

# *A Timeless Tradition*

HOLIDAYS AT THE WHITE HOUSE 2015



**T**hank you for visiting the White House and joining in our celebration of the holidays. As we reflect on the many blessings of this season, we are pleased to have you with us for one of the White House's timeless traditions.

The holiday season is a time when we recall our obligations to lift up one another and to serve as our brothers' and our sisters' keepers, and it offers countless opportunities to perform acts of kindness and goodwill. The universal message of peace and brotherhood inspires many during the holidays and encourages us all to carry forth a shared spirit of compassion and charity throughout the New Year.

The decorations that deck the White House halls reflect long-held traditions cherished across America, and they commemorate special moments that shaped our country during the past two centuries. May the festive displays offer reminders of your own holiday traditions, inspire you to create new ones, and bring you the same joy this season brings our family.

We send our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones for happiness and peace in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barack Obama".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Obama".



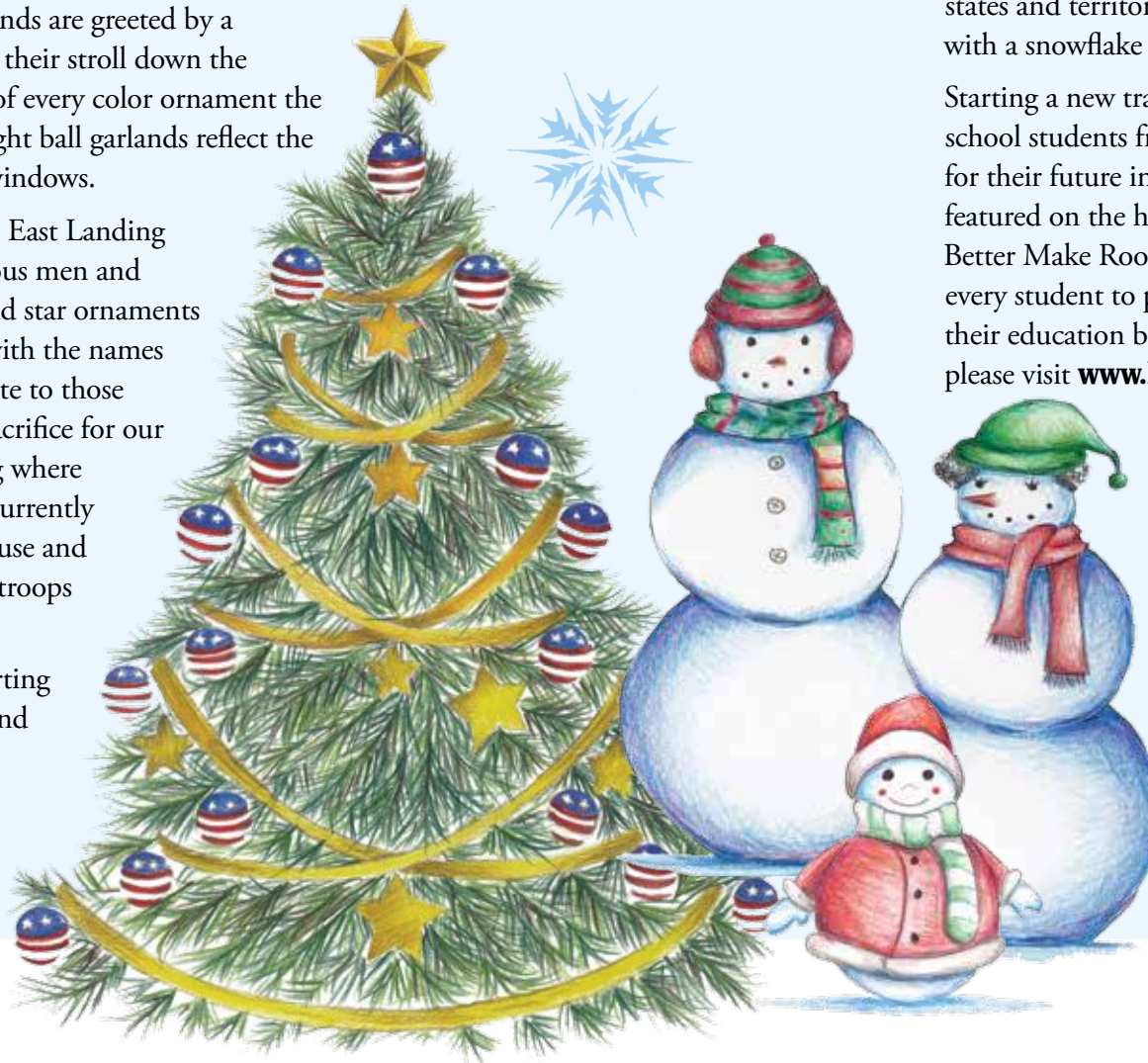
## EAST VISITOR ENTRANCE AND LANDING

Each year, guests from across our country and around the world travel to our Nation's capital to rejoice in the holidays. With this season's theme, *A Timeless Tradition*, the decorations throughout the White House inspire visitors to celebrate long-held traditions while also creating new memories.

At the East Visitor Entrance, friends are greeted by a family of penguins as they begin their stroll down the halls. Through the doors, bulbs of every color ornament the chandeliers and railings, and bright ball garlands reflect the soft glow of white lights in the windows.

An Administration tradition, the East Landing customarily honors the courageous men and women of our armed forces. Gold star ornaments adorn a resolute evergreen tree with the names on these ornaments paying tribute to those heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. It is also on this landing where we honor the brave individuals currently serving; visitors are invited to pause and send a message of thanks to our troops serving overseas and stateside.

For more information on supporting our service members, veterans, and their families, please visit [www.JoiningForces.gov](http://www.JoiningForces.gov).



## EAST COLONNADE AND EAST GARDEN ROOM

From the redwoods of California to the plains of Oklahoma, the lakes of Minnesota to the everglades of Florida, our country is built on the unique traditions and cultures of people from across our great Nation. Each of the fifty-six states and territories that make up the United States is represented with a snowflake dangling from the ceiling in the East Colonnade.

Starting a new tradition last season, Mrs. Obama asked public school students from Washington, D.C., to share their dreams for their future in the East Colonnade. This year, those goals are featured on the hand-crafted snowflakes. With Reach Higher's Better Make Room campaign, the First Lady is striving to inspire every student to pursue and attain those aspirations by completing their education beyond high school. To engage with these efforts, please visit [www.ReachHigher.gov](http://www.ReachHigher.gov) and use [#BetterMakeRoom](https://twitter.com/BetterMakeRoom).

The wintry stroll continues through the East Colonnade and into the East Garden Room, a space dedicated to the White House's current furry inhabitants—Bo and Sunny. While dreams of milk bones and tennis balls dance in their heads, the First Family's Portuguese Water Dogs are represented larger than life on a giant dog bed, their puppy-themed tree decorated nearby.





## WHITE HOUSE LIBRARY

From classic works of fiction to first-hand accounts of important moments in our Nation's history, the books of the White House Library—2,700 in total—surround the room and fill the walls. Decorated as a holiday forest of novels and manuscripts, this room is trimmed with pages of text and celebrates our American story.

## VERMEIL ROOM

Throughout the Ground Floor Corridor, topiaries embellished by argentine balls and bells lead the way to a silver wonderland. In the Vermeil Room, gilded silver illuminates portraits of First Ladies and accentuates their timeless grace and elegance. Two Christmas trees dressed in ornate fabric create a vibrant image of the holiday season. The festive displays, warm and inviting, emulate hospitality shown by First Ladies throughout history.

## CHINA ROOM

The China Room's holiday décor is inspired by the Obama family's china service. Chosen by First Lady Michelle Obama, this china pattern features a bright Kailua Blue, evoking the waters off the coast of the President's home-state of Hawaii. Revealed earlier this year and debuted at the Japan State Dinner, this service represents a colorful twist on the tradition of designing and utilizing presidential china.

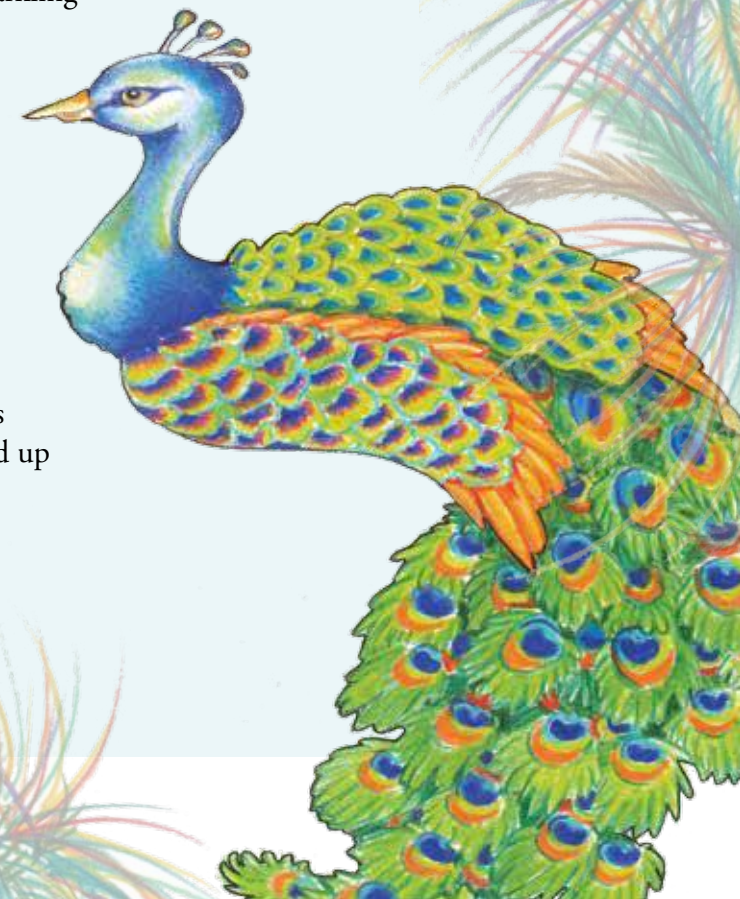
## EAST ROOM

Entering the historic East Room under a canopy of sparkling icicles and glimmering silver spheres, visitors are awed by a multitude of white, silver, and champagne tones. Four grand trees covered in ornate decorations of iridescent pearls, frosty icicles, vintage jewels, and delicate buttons trim the edges of the largest room in the White House.

A long-standing holiday tradition—the White House crèche—graces this room. The nativity scene made of terra cotta and intricately carved wood was fashioned in Naples, Italy, in the eighteenth century. Donated to the White House in the 1960s, this piece has sat in the East Room for the holidays for more than forty-five years, spanning nine administrations.

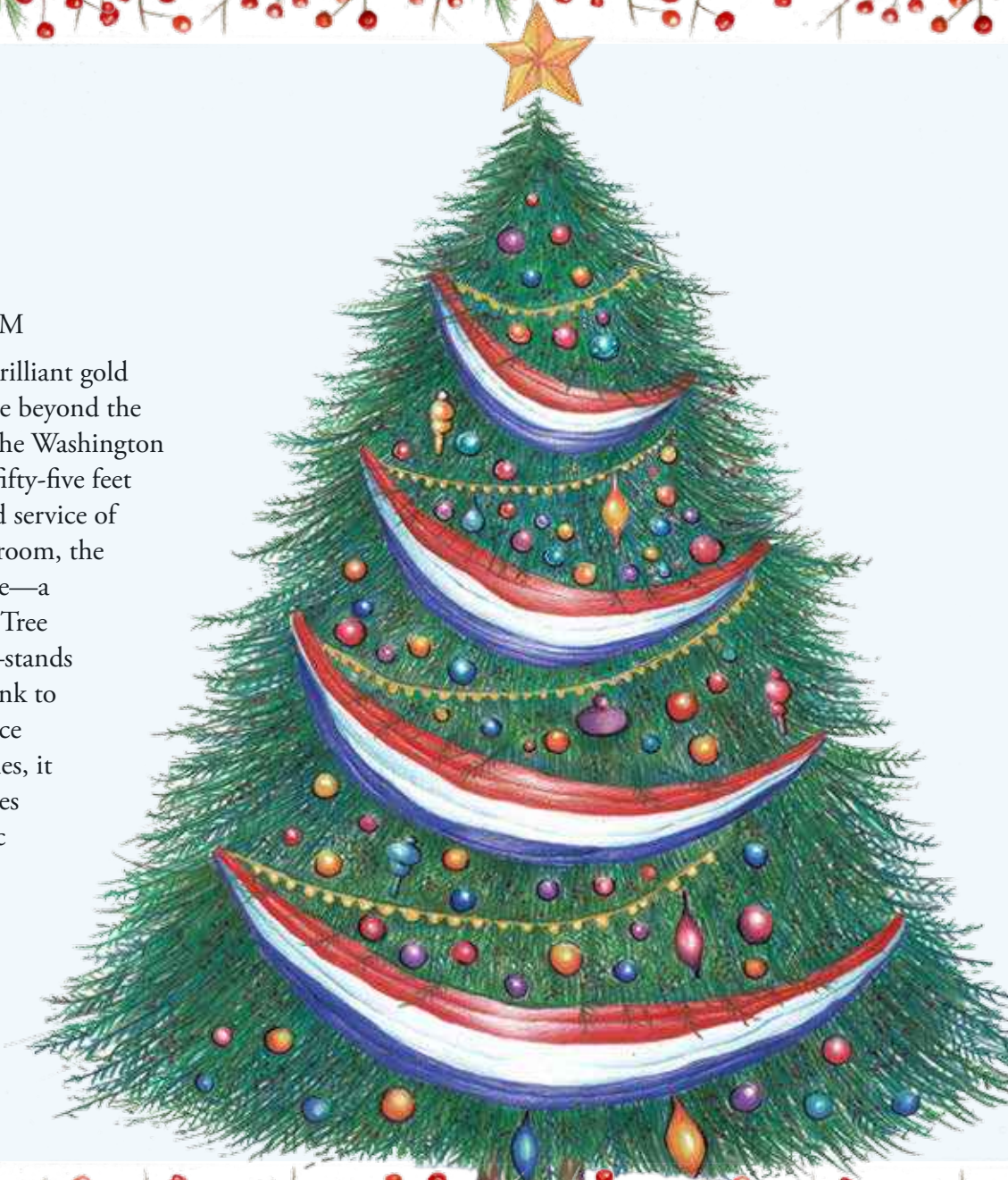
## GREEN ROOM

Inspired by friends flocking together to celebrate the holidays, garlands of sparkling gems and teal ornaments plumed with peacock feathers deck the trees and mantels in the Green Room. This room—with walls covered by emerald silk—has hosted remarkable events throughout the years. One such moment was a meeting between pioneering women First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Amelia Earhart. Mrs. Roosevelt was so inspired by Earhart's accomplishments that she even signed up for flight classes of her own.



## BLUE ROOM

Through windows cascading with brilliant gold stars, visitors to the Blue Room gaze beyond the South Lawn to see in the distance the Washington Monument standing five hundred fifty-five feet tall, dedicated to the patriotism and service of our first president. Inside this oval room, the official White House Christmas tree—a Fraser fir from Bustard’s Christmas Tree Farm in Lehigh, Pennsylvania—stands eighteen feet one inch tall from trunk to tip. Dedicated to our Nation’s service members, veterans, and their families, it is ornamented with holiday messages of hope for our troops and patriotic symbols of red, white, and blue.



## RED ROOM

Once First Lady Dolley Madison’s famous salon, this room had walls adorned in a sunflower yellow until it was redecorated in 1882. To complement its now vibrant ruby hue, the Red Room customarily glistens with cranberries during the holidays. The two Christmas trees in the parlor emit a warm crimson glow as cranberry garlands, apples, and pomegranates decorate their branches. Bright red cardinals and crisp golden oak leaves embody the cheerful spirit of the season and accentuate the wintry green garland that drapes across the mantel.





## STATE DINING ROOM

President and Mrs. John Adams hosted the first White House Christmas party in December 1800, and while holiday celebrations were not grand state affairs, they became family-oriented traditions that promoted good cheer amongst children and adults alike. The Kennedy Administration represented a new generation and accordingly introduced a livelier form of entertaining. Guests mingled while sharing traditional libations in the State Dining Room, and “The People’s House” emerged as a symbol of national pride.



A devout lover of ballet, classical music, and culture, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy announced that her first theme for the holidays as official hostess of the White House would be *The Nutcracker*. Guests would find miniature ornaments, wrapped mini presents, sugar plum fairies, and characters from Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker Suite* adorning the Christmas trees. The First Lady sought to display the wonders of Christmas through the eyes of children and brought a chic and timeless touch to the holidays.

This year, the State Dining Room showcases seasonal delights that are sure to captivate eyes and indulge appetites. Sunny and Bo play amidst snow-white gumballs as a large candy-adorned nutcracker guards the holiday treasure trove. The White House Gingerbread House—a staple for the past half-century—is among the toys, gifts, and presents that festoon this room.



## GRAND FOYER AND CROSS HALL

The Grand Foyer and Cross Hall are filled with crimson holly and glittering gold vases. Evergreen trees and wreaths are decorated with dazzling ornaments and ribbons, and great, vibrant orbs dangle between the columns.

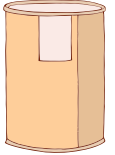
During the holidays—beneath the gaze of presidents past and surrounded by the history of our great Nation—friends and fellow Americans fill the White House with laughter and joy. May sharing in timeless traditions this season bring you continued hope and happiness throughout the New Year.



## PUMPKIN PIE

### Filling:

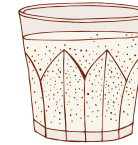
16 oz pumpkin puree  
3 whole eggs  
1 egg yolk  
1 cup heavy whipping cream  
2 tbsp pure maple syrup  
1 cup dark brown sugar  
½ tsp ground cinnamon  
½ tsp ground ginger  
pinch of nutmeg  
pinch of black pepper  
½ tsp salt



In a stand up electric mixer, whisk together the first 5 ingredients. Combine the remaining ingredients and add to the egg mixture. Set mixture aside.

### Pie Dough:

3 cups all purpose flour  
¼ cup granulated sugar  
1½ tsp salt  
2½ sticks butter, sliced  
⅓ cup shortening  
½ cup cold water



In a stand up electric mixer using a paddle attachment, mix together the first 3 ingredients.

Place the pieces of butter and shortening on top of the flour mixture. With the machine on, pour in the cold water and bring dough together. Scrape the bowl well, and mix briefly again.

Place dough onto a lightly floured parchment lined pan. Refrigerate for 2 hours.

Roll the cold dough between 2 pieces of lightly floured parchment paper to a ¼ inch thickness.

Lightly spray a 9" pie dish/pan. Place pie dough into dish and shape edges.

Freeze dough for 1 hour. Preheat oven to 380°.

Line the pie shell with aluminum foil and place metal pie weights into area and bake for 40 minutes until completely golden all over. Once slightly cooled, carefully remove the foil and metal weights.

Pour in the pumpkin puree and smooth with a spatula.

Bake on a half sheet pan with water surrounding the glass dish.

Bake the pie at 320° for 1½ hours or until a cake skewer comes out clean.



## DO-IT-YOURSELF HOLIDAY "CRACKERS"

Fill these cylinders with candies, toys, and notes, give to a friend, and break open for a holiday surprise!

### What You Will Need:

1 sheet of construction paper  
1 roll of tape  
1 pair of scissors  
2 pieces of ribbon  
crayons or markers  
treats for stuffing  
foil wrapping paper



### Directions:

1. Use crayons or markers to decorate one side of the construction paper.
2. Loosely roll the decorated paper into a tube wide enough to fit the treats.
3. Tape the seam.
4. Cut the tube in half.
5. Fill each piece with small treats.
6. Place both pieces end-to-end on a sheet of wrapping paper.
7. Roll the pieces until the wrapping paper covers the tube.
8. Twist the ends and tie with ribbon.
9. Give the [cracker] to a friend.

Crack open and enjoy the treats!



### IN APPRECIATION

The White House would like to thank the Executive Residence staff, the team at Rafanelli Events, and the many wonderful volunteers from across our country for their efforts in preparing and decorating the White House this season. We would like to thank Carolina Herrera, Duro Olowu, and Carol Lim and Humberto Leon for their holiday design of the China Room, Vermeil Room, and White House Library, respectively. With tremendous gratitude, we also thank the student artists of the Duke Ellington School for the Arts in Washington, D.C., for illustrating this booklet.

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