

A  
Season  
OF  
Peace & Light



HOLIDAYS AT THE WHITE HOUSE  
2024



**T**he holidays have always held a special place in our hearts, and we've loved opening the doors of the People's House wider and wider each year, continuing the spirit of goodwill and gratitude. America's story is your story, and we hope you feel at home here.

As we celebrate our final holiday season here in the White House, we are guided by the values we hold sacred: faith, family, service to our country, kindness towards our neighbors, and the power of community and connection.

It has been the honor of our lives to serve as your President and First Lady. Our hope is for the Nation to be blessed with the peace and light of the holiday season.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Love,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Joe Jill".

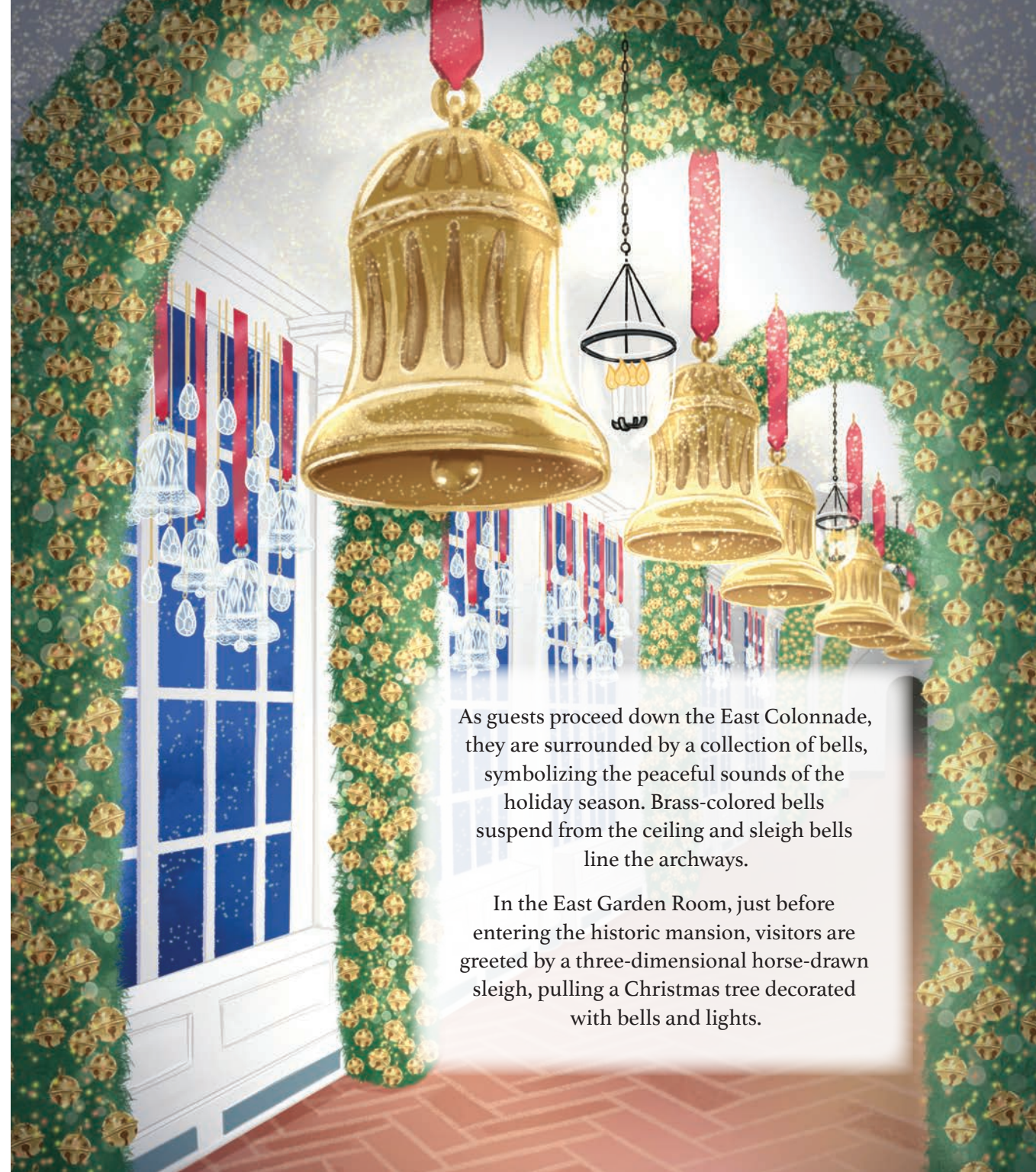
# WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE



**G**uests enter the East Wing of the White House under stunning, rotating starlight. Lush greenery and garlands adorn the East Wing Lobby, enveloping guests in the peaceful tranquility of nature as they begin their holiday tour of the White House.

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 display featured on the White House tour is dedicated to Gold Star Families. This year’s Gold Star Tree exhibit is constructed of six oversized and stacked stars, representing all six branches of the military. Names of fallen service members are written on gold star ornaments on the four accompanying Christmas trees. The Gold Star Trees honor 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.



As guests proceed down the East Colonnade, they are surrounded by a collection of bells, symbolizing the peaceful sounds of the holiday season. Brass-colored bells suspend from the ceiling and sleigh bells line the archways.

In the East Garden Room, just before entering the historic mansion, visitors are greeted by a three-dimensional horse-drawn sleigh, pulling a Christmas tree decorated with bells and lights.

## LIBRARY

A forest of vintage ceramic Christmas trees are featured throughout the library, twinkling in all of the colors of the holiday season.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt designated 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. A classroom teacher for forty years, First Lady Jill Biden added children's books to the White House Library collection, in collaboration with the Library of Congress.

## VERMEIL ROOM

The décor of the Vermeil Room (vermeil is the French term for silver dipped in gold) is devoted to floral displays, using a variety of materials.

On the walls of this room are the portraits of 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

Food is love. A baker's bench and artisanal breads set the scene in this room, reminding guests of the peaceful, patient, and loving process of baking bread.

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, diplomats, and other White House guests.

## DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION ROOM

This fall, First Lady Jill Biden expanded and enhanced the public tour of the White House. The Diplomatic Reception Room, used to welcome foreign dignitaries, and home to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's famous fireside chats, is now open to the general public for the first time. Holiday florals and fruit are on display in this room, as a nod to the importance of hospitality and grace to peaceful diplomacy.





## EAST ROOM

**A** reflective canopy wraps the ceiling and windows, surrounding guests in a peaceful snowfall.

Two large Christmas trees flank the center door, with the tree bases illuminated with silhouettes of Americans holding hands, giving movement and energy to the décor.

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 instructed workers to save in 1814 when the White House was about to be set aflame during the War of 1812.

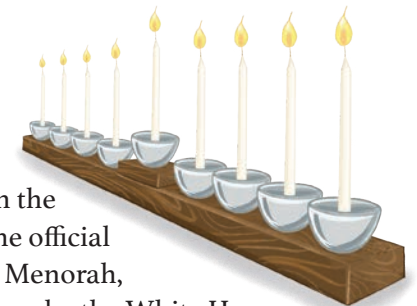
The East Room includes a Neapolitan crèche, or Nativity scene, with over forty figurines, most dating back to the eighteenth century. The crèche has been displayed during every White House holiday season since 1967.



## GREEN ROOM

**I**n the Green Room, light shines through colored glass ornaments and prisms, reflecting beautiful hues throughout the room.

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



Displayed just outside the Green Room in the Cross Hall is the official White House Menorah, created in 2021 by the White House Executive Residence Carpenters' Shop. The Menorah was constructed using wood that was removed more than seventy years ago during the Truman-era Renovation of the White House.



## BLUE ROOM

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

The stunning tree features a light-filled, whimsical carousel, with names of every state, territory, and the District of Columbia, showcased throughout the tree's décor. With bright lights, vivid colors, and three-dimensional holiday candy treats, guests will gaze in wonder as they are taken on a delightful adventure around the tree.

This year's official White House Christmas Tree was presented to the First Lady by David, Sam, and Jim Cartner of Cartner's Christmas Tree Farm in Newland, North Carolina, the 2024 Grand Champion Grower in the National Christmas Tree Association's annual contest.





## RED ROOM

**I**n the Red Room, white paper doves carry messages of peace. Letters from children around the country to the President and First Lady trim the fireplace mantel. Large, illuminated gift boxes are placed under the Red Room's Christmas tree.



## THE GINGERBREAD WHITE HOUSE

A favorite for all during the holidays is the annual Gingerbread White House. This year's sweet creation draws inspiration from the overall holiday décor theme of a "Season of Peace and Light." A glowing starburst shines over the Gingerbread White House, and the sugary replica includes a cheerful scene of ice skaters on the South Lawn.



## STATE DINING ROOM

**A**s part of the First Lady's *Joining Forces* initiative to support military families, Dr. Biden invited families of the *USS Delaware* and the *USS Gabrielle Giffords*, two U.S. Navy vessels for which she serves as sponsor, to provide the colorful paper chain garlands hanging throughout the room. The ornaments on the Christmas trees were crafted as self-portraits by students from across the country, ensuring that children see themselves reflected in this year's holiday display.



## 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.

Suspended overhead in the Cross Hall is a cascade of peace doves flying above. Christmas trees trimmed with red and green plaid décor, as well as a vintage red truck, complete the holiday scenery.

It takes over 300 dedicated volunteers from across the country working a full week to decorate the inside and outside of the White House.

There are 83 Christmas trees throughout the White House.

Approximately 9,810 feet of ribbon, over 28,125 ornaments, and over 2,200 doves were used this year to decorate the White House.

## GRAND FOYER

At the holidays, Americans come together every year in fellowship and faith, reminding us that we are stronger as a community than we are apart. As guests leave the 2024 White House holiday display, the President and First Lady ask each of you to reflect on your time at the People's House. The strength of our country, and the soul of our Nation, come from you. May the promise of this "Season of Peace and Light" guide your path forward.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

## Fun Facts

The Gingerbread White House creation includes 25 sheets of gingerbread dough, 10 sheets of sugar cookie dough, 65 pounds of pastillage, 45 pounds of chocolate, 50 pounds of royal icing, 40 pounds of poured sugar and 10 pounds of gum paste.

Over 165,075 holiday lights decorate the trees, garlands, wreaths, and displays in the White House.



## HOLIDAY RECIPE

### - THE PRESIDENT'S CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES -

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/4 sticks soft unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste
- 1 whole egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips

ENJOY  
THIS TASTY  
TREAT  
FROM THE  
WHITE HOUSE  
PASTRY SHOP.

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- ♦ Preheat oven to 325° F.
- ♦ Place the butter and both sugars in a stand-up mixer with a paddle attachment. Cream until combined. You can also mix by hand quickly with a whisk or spatula.
- ♦ In a separate bowl, lightly mix together the eggs and vanilla. Pour into the creamed butter mixture and combine on low speed.
- ♦ Stop mixing and using a handheld rubber spatula, scrape the bottom and sides of the mixing bowl.
- ♦ Add the baking soda, salt and all-purpose flour. Mix until combined. Add the semi-sweet chocolate chips. Mix on low speed just until combined.
- ♦ Remove mixing bowl from stand-up mixer and place prepared cookie dough into a covered container and refrigerate for two hours. Using a #24 ice cream scoop, scoop dough onto a parchment-lined sheet pan. It is best to refrigerate the scooped cookie dough for 30 minutes before baking. *(This step can be omitted if time is constrained.)*
- ♦ Bake cookies for 9 minutes and rotate pan. Continue to bake for approximately 3 more minutes or until lightly golden around edges. Carefully remove from oven and allow to cool.

*Yield: approximately 24 cookies*



## WHITE HOUSE KEEPSAKE ORNAMENT

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- ♦ Colored paper (8.5" x 11" sheets)
- ♦ Scissors
- ♦ Tape
- ♦ Glue
- ♦ Ruler
- ♦ Ribbon

#### DIRECTIONS:

1) Using scissors, cut out four strips of any paper you have at home, measuring 4 inches wide by 11 inches long.

2) Take each strip and fold them into 1-inch-wide pleats, back and forth (like an accordion).

Using glue or tape, connect the ends of all four strips together so it makes a loop. Stand your loop up vertically on a flat surface, then press the outer edges inward and push down, so your craft flattens into a circular shape, sometimes called a paper rosette, or paper starburst fan.

3) Turn to the reverse side of this page, and cut out the patterned star shape (along the dotted black line) from your White House holiday tour book.

4) Tape or glue the patterned star from your tour book to the center of your paper rosette. Add a ribbon to the back of your creation. Your White House holiday tour keepsake is now ready to hang on your tree!





*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.*

*Bryan Rafanelli, of Rafanelli Events, worked closely with Dr. Biden to lead the creative efforts of a talented team to bring her vision to life for the White House holiday décor, celebrating a “Season of Peace and Light.”*

*We are grateful for the support from the National Confectioners Association and the creative design teams of Birch Event Design, BMF Media Group, Cheree Berry Paper & Design, East Olivia, Frost Chicago, Glitterville Studios, HMR Designs, Kehoe Designs, MC<sup>2</sup>, Mot Designs, Patch NYC, Rafanelli Events, Red Bliss Design, Silver Lining Design Group, and 4 Wall Entertainment.*

*Thank you to children’s book author and illustrator, Zoe Ranucci, for her creative artwork throughout this book, which perfectly captures a “Season of Peace and Light” at the White House.*

We invite you to share your experience using:  
#WHChristmas  
#WHHolidays  
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