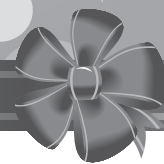


# Time for the Holidays



## Home for the Holidays – Where Your Heart Is

BY EMILIE PENNY

**W**hat does it mean to be home for the holidays? To me, it means time spent with family and friends, doing the things we love most.

Throughout my life, my definition of home has changed. At first, home was with my parents on Long Island. When I met my husband, I knew that he was “the one” because being with him felt like being home. No matter where we were, I felt safe and at ease with him. As our relationship developed, time spent with him at his childhood home in England also came to feel like home to me. After we got married and bought our first house, my definition of home changed once again. My home was still with my husband, but now we had put an official stake in the ground together.

### WELCOME IN RAMSEY

We settled in Ramsey, New Jersey. With neither of us being from the state originally, it felt both foreign and familiar at the same time. We soon got to know and love our new hometown. Quickly, we began to take advantage of all the town had to offer, including the town pool, near-by hiking trails, gourmet restaurants, and seasonal events.



Santa closes out the parade with a wave during the 2022 Home for the Holidays event.

One town event we’ve recently made a new tradition is Ramsey’s Annual Home for the Holidays event. The event is a mix of a parade and festival and is held every December. Sponsored by the Ramsey Fire Department, the residents gather on Main Street to watch fire trucks, local vendors, school bands, scouts, and other members of the community march with pride.

The event feels special and is the perfect way to ring in the festive season. The feeling of community is incredible, and standing in solidarity with other residents makes us feel lucky to live here. Last year, multiple homeowners in our community even opened their doors to residents to extend the celebration.

The sense of community in Ramsey is exceptionally strong during the holiday season, and easily feels like home to all who are lucky enough to spend time in the town.

While the location of my home is different than it used to be, the foundation and sense of comfort it gives me is the same. Attending Home for the Holidays

with my family is a time for us to celebrate each other and the many good things in our lives.



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## Secret Santa With a Twist

BY CARMEN LO

**E**very year around the holidays, all my girlfriends would commit to a day to spend together. We’ve now hit the age where everyone is at a different point in their life – some starting out in their career, others in a relationship or married with kids. Yet, we’ve always made time for each other year after year to show that we continue to care for



Girls cabin trip.

each other. This year will be no different. In recent years, we’ve modified our holiday tradition to Secret Santa but with a twist.

Of course, we start by randomly choosing a name from a virtual bucket and keep the name a secret from each other. Everyone has a budget of \$50 to build a package that fulfills the following five conditions:

1. Pick an item in the friend’s favorite color
2. Choose their favorite drinks
3. Choose their favorite snacks
4. Include an item that reminds you of them
5. Pick something they can use everyday

This has been the perfect tradition for celebrating one another.



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