

the vote. the stay-at-home dad. the push-up bra. **the Lean Cuisine® pizza.**



HOLIDAY DINNERS special section

SOUTHERN COOKS SHARE THEIR SECRETS

Let these great tips help you breeze through the season.

Because this is a busy time for many, we've asked our editors and faithful readers, chefs and home cooks alike to share their tips for making the holidays enjoyable.

The Home Cook

Several weeks in advance, Marie Davis of Charlotte prepares two grocery lists—one of nonperishables items to purchase ahead of time and another of perishables to buy just a few days before the holiday.

Marie also spends some time shopping for unique things to include in personalized gift baskets. "Gift baskets are inexpensive, thought-

ful, and full of fresh ingredients."

Her favorite baskets to assemble are a bread lover's basket (bread, starter, jams, flavored butters) and a spaghetti dinner basket (dried pasta, homemade sauce, a large wedge of Parmesan, and a cheese grater). For teachers' gifts, Marie suggests giving gift baskets of homemade apple jelly. The possibilities are endless—just tailor the gifts to the recipient's taste.

For tree-decorating parties, Marie makes easy homemade soups such as oyster stew or hearty winter vegetable soup, fresh bread, and fruit salad. Marie also likes to make iced coffee in advance, freeze it, and then serve



PHOTOGRAPH: TINA CORNETT / STYLING: CINDY MANNING BARR

Set up cookie-decorating tables at holiday parties for guests of all ages to enjoy.