

## **Celebrating the Holidays Alone**

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According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 26 million Americans are separated or divorced, and 60 million have never married. Also, many people are separated from their families during the holidays.

Being alone isn't a negative unless you choose to see it that way. In fact, many people with spouses or partners may be envious of your independence.

To make your holidays alone memorable and rewarding:

**1. Volunteer.**

Homeless shelters, food banks, soup kitchens, and senior centers often have special meals around the holidays, and they can usually use some extra hands.

**2. Hit the road.**

Stock up some of your favorite food, grab the camera, fill up the gas tank, and go.

**3. Create your own rituals.**

- Celebrate thankfulness by writing letters to the ones you love.
- Rid yourself of any bad memories from the past year by burning physical objects that represent bad memories.
- Set the stage for positive events in the next year by writing in a journal.

**4. Go outside.**

- Pack a beautiful meal, and venture out of your home.
- Go someplace new, or see someplace old in a new way.
- Take your time, pay attention to sounds, take in your surroundings, and breathe.

**5. Consider whether to cook or not to cook.**

- If you enjoy cooking, make your favorite holiday treats.
- If cooking is not your idea of relaxation, get meals to go.

**6. Get in touch with yourself.**

- Do some journal writing.
- Spend some time thinking and recording your goals and aspirations as you enter the new year.

**7. Get in touch with others.**

Write letters or postcards and call people you love or have lost touch with.

**8. Plan a relaxing evening of self-indulgence.**

- Take a bubble bath.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Order a take-out dinner.
- Curl up with a good book.
- Watch your favorite movie.

**9. Stop procrastinating.**

- Take on a project you have been meaning to do.
- Finish a photo album.
- Redecorate your bedroom.
- Organize your recipes.
- Enjoy a feeling of satisfaction when the project is complete.

**10. Do something totally uncharacteristic.**

- Find a group to go caroling with.
- Explore a neighborhood you never frequent.
- Meditate.
- Celebrate your individuality.