



Better Home Living™

The Newsletter That's Both Informative and Fun!

A genuinely easy way to fold a fitted sheet

There are countless videos on folding fitted sheets, but most of them are as easy as assembling furniture. Which is to say, they leave you with extra parts, some big gaps, and probably slightly crooked product.

Forget about sticking your hands through two corners of the sheet, inside-out, then tucking the right corner into the left and crisscrossing them and flipping the whole thing around. That was the gist of one so-called easy solution.

Marie Kondo to the rescue. Kondo, of "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" fame and star of a hit Netflix show, has a method that is really, truly doable. Spoiler alert: she doesn't even TRY to make the thing flat.

Here are Kondo's steps to folding a fitted sheet:

Find a good surface to lay the sheet onto.

Make sure the elastic is facing up, then fold the sheet in thirds -- one long side into the center, then bring the other side across it. You'll have a long rectangle.

Now fold the sheet in half widthwise (left to right as you face it).

Drumroll please: now you ROLL it. Roll it from one short side to the other until you have a compact cylinder. If you're familiar with Kondo's style, this makes sense. The little sushi sheet can essentially stand on its own and will fit neatly into a drawer.

Finally, brag about your new skill.



I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

*Christopher Dunlap
Mops & Buckets, LLC*

An ounce of prevention for the winter season

If you were asked to name the most important day in December, Christmas or Hanukkah would probably come to mind. Certainly, these events dominate the month.

But there is another day, a significant day, a day dreaded by anyone trying to function in colder climates.

December 21 is the first day of winter. In many parts of the country, that means snow and ice. Before that big storm inevitably hits, there are steps you can take to ensure you make it to where you need to go.

* First: think about your car. It may seem obvious that it needs a strong battery and good antifreeze, but those are also easy to put off. Get a tune-up to ensure that the car will start in cold weather.

* Alternate transportation for work. In heavy snow, sometimes only four-wheel drive vehicles can get through. Make arrangements now with someone who has one to get to work. If all else fails, call in to your workplace. They may be able to send someone to pick you up.

* Alternate childcare. When snow is deep, daycare centers will sometimes close. Arrange now for a backup to take care of your child so you can go to work.

* Your home. Take steps to prevent home emergencies. Wrap pipes that may freeze with heat tape. Have your heating system checked so it doesn't go out at the worst possible time. Think of any other type of emergency that could occur.

* Personal. Be prepared with non-slip boots, walk with care, and use handrails on steps.

Holidays should be happy days — and they will be happier if you have taken steps to ensure you'll have no problems in December and the rest of the winter season.

Who was General Tso?

Have you ever bitten into the sticky-sweet, somewhat spicy General Tso's chicken and stopped to ask why this amazingly bad-for-you (but oh-so-delicious) food is named after a supposed military figure? And whether it's a compliment?

Perhaps not surprisingly, the dinner is not an authentic Chinese dish. But General Tso was a real person, according to AllRecipes.

Known as Zuo Zongtang, he was a respected Chinese statesman and military leader of the late Qing dynasty and played an important role in the Taiping Rebellion, a civil war that was waged in China in the mid-19th century.

Still, that doesn't answer how he became associated with takeout.

The dish was created by a chef named Peng Chang-kueu in the 1950s, whose restaurant, Uncle Peng's Hunan Yuan, was one of the first Hunanese restaurants in the country. Peng invented the meal while in Taiwan and sweetened it when he came to the States. As the story has it, Peng was from the same town as Zongtang and that was the name that sprang to mind when it came time to name the dish.



Do You Know...

... someone that could use our services? Perhaps a friend, family member, co-worker, or someone from church?

When a new client signs up for regular cleaning services at your recommendation; you will receive \$100 after their 4th cleaning!

If you would think of 3 or 4 people that could use our services, then don't hesitate to call them and give them our name and phone number. Be sure to have them mention your name when they call so we can send your \$100 Bonus!

Thanks in advance for your help and we look forward to sending cash your way!

Thanks a Bunch!

A special thanks to all our customers who referred us!

Plan early for inexpensive January get-aways

The end of the year can leave many of us feeling drained, emotionally and financially. A vacation to recover from the holidays -- is it even possible?

Absolutely. Start planning now, and you may find that a January holiday is surprisingly affordable.

Here are a few ideas from Travel and Leisure on cheapest places to travel in January (note that some are cold-weather locales, naturally. Keep an open mind!):

* Chicago, Illinois. Great food, music, museums, and sports. And in January, hotels are 50 percent more affordable than high season, while an average round-trip ticket is \$179.10.

* Boston, Mass. Catch the Boston Symphony Orchestra in its world-famous concert hall, check out any number of fantastic museums, grab a great meal, and maybe see the Celtics play. Boston in January offers a 53 percent savings on hotel rates and flights are an average of \$200.66.

* Toronto, Canada. Eat your way through this diverse city, which lays claim to a Chinatown, Koreatown, Little Italy, Little Portugal, and a Greek Town. Toronto also boasts the world's longest underground shopping complex, at 19 miles. Hotels are 33 percent more affordable and plane tickets average \$280.65 from the U.S.

* San Diego, Calif. Here's a balmy option with beautiful scenery, architecture, beaches, and tons of great food. The San Diego Brew Festival takes place in January, showing off some of the area's 130-plus craft breweries and delicious food truck fare. You'll save 37 percent on hotels, while round-trip tickets average \$274.95.



"Dear, do I take Holly or Jolly with food?"

Oh, bring us some figgy pudding! We won't go until we get some!

In the U.S., you could wait a long time for this Christmas dish!

If anyone recalls Christmas carols these days, the one they usually remember is "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," which is pretty easy until the second verse.

At that point, the song mysteriously demands figgy pudding -- and right now. In the U.S., that demand may be kind of like the lyrics to Louie Louie: no one knows what they mean.

Figgy pudding, or Christmas pudding, is a tradition that didn't cross the Atlantic. It remains an English Christmas dessert, primarily made by fancy bakers and purchased at Christmas for enjoyment all year long.

At one time, the making of The Pud was as laden with tradition as the pudding itself. It took a month to get the ingredients settled into the cake-like mound. Moms mixed it up on the Sunday before Advent, when the Church of England proclaimed: Stir Up Our Hearts, Oh Lord! Brits, who make everything into a tradition, called this Stir Up Sunday.

Recently, an informal survey of Brits on Facebook showed that none had ever heard of Stir Up Sunday. Though one person did point out that his grandma used to put silver coins in the Christmas Pudding mix and if you found one, you got a reward. He didn't realize it, but that actually is part of the tradition of Stir Up Sunday.

Nonetheless, the Christmas pudding has survived and people do compete to buy (not bake) the best ones from the best outlets.

These puddings are very dark, thick, cake-like creations filled with dried fruit (usually raisins) and held together with suet. It is much like the American fruit cake. Typically, it is molded into a mound and served with brandy that should be set afire at the table.

The key to the Christmas pudding is that it must be steamed for hours then allowed to age a month in a cool, dark place. Once it is sufficiently seasoned, it can be steamed for serving and enjoyed year-round, if there are leftovers.

For the recipe, look at several examples online to find your best mix of tradition and ease.

First, a traditional recipe that can be used with an InstaPot: melissaknorris.com/traditional-christmas-pudding-recipe/.

Next, the BBC, which even features a video about steaming the pud: bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/christmas_pudding_41498



Season's Felicitations

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8
9					10			
11					12			
13				14				
			15					
16	17	18				19	20	21
22					23			
24					25			
26					27			

Across

1. Attend

5. White lead-in

9. Tennessee's state flower

10. Indian butter

11. Stanza units

12. Affirmative votes

15. Ripped to pieces

15. Polo Grounds legend

16. Composers of sacred songs

22. "Beat it!"

23. Water buffalo

24. Caroled

25. Hounds

26. Plural pronoun

27. Healthful retreats

Down

1. Present

2. Hydrox rival

3. Cake layer

4. Medical students might bone up on this course?

5. People from Cairo

6. Perlman of

Down

7. Burn the surface of

8. Reason to cram

14. Money dispenser

16. Call to attention

17. Former Iranian ruler

18. Top-notch

19. Polaroid

20. Forum wear

21. Back talk

S	V	S	S		T	H	E	T
S	G	V	N		S	A	N	G
S	N	A	G		S	H	O	S
V	O	N	A		P	S	A	L
S	T	S	T					
T	O	R	E		T	O	R	E
R	T	A	P		A	P	A	R
S	E	A	S		E	E	T	
E	H	E	S		I	R	I	S
S	T	E	R		G	H	E	
					E	R	S	
					T	O		

The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

Trivia Teaser – Around the Corner

1. Finding the "prosperity corner" of a house is part of what Chinese practice? a-Feng Shui, b-Tai chi, c-Chi kung, d-Wing chun.

2. What Eagles hit song makes reference to "standin' on a corner in Winslow, Arizona"? a-"New Kid in Town," b-"Peaceful Easy Feeling," c-"Take It Easy," d-"Desperado."

3. Poets' Corner is a section of which church in London, England? a-St. Michael's Church, b-Westminster Abbey, c-King's Church, d-St. Paul's Cathedral.

4. "Nobody puts Baby in a corner" is a line from what movie? a-"Footloose," b-"The Notebook," c-"Twilight," d-"Dirty Dancing."

5. In what sport might players be awarded long and short corners? a-Badminton, b-Field hockey, c-Judo, d-Korfball.

6. Grover's Corners is the setting for what 1938 play by Thornton Wilder? a-"Gaslight," b-"Hellzapoppin," c-"The Wild Duck," d-"Our Town."

7. Crowley Corners, Tennessee is the hometown of what title TV character? a-Hannah Montana, b-Angus MacGyver, c-Adrian Monk, d-Veronica Mars.

8. In roulette, a bet consisting of two corners and a straight-up is nicknamed after what cartoon character? a-Mickey Mouse, b-Daffy Duck, c-Tweety Bird, d-Betty Boop.

9. What triangular filled-pocket cookie is usually associated with the Jewish holiday of Purim? a-Kreplach, b-Lekach, c-Charoset, d-Hamantash.

10. Meg Ryan plays the owner of a bookstore called The Shop Around the Corner in what romcom? a-"Sleepless in Seattle," b-"You've Got Mail," c-"City of Angels," d-"French Kiss."

- 1-a. Feng shui
- 2-c. "Take It Easy"
- 3-c. Westminster Church
- 4-d. "Dirty Dancing"
- 5-b. Field hockey
- 6-d. "Our Town"
- 7-a. Hannah Montana
- 8-a. Mickey Mouse
- 9-d. Hamantash
- 10-b. "You've Got Mail"

Answers to 'Around the Corner'

The loo goes high tech

You'd be forgiven for assuming a toilet is quite simple enough and doesn't need to be made into another "smart" gadget. But it turns out that we can improve upon our old loo technologies in a variety of ways.

A startup called Shine Bathroom raised \$750,000 in seed money to help build and distribute an accessory you attach to an existing toilet to make it a "smart toilet," according to an article in Tech Crunch.

The immediate goal, said the story, is to introduce new ways of cleaning toilets that are more ecologically friendly as well as provide tools to detect and even fix issues in the plumbing.

The long-term goal is to rethink the entire bathroom itself, so it puts less strain on our natural resources (thinking way beyond low flush, apparently).

The toilet attachment is battery operated and includes a water vessel, a sensor, and a spraying nozzle that goes inside the tank. A third sensor fitted with an accelerometer is attached to the main line that fills the toilet's tank; the vessel is filled with tap water.

The water passes through a special filter that electrolyzes it via a current, and sprays with every flush to clean and deodorize. Shine says there are no soaps or detergents and that the technique is as powerful as bleach but without harsh chemicals.

The second feature is a bathroom assistant called Sam, which links to the hardware and sensors to identify problems like leaks. Sam can also link with Alexa to clean, check water levels, and other tasks.



(786) 350-1736
mopsnbuckets@hotmail.com
www.mopsnbuckets.com

About Our Company

Mops & Buckets is a full-service residential cleaning company that operates in both Miami Dade and Broward Counties.

Services include general cleaning, deep cleaning, carpet cleaning, construction cleaning, move-in/out cleaning, and window washing.

Owner Christopher Dunlap has been in the cleaning industry for 10 years and feels it is important to provide cleaning services that place the utmost importance on the health and safety of his clients and employees. For that reason, Mops & Buckets is an active participant in the industry association ISSA (International Sanitary Supply Association). They also use Green Sealed Certified products to minimize toxins being released both in the environment and your home.

Make it easy for the EMTs

Any time you must call for emergency help, do what you can to meet the EMTs or at least be in an accessible position.

Go outside immediately: In a public place, a restaurant or at home, get outside if you can. If the EMTs have to fight off a barking dog in your home, for example, this only delays treatment.

*Like snowflakes, my Christmas memories gather and dance —
each beautiful, unique, and gone too soon.*
— Deborah Whipp

Kid-friendly Meatless Monday ideas

As the world turns its attention to more plant-based menu options, "Meatless Monday" has become a regular in the dinner rotation. But that can be surprisingly tricky when kids are involved. Sure, mac n' cheese is easy enough. But what else?

Thankfully, there's no shortage of ideas online, and Epicurious is among those with dozens of suggestions. Next time you need some kid-friendly vegetarian options, consider these:

- * Cauliflower-carrot cheesy tot: a variation on the tater tot that looks so similar, you just might fool 'em. Plus, they're cheesy. Plus, ketchup.

- * Fresh corn quiche: a store-bought pie shell makes it easy, and the custard with fresh corn kernels makes it delicious.

- * Flatbread caprese: cherry tomatoes and fresh mozzarella on a homemade or store-bought flatbread. Move over, kids.

- * Jackfruit tacos: what fruit? When ripe, jackfruit resembles a mango or banana-type flavor. Unripe, some have described it as asparagus-like; scores of vegans apparently liken the unripe version to pulled pork, according to Epicurious. Regardless, try it in a taco shell with salsa and guacamole.

- * Air fryer crispy herbed chickpeas: an addictively crunchy snack.

- * Ramen noodles with miso pesto: a cilantro-miso sauce provides plenty of interesting flavors. Plus, everything turns green.

- * Broccoli cheese soup: comfort food, with broccoli thrown in.

- * Baked pasta Norma: a Sicilian classic with fried eggplant, tomatoes, and basil tossed with short pasta.

- * Sweet potato fritters with poached eggs and avocado: the presentation of a foodie in a kid-friendly dish.

**Buy the Gift of a Home
Cleaning for a Friend, Get
50% Off Your Next Cleaning!**

\$150 Minimum Purchase

Schedule by December 31, 2019

**Mops & Buckets, LLC
786-350-1736
www.mopsnbuckets.com**