

THE RIVER FRONT MASTER

92 SW 3rd Street, Suite 100 Miami, Florida 33130

ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President	Shahab Karmely
Vice President	Daniel Hannah
Secretary	Marcela Lopez Bravo
Director	Jorge Blet

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Manager.....Rolando Cerit, CAM manager@riverfrontmaster.com Director of SecurityPaul Ampudia 786.453.3220 chiefofsecurity@riverfrontmaster.com Maintenance Sup...Benancio Collado maintenance@riverfrontmaster.com Maintenance Tech......Jorge Gomez

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Main786.453.3200 Security786.459.3220 Ext 1

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday9:00 am - 5:00 pm





SAFETY TIPS FOR HOLIDAY DECORATING

The holiday season can bring lots of joy into our homes, but it's also a time for potential safety hazards. The following tips from the National Safety Council will help your family have a safe holiday.

Exterior Decorations

- ✓ Do not overload circuits with too many lights. Only use lights that are rated for outdoor use.
- ✓ Make sure that any extension cords running power to exterior lights are shielded from moisture and protected from the weather.
- ✓ Secure all exterior decorations to prevent accidents caused by wind or heavy snow.

Interior Decorations

- ✓ Do not buy a dry Christmas tree. Remember to water your tree every day.
- ✓ When buying an artificial tree, choose one that has been labeled fire–resistant.
- ✓ Check lights for broken sockets, frayed or bare wires, as well as any loose connections.
- \checkmark Use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord.
- \checkmark Be sure to use indoor lights only indoors, and outdoor lights outdoors.
- \checkmark Turn off all lights on your tree and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.
- \checkmark Place the menorah and other candles out of the reach of children.
- ✓ Never leave burning candles unattended, and always supervise children when they're near candles.

Many Christmas plants, including mistletoe, holly berries, and amaryllis, can cause severe stomach problems if eaten. Keep them out of children's reach.

Wrap It Up!

Have you noticed that wrapping a gift can cost more than the gift itself? There are some ways to cut the cost of gift–wrapping. Try these tips this holiday season!

- □ Brown paper bags can be decorated with stamps, markers, or paint. Tie the top with yarn or raffia. Use white trash bags to wrap large or oddly shaped presents. Check your local newspaper office to see if they sell "ends" from the newsprint paper. You can decorate the paper in many different ways.
- □ Make the wrapping part of the present itself. Wrap a gift of clothing in a pretty scarf and tie it with a hair ribbon. A purse or small bag could hold another smaller gift. Use a tablecloth or towel to wrap up a gift. Check thrift shops for old tins, hatboxes, or fabric remnants that would make great gift containers. Baskets make great gift holders.



Use curling ribbon instead of other bows or ribbon. It is cheaper and can give a wrapped gift a very festive look. Make tags by cutting up holiday cards from the year before. Simply cut around an image from the front and write on the back. Punch a hole in one corner and thread curling ribbon through it. Tie it on your package for a nice touch.

Finally, buy your wrapping paper for next year at the after Christmas sales this year. You can save up to 75% off. Place it in a plastic bag to keep it clean and dry.



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Recipe for Latkes

- 4 medium potatoes
- 1 medium onion
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup matzah meal
- salt and black pepper to taste
- vegetable oil

Shred potatoes, onion and bell pepper into a large bowl. Press out all excess liquid. Add eggs and parsley and mix well. Add matzah meal gradually while mixing until the batter is doughy, not too dry. Add a few dashes of salt and black pepper. Heat about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of oil to a medium heat. Form the batter into thin patties about the size of your palm. Fry batter in oil. Flip when the bottom is golden brown. Place finished latkes on paper towels to drain. Eat hot with sour cream or applesauce. They reheat OK in a microwave, but not in an oven unless you cook them just right. If you'd like to try something a little different, add some bell peppers, carrots, celery, or other vegetables to the batter to make veggie latkes!



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