



Messenger's Merry Virtual Holiday Guide

How to make the most of the holidays this (socially distanced) season

For many of us, the holidays will look a little different this year. But, even if you're apart from some of your favorite people, you can still enjoy those special moments together. Whether it's cooking up a feast, winding down in front of a film, or testing your trivia knowledge with a quiz – try giving those festive traditions a virtual spin this year.

To help you make the most of the holidays, we've created a guide for hosting virtual celebrations on Messenger Rooms.

Room to celebrate

The great thing about a virtual holiday get-together?

There are no limits to the fun you can have with immersive backgrounds and AR filters. This year, people of all ages have embraced these types of features for some much needed escapism. And Messenger has a host of new features to make the holiday a little bit more magical...



Set the right mood

AI lighting and 360-degree immersive backgrounds can transport you and the family far, far away. Want to enjoy a drink beneath the Northern Lights? Now you can. And the stars even move with you as you pan around the room.



Theme your call

AR filters are guaranteed to put a smile on everyone's face. Turn your grandparents into Christmas Elves, or you can even opt to be Santa himself. And for any Scrooges out there, there's a Grumpy Yeti filter.



Bring the big-screen to you with Watch Together

A highlight of the holiday season is curling up on the sofa and watching shows or movies with your nearest and dearest. Messenger's recently launched Watch Together feature lets you enjoy TV shows, movies, music videos, and even Facebook Watch originals, all together. Why not tune into the Topsy Bartender and stir up a festive cocktail? Or, for the more sentimental squads, curl up and shed a tear together at Humans of New York: The Series. You can even watch the latest seasonal recipe videos and cook along with your friends and family - together. Magic.



Share the love with Screen Sharing

Whether trying to explain to your grandparents where the mute button is, or scrolling through potential gift options with friends, Screen Share always comes handy. If you're hosting a festive get-together, why not use Screen Share to reminisce through photos, host a quiz or even create your own 2020 family awards ceremony!

Carry on traditions, even when you're apart



Tis' the seasoning

Share your traditional holiday recipes with the family before the big day. Cook your festive feast together and see who comes out on top!



Joy to the world

Light the candles, search for carol singers and watch with your family. Maybe even sing along? AI filters will help set the mood... just remember to mute yourself if singing isn't your forte!



Look the part

Dig out a waist-up costume to truly embody the Christmas spirit - a Santa hat or elf ears will do nicely! If you don't have any of these to hand, try one of Rooms' cool filters...



Get crafty

Use your festive Room to get those creative juices flowing. Challenge your friends and family to create a Christmas wreath, customised crackers, or Hanukkah Crochet Star Garland and show off your results on camera.



The Etiquette of Virtual Get-togethers



About Myka Meier

Myka Meier is a two times best selling author, entrepreneur and etiquette expert. She is the founder of Beaumont Etiquette, a New York based etiquette company and the co-founder of The Plaza Hotel Finishing Program.

A dual British-American citizen, Myka was trained in London under a former member of The Royal Household of Her Majesty the Queen, and also attended some of the world's most prestigious finishing schools throughout Europe.

1 Testing, testing

It's always best to test your Wi-Fi before the call to avoid any issues or tardiness before everyone arrives. It's also worth joining the call slightly earlier so you can test different features and ensure your Messenger Rooms link works.

If you are hosting, I would always recommend doing a test run with anyone who has never joined a Rooms call ahead of time to prevent last-minute hiccups.

2 The host with the most

When hosting a call, you get the biggest responsibility of ensuring everyone feels prepared and included. But don't worry, all you really need to do is make sure everyone receives all relevant details: a Rooms link, when you will kick off and wrap up, the theme of the call (if there is one) and whether any props are needed for festive activities.

During the call, you should try and give everyone the chance to join in. Asking a specific question or giving someone a shout out might be a good way to engage them if they are quieter than usual.

You may get everyone involved by pre-organizing a group holiday game - such as a Secret Santa party, a white elephant gift exchange, or have everyone vote on the best holiday sweater, background, or holiday spirit award! Remember, you also have a few tricks to use as the host. You can mute everyone and give someone the opportunity to give a toast.

3 Master online conversations

I would always recommend muting your microphone unless you are speaking to show respect to the other people on your call. Background noise or hearing someone else speak can be distracting.

Just like an in-person conversation, wait your turn to chime in so everyone can be heard!

4 Pitching in politely

If you need to interrupt someone during a call for some reason, avoid blurting out what you want to say and instead wait until there is a natural pause in the conversation. You could say something like "I wanted to add in..."

But if you can't find a good time to jump in, I recommend you revert to simply saying "Excuse me..." and then add in what you wish to say. Now, if you see the oven smoking or the Christmas tree falling over, there are always exceptions!

5 Beware of oversharing

Be sure to check that your background doesn't have anything private you don't want people to see.

Also, be wary of oversharing when you are sharing your screen - whether you are showing memories from your camera roll or holiday shopping together online. Make sure you close or hide any private documents, emails, browser bookmarks or websites on your device before sharing your screen.

6 Conducting the camera

If you don't want to be on camera during a call, let the host or group know in advance. When you're hosting, make sure to tell your guests ahead of the call if they are required to be on camera.

You may look great in your tartan sweater but Grandma won't want to see your snowman boxers!

7 Managing the mic

Avoid awkward oversharing by ensuring the mute button is on if you wish to say something in private to someone who's physically in the room with you. I always double-check by testing this to make sure nobody can hear me. If someone overhears your comment about their ugly holiday sweater...when it wasn't meant to be an ugly sweater... you could truly hurt their feelings and this above all, is what you want to avoid!

Similarly - when leaving a call, I would check to make sure you have hung up and both the microphone and camera are off before rushing off to discuss any details from the call.