

The Sampler

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Resetting Your Holiday Expectations

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While the holidays are still magical for children and some adults truly embrace the spirit of the season, most people find the holiday season just adds stress to their already busy life routine. Common concerns include worry about finding and paying for gifts (especially with low inventory and rising costs for many items), finding time for all the extra festive activities, additional physical or mental health

concerns due to the pandemic, or just trying to seem happy for the next month or two when they really just feel overwhelmed and tired. For the record, if that is how you feel, you are not a Scrooge. In fact, you are very normal and very much in the majority. In fact, research suggests that the *pressure to be happy* can actually lead to sadness and even depression during the holidays.

With this in mind, take the time to reset the holiday expectations meter for yourself and your family. Below are some tips to creating a happier holiday.

1. **Don't idealize the holidays.** Real life is not a Norman Rockwell painting. The more you try to live up to that kind of expectation, the more frustrated,

disappointed and unhappy you are likely to be with yourself and others.

2. **Accept people for who they are.** Before being with family and friends this season, take a few moments and acknowledge what you wish they were like and how you would like them to act.

Now, let that image go. Expecting others to be anything but themselves is unrealistic and will mostly likely increase stress.

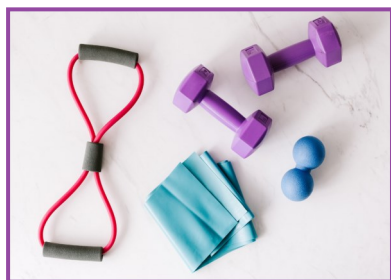
3. **Refresh traditions.** Traditions are wonderful ways to create memories and bring families close together, but traditions also often need to change over time. Take time to discuss your favorite traditions, and then plan only those traditions that best fit your current life circumstances and bring you joy. Updating a tradition may be the perfect thing just now!

4. **Set boundaries.** Decide as a family how you will spend your time



and money this holiday season. Don't forget to schedule in some "down time" so you don't get overburdened with activities. Once limits have been set, you might discover that holiday activities and time with extended family become much more enjoyable.

5. Take care of yourself. It's easy to get out of the habit of exercising and eating healthy and getting enough sleep during the holiday season. Don't take the season off from your workout routine during the holidays. Exercising regularly not only helps you burn the excess calories you consume from holiday feasting, it's also a great way to relieve stress and improve self-esteem. Active activities involving the whole family can also be a great tradition. In addition to exercise, be sure to get enough sleep, eat healthy, and take time to relax and rejuvenate so you can stay healthy and keep your spirits high.



6. Focus on the moment. Even after setting boundaries, it can be easy to get overwhelmed. Slow down and enjoy where you are in that moment. If you feel tense, take a deep breath and take in what you are experiencing with all of your senses. Take a mental snapshot to create memories for the future. Remember, even the frustrating moments might make you laugh in the future.

7. Take time to reflect and focus on the positive. Take some time to think about all of the positive things that have happened in the past year. Reflect on accomplishments, goals you or your family members have achieved or positive changes that have been made – no matter how small. Capture some of these reflections in a journal so you can remember them for years to come. If you want to go above and beyond (no pressure!), send a brief email or letter to share your reflections with loved ones.

There's an old saying that goes something like this, "If you keep your expectations low, you'll accomplish two things. First, you won't be disappointed if things don't go a certain way; and two,

you may find yourself pleasantly surprised." Here's to being pleasantly surprised. Happy holidays! ~

~Naomi Brower

Thanksgiving Leftover Ideas

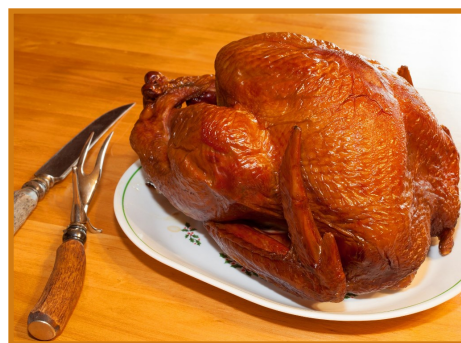
You always have leftovers after Thanksgiving. Here are a few idea's on how to use them.

Deep-Dish Turkey Pot Pie

1 ⅔ cups hot water
1 package (6 oz.) stuffing mix for turkey or chicken
3 cups chopped, cooked turkey
1 package (10 oz.) frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
1 jar (12 oz.) turkey gravy

Add water to stuffing mix; stir just until moistened. Set aside. Place turkey and vegetables in a 1-quart casserole dish. Pour gravy over turkey mixture; stir gently, then top with prepared stuffing. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes or until heated through.

Reference: kraftfoods.com



Potato Cakes

4 cups mashed potatoes
1 small onion, minced
1 egg, beaten

Combine potatoes, onion and egg. Mix well; pat into 3-inch cakes and pan-fry over medium heat for 5 minutes on each side. Serve hot. Can be topped with leftover gravy too.

Family and Consumer Science Events

Virtual Home Buyer Education Classes

USU Extension Office
1181 No. Fairgrounds Dr., Ogden

♦ Saturday, Nov. 13, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

For your safety, due to COVID this class will be taught virtually. You will receive a link to attend one day before the event. You will also need to fill out paperwork and send it in before and after the class.

These classes will help prepare you for the home buying process. Topics that will be covered are: how much can you afford, mortgage loans, credit, shopping for a home, what to expect at closing and much more. Cost is \$25 per household for certificate and free if you only want education. Call 801-399-8207 to register.



Save the Date . . .



Utah Marriage Celebration - Online

In order to keep you safe during the continued uncertainty around COVID, we have made the difficult decision to hold the Marriage Celebration virtually again in 2022. While we know this changes the nature of the event, it's not all bad news! The virtual format creates an opportunity for us to bring you more nationally-recognized speakers, fresh class topics, and shorter "byte-sized" classes. You aren't going to want to miss it! Live workshops will be streamed on **February 11th** from 6:00-9:30 p.m. with bonus pre-recorded workshops available starting at 4pm. Tickets will be going on sale in December, for only \$10/couple through January 31.

Save the date! Additional details coming soon.



*From all of us at the
Extension office
we want to wish you a
Merry Christmas
and A Happy New
Year!*

The Most Meaningful Christmas Gifts

I subscribe to our local daily newspaper and right beneath the crossword puzzle (which I try to complete daily) is the long-time column known as “Dear Abby”. While many of the questions posted are related to dealing with human frailties and requests to receive advice of how to “fix” problems, occasionally there is a post that catches my eye.


Recently, there was a post by grandparents regarding their granddaughter sending a Christmas gift last year they referred to as “a gift of a lifetime” which they have enjoyed all year long. “What was the gift and how much did it cost?” might be going through your mind as it did mine. As I do not have permission to quote the message, I’ll summarize it as best I can:

The gift was wrapped up in a beautiful wrapped box tied up with a pretty bow and placed beneath the Christmas tree with all the other presents. What was inside the box was a gift of memories written on 12 separate cards sealed in envelopes to be opened on the first day of each month identified on the envelope. The grandparents mention the anticipation of what each new memory might be.



Inside each envelope were experiences long forgotten or experiences the grandparents hadn’t realized had made such an impact on their granddaughter’s life. The grandparents advocated for also turning the gift idea around for grandparents to send out to grandchildren sharing experiences from their perspective.

The investment of sharing a meaningful thought, the expense of taking time to share a hand-written sentiment and the reward of increased love and closeness will be long-lasting and treasured always by grandparents who really don’t need “things” for Christmas.

Summarized from article printed in: Dear Abby, THESPECTRUM.COM, Tuesday, December 1, 2020, (page 3B). 

~Kathy Riggs USU Extension Professor

Pumpkin Cream Cheese Spread

- 1 package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup canned pumpkin
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¾ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

In a medium mixing bowl, beat all ingredients with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hours or up to 24 hours. Great on pear and apple slices. Yield: 1½ cups.

Holiday Cheese Ball

- 1 package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 3 oz. Swiss cheese
- Few drops of lemon juice
- 3 green onions
- 3 tablespoons crushed pineapple, drained
- Pecans, chopped

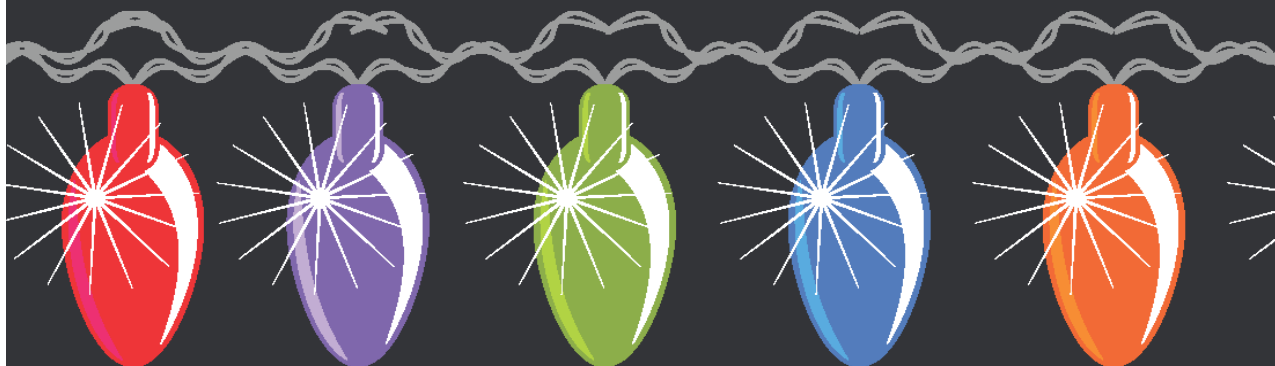
Place cheeses in bowl and process until well creamed. Add lemon juice and onions; process in. Add pineapple and pulse a couple of times. Remove from bowl and shape into a ball. Chill until firm. Roll in nuts.

Note: If you do not have a food processor, grate the Swiss cheese and allow both the Swiss and cream cheese to come to room temperature. Work the two cheeses together with a mixer or fork. Chop onions very fine and stir in with pineapple. Chill until firm and roll into nuts.

Cinnamon Sugar Almonds

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| ½ cup brown sugar, | 1 large egg white |
| lightly packed | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| ½ cup sugar | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 1 tablespoon cinnamon | 3 cups almonds |

Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large bowl, mix together brown sugar, sugar, cinnamon and salt until well combined. In another bowl, whisk together the egg white and vanilla until frothy. Add almonds to bowl of egg whites; toss until the nuts are completely coated. Next pour the coated nuts into bowl with the cinnamon sugar mixture and toss until they are well coated. Pour nuts on baking sheet and spread out evenly. Bake at 250° for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Allow nuts to cool completely on baking sheet. Store in airtight container.



HOLIDAY HACKS FOR THE PANICKED PROCRASTINATOR

LEARN HOW TO CURB PANIC BUYING
& TURN PROCRASTINATION INTO
PRODUCTIVE SPENDING.



DECEMBER 2, 2021
1:00 PM | LIVE PANEL DISCUSSION
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Create Better Health News Corner

CREATE SNAP-ED
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Create Better Health for the Holidays

Tis the season! Mashed potatoes and gravy. Roasts, turkey, ham, and beef. Casseroles, cookies, and pie! Food plays a huge part in our holiday festivities, and why shouldn't it? What better way to gather friends and family than to share a meal together?

We hope you get to enjoy all of your favorite holiday foods to the fullest. Here are our healthy tips that will help you maximize your health at minimal cost to your favorite holiday dishes.

Make smart beverage choices. Did you know the average person drinks 400 calories a day? That is 20% of a standard 2,000 calorie diet. Many of these drinks offer you absolutely no nutritional value.

Choosing low-calorie or nutrient dense drinks such as water, low-fat milk, or 100% fruit juice can reduce the number of calories you drink and increase the nutrients you provide to your body at the same time.

Listen to your body and allow yourself to enjoy your favorite holiday foods without guilt or shame. Wanting a cookie does not make you a bad person. There is room for all kinds of food in a healthy balanced diet. Focus on nutrient dense foods by consuming whole fruits, a variety of vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy. The more you practice these principles, the better your favorite snacks and treats will fit into your diet.

If you do feel like you gorged yourself a bit after a particularly delicious meal, don't feel like you need to make up for it by starving yourself the next day. Just get back to eating whole fruits, a variety of vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy. Avoid an "all or nothing" mindset and focus on having a flexible mindset when it comes to having a

healthy balanced diet. Overeating one night is not as big of a problem as having inconsistent eating habits and an unhealthy relationship with food.

These principles can help you get the most of out your favorite holiday foods this year. No matter how you choose to celebrate, remember there is room for your favorite foods as part of a healthy holiday meal. Make room for your favorite holiday foods by making intentional decisions about the kind of beverages you choose to consume and enjoy nutrient dense foods. 🍷

~Kayla Lane

Apple Cranberry Crisp

5 cups apples, thinly sliced
and peeled
1 cup dried cranberries
1 teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon

Topping:

⅓ cup oats
2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons whole-wheat flour
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon butter, melted



For filling: In a 2-quart baking dish, combine apples and cranberries. In a small bowl, stir together sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle over fruit mixture in baking dish; toss to coat.

For topping: In a small bowl, combine oats, brown sugar, flour and cinnamon. Using a fork, stir in butter until crumbly. Sprinkle oat mixture evenly over apple mixture. Bake at 375° for 35-40 minutes or until apples are tender. Serve warm. Yield: 6 servings

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact 1.800.221.5689 or visit online at <http://fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/coalition/map.htm>. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture's policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.