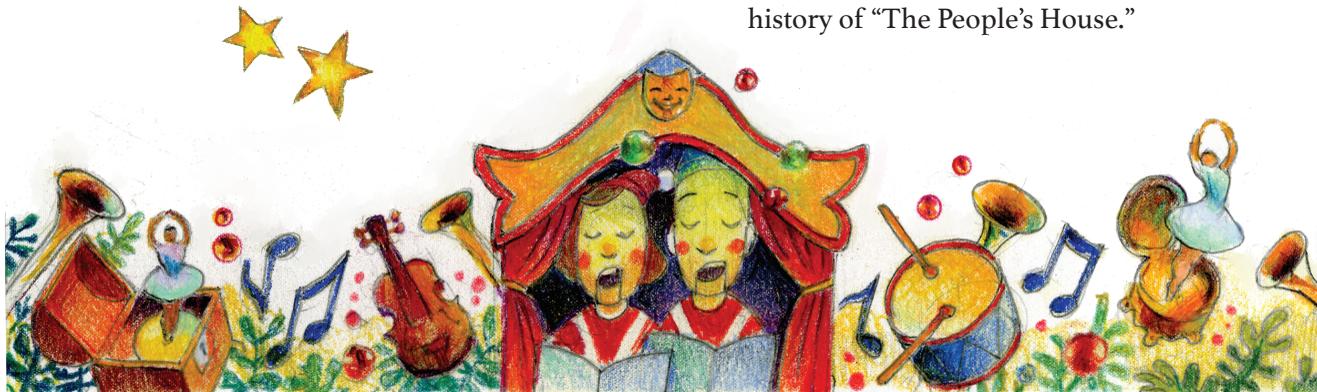
President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dedicated this room to serve as the White House Library in 1935. This space now holds approximately 2,700 volumes of books focusing primarily on American history and literature.

## VERMEIL ROOM

The decor of the Vermeil Room (French for gilded silver) represents the joy of music and performance during the holidays.

At the center of the room is a mechanical theater creation with rotating United States Marine Band figures entertaining guests with herald trumpets. Flanking the stage are Christmas trees draped with whimsical handcrafted instruments and snare drums, inviting guests to sing their favorite holiday tune. The mantel is graced with sculpted ballerinas, spinning out of music boxes.

On the walls of this room are the portraits of the first ladies, including Mamie Eisenhower, Claudia “Lady Bird” Johnson, and Jacqueline Kennedy. Over sixty years ago, Mrs. Kennedy founded the White House Historical Association to protect, preserve, and provide public access to the rich history of “The People’s House.”





## CHINA ROOM

*F*avorite flavors and scents of the season are featured in the China Room. A White House sweet shop sets the scene in this room, with holiday cakes, cookies, and gingerbread enhancing the space. Piles of cooking supplies and baking ingredients remind guests of familiar recipes that bring generations of families together year after year during the holidays.

The China Room, which was first introduced as a display room by First Lady Edith Wilson in 1917, houses tableware used by past presidential families. Most presidents, beginning with George Washington, are represented by either a personal or State Service of porcelain, glass, or silver. Each piece recalls the State Dinners and celebratory meals that have brought together world leaders and diplomats.





## EAST ROOM

The joyful anticipation of the holidays is front and center in the East Room, with Advent calendars counting down the days to Christmas. Behind each number is a special surprise for children of all ages to enjoy.

As the largest room in the White House, the East Room has hosted public receptions, ceremonies, bill signings, and other memorable occasions. It also includes Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington, which First Lady Dolley Madison helped save in 1814 when the White House was about to be set aflame during the War of 1812.

The East Room features a Neapolitan crèche, or Nativity scene, with over 40 figurines, most dating back to the eighteenth century. The crèche has been displayed during every White House holiday season since 1967.





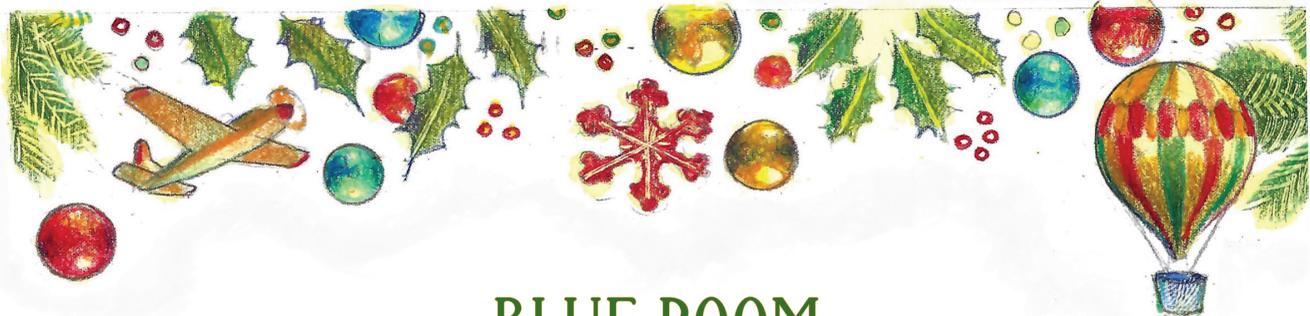
## GREEN ROOM

*G*lowing candles and shimmering stained glass symbolize the peace, strength, and joy we find in faith. It is often in quiet, candlelit rooms when we can see most clearly, center ourselves in faith, and embrace the wonder of our world around us.

Arranged in the windows are colorful sprays of crystal and prisms, mixed with shimmering fabric and embroidered starbursts to reflect light. Colorful orchids, a favorite of First Lady Jill Biden, and holiday florals are incorporated throughout the room.

Once Thomas Jefferson's dining room, the Green Room houses Henry Ossawa Tanner's *Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City*. Tanner mixed actual sand into his paint to illustrate the windswept beaches of our coasts.





# BLUE ROOM

The Blue Room showcases the official White House Christmas Tree. This year's tree is an 18½ foot Fraser Fir from Fleetwood, North Carolina and stands floor to ceiling, filling the oval room. Every year, the Blue Room's chandelier is removed to accommodate the Christmas tree's full height.

The stunning tree celebrates cheerful scenes, landscapes, and neighborhoods from all across the country, with names of every state, territory, and the District of Columbia, showcased throughout the decor. With bright colors and three-dimensional elements, guests will gaze in wonder as they are taken on a delightful adventure around the tree. A replica of a vintage passenger train, on loan from the Train Collectors Association, magically weaves through the tree's base.

This year's official White House Christmas Tree was presented to the First Lady by siblings Amber Scott and Alex Church of Cline Church Nursery, the 2023 Grand Champion Grower in the National Christmas Tree Association's annual contest.





# RED ROOM



The decor of the Red Room represents the joy of making holiday crafts together. Whether sewing a costume for the Christmas pageant, stringing popcorn for the tree, or fashioning homemade ornaments, the holidays are a time for creativity and imagination. As part of the First Lady's *Joining Forces* initiative to support military and veteran families, caregivers, and survivors, the ornaments in this room were created out of the handprints

and painted family portraits of military-connected children, ensuring that military and veteran families can see themselves and their talents reflected in this year's holiday display.

A Red Room tradition since 1975, fresh cranberries are integrated into the decor as topiary forms. Marking a new twist to the time-honored tradition are cranberry red beads incorporated into the room's handmade popcorn garland.

# STATE DINING ROOM

Embodying the  
“Magic, Wonder, and  
Joy” of the holidays

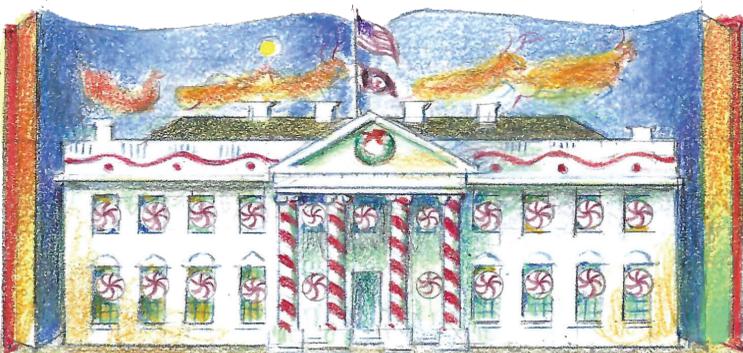
is Santa’s Workshop in the State Dining Room. Elves’ workbenches, stools, and ladders circle the Christmas trees, with tools and gifts-in-progress filling out the decor. Life-sized nutcrackers and dancing ballerinas flank the Christmas trees and reside within the window wells, with festive ribbons and gift tags lining the fireplace.

An engraving on the mantel reads, “I Pray Heaven To Bestow The Best of Blessings On This House...” The words were taken from a letter written by President John Adams to his wife, Abigail, dated November 2, 1800. These words are now known as the White House blessing.



## The Gingerbread White House

A favorite for all during the holidays is the annual Gingerbread White House. Inspired by the 200th anniversary of the publication of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, this year’s Gingerbread White House features a recreation of this storied tale. The display includes a sugar cookie replica of the famous book, as well as Santa’s sleigh flying above the White House grounds. This magical poem has delighted children for 200 years, with families across the world gathering together for generations to recite the lyrical lines by memory.





## CROSS HALL

The Cross Hall unites the State Rooms of the White House, with the East Room and State Dining Room at the opposite ends, and the Green, Blue, and Red Rooms opening from the south side. The slightly arched ceiling springs from the cast plaster molding designed during the Theodore Roosevelt renovation of 1902.

During the holidays, the Cross Hall features the official White House Menorah, created in 2021 by the White House Executive Residence Carpentry Shop. The menorah was constructed using wood that was removed more than seventy years ago during the Truman-era renovation of the White House.





## GRAND FOYER

Closing out the 2023 White House holiday display is an incredible, eye-catching recreation of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* in the Grand Foyer.

With Santa's enchanting sleigh and reindeer suspended in the air, and the Cross Hall's architectural niches featuring elements of the famous story, guests will leave their White House holiday experience with hearts full of

*Magic, Wonder, & Joy*





# HOLIDAY RECIPE

## PINWHEEL COOKIES

### VANILLA DOUGH:

- 1/2 lb unsalted butter
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp orange zest
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

### CHOCOLATE DOUGH

- 1/2 lb unsalted butter
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup natural cocoa powder

### DIRECTIONS:

#### - Vanilla Dough -

1. With a hand mixer, cream the butter, sugar, salt, orange zest, and vanilla on medium speed until light and fluffy (approximately 4-6 minutes).
2. On low speed, add the egg and mix for about 40 seconds, scrape the bowl and mix for another 40 seconds until everything is completely combined.
3. Gradually add the flour, mixing until combined. Scrape the bowl as needed.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to an 8 x 14 x 1/4-inch rectangle. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate.

#### - Chocolate Dough -

- Follow steps #1 and #2 as for the Vanilla Dough.
3. Sift the flour and cocoa powder together, adding to dough gradually. Mix until combined.
  4. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to an 8 x 14 x 1/4-inch rectangle. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate.

### PINWHEEL

1. Once the doughs have refrigerated and are pliable, brush the vanilla dough with a little water and place the chocolate dough on top. Slightly press down with a flat cutting board.
2. Starting with a long side, tightly roll the two doughs together, making sure there are no gaps between them.
3. Tightly cover the dough roll in plastic wrap, and twist the ends until tight. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or until firm.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside.
5. Unroll the refrigerated dough and trim the edges, making a 12-inch-long log. Slice half of the log into 24 cookies (about 1/4-inch-thick slices) with a sharp knife. Wrap remaining dough and store in the refrigerator until ready to use. Place cookies 1 1/2 inches apart on the prepared baking sheets.
6. Bake for 7-8 minutes or until the edges just start to brown. Let the cookies cool for 2 minutes on the pans, and then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Repeat the process with the remaining half of the dough.

Enjoy  
this  
tasty treat  
from the  
White House  
Pastry Shop.



*Yield:*  
approximately  
24 pieces



# WHITE HOUSE HOLIDAY KALEIDOSCOPE

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Empty cardboard tube
- Scissors
- Tape
- Flexible drinking straw
- White cardstock (optional)
- Mylar sheets or mirrored sheets (optional)
- Markers, stickers, or paint for decorating your cardboard tube (optional)

## DIRECTIONS:

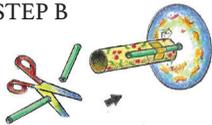
- Using scissors, cut out the circular holiday scene, along the dotted lines. Poke a hole in the center of the circle (Step A).

### STEP A

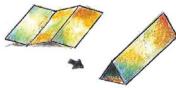


*Note: If you choose not to cut the circle in this booklet, you can also trace a 3.75 inch circle on white cardstock and decorate it with markers, stickers, or paint.*

### STEP B



### STEP C



### STEP D



- Cut the straw in half. Tape it along the top of the tube with the flexible part of the straw hanging over the edge. Place the straw through the hole in the circle, with the design facing the tube. Make sure that the hole fits over the flexible portion of the straw so it will turn easily (Step B).

- Look into your kaleidoscope, spin the circle, and explore a magical White House scene!

## Optional:

- For a more traditional kaleidoscope effect, cut mylar or mirrored paper into three equal strips. Tape the strips together with the shiny sides facing down to create a triangular prism. Slide the prism inside the tube for a snug fit (Step C).
- Place the straw through the hole of your decorated circle and explore the reflections of your created design (Step D)!





## 2023 White House Holiday Facts and Figures...

- Approximately 14,975 feet of ribbon, over 350 candles, over 33,892 ornaments, and over 22,100 bells were used this year to decorate the White House.
- ★ There are 98 Christmas trees throughout the White House complex.
- The Gingerbread White House creation includes 40 sheets of sugar cookie dough, 40 sheets of gingerbread dough, 90 pounds of pastillage, 30 pounds of chocolate, and 50 pounds of royal icing.
- ★ Over 142,425 holiday lights decorate the trees, garlands, wreaths, and displays in the White House.
- Seventy-two classic wreaths adorn the north and south facades of the White House.
- ★ It takes over 300 dedicated volunteers from across the country working a full week to decorate the inside and outside of the White House.



*The President and Dr. Biden thank the Executive Residence staff and the team of over 300 volunteers who dedicated their time, energy, and talents to transform the White House for the holiday season. Your hard work and creativity made this all possible.*

*We are grateful for the talents and support from:*

*The National Confectioners Association*

*The Train Collectors Association*

*The Library of Congress*

*The creative design teams of Burke & Pryde, DesignMa, Dodge-Chrome, Inc., Emily Barton Design, Glitterville Studios, Mark Gagnon, Rafanelli Events, and Silver Lining Design Group.*

*Thank you to children's book illustrator, Raúl Colón, for his inspired artwork throughout this book, which perfectly captures the "Magic, Wonder, and Joy" of the holidays.*

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