

Counting Down to the Festivities



This month's makes are three different styles of advent calendar, November being a good time to get ahead and finish in time for the start of the festive countdown. The word advent comes from the Latin *adventus* meaning coming toward, the history and religious roots can be traced to the late 19th century, of German origin, used to mark off the days to Christmas. Now a festive staple for both adults and children with many variations, styles and themes available each year on differing budgets. Creating your own unique and personalised version to display each year will not only add to existing family festive traditions but you know you'll like the small gift each day.

Materials:

Wooden drawer advent

- Wooden advent calendar, wooden advent numbers
- Paints/paint pens, paintbrush/sponge, decorative craft papers, PVA glue
- Wooden standing arch, wooden craft embellishments, brush trees, LED candles

Party bag advent

- Plain small party bags, decorative craft papers/card, PVA glue, advent numbers, festive embellishments, ribbon

Bauble advent

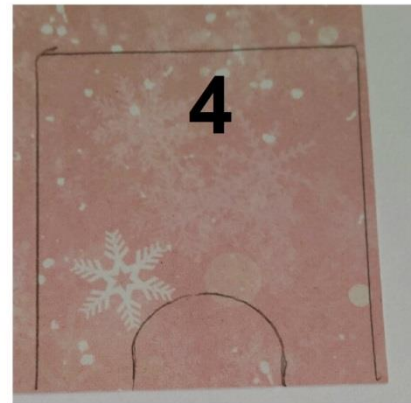
- 6cm fillable baubles, transparent nylon thread
- Faux snow, peel off numbers, festive stickers

Instructions:

Wooden drawer advent

The images below show 'before and after', decorated in a Nordic Winter style using red/white/green paints and matching coloured snowflake papers. The removable back is clipped in much like a photo frame to be removed for easier decoration and personalisation.

Something to be aware of if the drawers are already a tight fit (as in my case) adding too many paint layers will inhibit fitting the drawers back in the carcass casing (fortunately I had a solution). The red/green paint covered well with just one coat but white needed more.



Remove the drawers and removable back from the carcass. Paint the carcass surfaces that will be seen, not inside the drawer crevices as these will be hidden with a drawer or covered with craft paper. The carcass back was covered with paper with no need to paint.

Paint the inside and outside of the drawers. When fully dry, draw round the drawer front onto patterned paper and trim. I did this each time for each individual drawer I intended to cover with paper to make sure of the fit (see 3/4). Adhere to the drawer front with PVA glue. As you can see on the main image (and on 2) I left some drawers just painted as I thought covering every drawer front with patterned paper would be too much. Fit the drawers back in the carcass to decide on number order. Despite best efforts there were five that would not fit back in, because of the centre opening I overcame that by gluing the drawers on the ledge. Glue the wooden numbers onto the drawer fronts.

The empty crevices I covered with patterned paper (see 5/6/7/8), but these could be painted inside instead. Two were filled with LED tea lights, the remaining three had added wintry scenes ensconced with mini brush trees with the fronts slightly obscured with painted/glued together wooden craft embellishment coverings (see 9/10).

A finishing touch was adding a wooden decorated and painted festive archway to cover the five drawers on the ledge to help disguise the contents inside, although not necessary as they could be wrapped with tissue paper.

I went all out with this advent as the festive season is a time for indulgence (within your budget). Even so, this came in well under half price of what you would pay for a ready-made version. Now it waits to be filled with whatever little surprises I choose.

Party bag advent

Decorate small party bags with pretty papers, advent numbers and festive embellishments. Another idea that can be used each year and filled with so many things – chocolate orange, alcoholic miniatures and mixer, cosmetics, miniature bubble bath and other treats. This could be adapted into a treasure hunt with clues where to find the bags each day, or a self-care advent filled with pampering and mindful gifts to help with the stresses leading up to the big day.



Bauble advent

Fillable baubles have been decorated with peel off numbers, other festive stickers, and faux snow inside to hide an advent gift (or wrap in tissue with no need for snow). When opening make sure it is done over something to collect the snow to go back inside. Transparent thread has been used to hang these up. Without a gift inside these would look lovely just as baubles on the tree. In the main image they have been added to a clear box wrapped with ribbon to look like a parcel which can be used as festive decoration. Or use for a special gift idea for someone to include small treasures in each bauble to open up over 25 days.



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