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Mix It Up

to Expand Your Gift-giving Dollar With Food Mixes in a Jar

When the holiday season rolls around, many family budgets become strained. With a long list of family and friends, finding enough money to go around may be challenging. To help reduce the stress of your next holiday season, try making gifts instead of purchasing them. Consider these fun and economical gift ideas:

- ✓ Create gift baskets. For the family member who loves movies, make a “night-in” basket. Get a large bowl for popcorn to use as the container. Add packaged popcorn and a coupon for a free movie rental. Gardening, sports or any other themed baskets also work.
- ✓ For parents with young children, provide a homemade coupon good for free baby-sitting. Other ideas include coupons for helping walk the dog, painting or cleaning.
- ✓ Create a recipe booklet with favorite holiday recipes. Copy the recipes onto festive recipe cards, punch a hole in the corner of the cards and tie them together with a red ribbon. Holiday photo albums also can be used to hold recipes.
- ✓ Fill a holiday mug with packets of flavored tea, hot cocoa or coffee for those who enjoy warm beverages. Or tie a packet of soup mix to a large wooden spoon. Include a bowl and package of biscuit mix for a complete gift.
- ✓ If you are computer savvy, create homemade calendars for family members. These could include highlighted birthday and anniversary dates. Try adding family photos for a personal touch.
- ✓ Repurpose old tins, filling them with cookies, muffins or other holiday goodies. A gift like this will be a delight to anybody who has little time for baking.
- ✓ Make homemade mixes in a jar. Mixes for soups and cookies are popular gift items that are fairly inexpensive to make. The gift recipient will appreciate the attractive and thoughtful gift and also will value the convenience.

Key to Abbreviations

tsp. = teaspoon	g = grams
Tbsp. = tablespoon	qt. = quart
c. = cup	mg = milligrams
oz. = ounce	lb. = pound

Try any of these four tasty and inexpensive recipes during this holiday season. You can decorate the jar with fabric and a ribbon. Either photocopy and cut out the provided recipes or hand-print each recipe on a card and attach it to the jar.

Country Chili Mix

1 lb. kidney beans
3 Tbsp. chili powder
2 Tbsp. dehydrated onions
1 Tbsp. garlic salt
1 tsp. oregano
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cayenne pepper (optional)

* To reduce sodium, substitute garlic powder for some of the garlic salt.

Pour the kidney beans into a clean quart-sized jar. In a small bowl, mix the remaining ingredients. Pour mixture into a clear sandwich bag and place it on top of the beans. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate and attach a copy of the recipe card.

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EXTENSION

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For more information on this and other topics, see www.ndsu.edu/extension

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Homemade Cornbread Mix

- 1 c. flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. dry milk powder
- 1 c. plus 2 Tbsp. cornmeal

In a large bowl, mix all the ingredients. Place the mixture in a clean quart-sized jar. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate it and attach a copy of the recipe card.

Cranberry-Oatmeal Cookie Mix

- 1 c. plus 2 Tbsp. flour
- 1 c. rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. white sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. white chocolate chips

Layer the ingredients in a clean, quart-sized jar. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate it and attach a copy of the recipe card.

Friendship Soup Mix

- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. dry split peas
- 2 Tbsp. beef bouillon granules
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. pearl barley
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. dry lentils
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. dry, minced onions
- 2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. rice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. macaroni noodles

In a clean, quart-sized jar, layer all the ingredients except the macaroni. Place the macaroni in a sandwich bag and place it on top of the other ingredients. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate it and attach a copy of the recipe card.

▼ Recipe Cards – you may photocopy the recipes and cut them apart. To attach a card, punch a hole in the flower in the upper right.

Country Chili

- 1 container Country Chili Mix
- Additional ingredients: 10 c. water (for soaking beans)
1 (8-oz.) can reduced-sodium tomato sauce
1 (24-oz.) can diced tomatoes
1 lb. ground beef or turkey
6 c. water (for cooking beans)

Remove bag of seasoning from jar and rinse beans. In a stockpot, bring 10 cups of water to a boil. Add beans and return to a boil; let boil two to three minutes. Cover and set aside at room temperature for one hour. Drain and rinse the beans.

Fill a pot with 6 cups of water and add the beans. Cook beans until soft, about one hour; simmer gently with lid tilted. Brown meat; drain and add to the beans with tomatoes and sauce. Add in seasonings, stir and simmer, covered, for one hour. Add a little more water if needed to thin the broth. For best flavor, use mix within one year.

Makes eight servings. Each serving (made with lean beef) has 350 calories, 7 g fat, 41 g carbohydrate, 17 g fiber and 730 milligrams sodium.

Homemade Cornbread

- 1 container Homemade Cornbread Mix
- Additional ingredients: 1 egg
1 c. water
2 Tbsp. oil

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Pour dry mix into a large bowl. In a second bowl, combine egg, water and oil. Add liquid ingredients to dry ingredients. Stir well. Pour into a greased baking pan and bake for 20 to 25 minutes until the top is golden brown. For best flavor, use this mix within nine months.

Makes 10 servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 4 g fat, 25 g carbohydrate and 330 mg sodium.

Cranberry Oatmeal Cookies

- 1 container Cranberry Oatmeal Cookie Mix
- Additional ingredients: $\frac{1}{2}$ c. butter
1 tsp. vanilla
1 egg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, mix butter, vanilla and egg together until smooth. Add cookie mix and mix well. Place by spoonfuls onto a greased cookie sheet and bake for eight to 10 minutes until golden brown. For best flavor, use this mix within nine months.

Makes 28 cookies. Each serving has 100 calories, 4.5 g fat, 13 g carbohydrate and 70 mg sodium.

Friendship Soup

- 1 container Friendship Soup Mix
- Additional ingredients: 1 lb. lean ground beef or turkey
3 qt. water
1 (28-oz.) can diced tomatoes

Brown meat and drain. Place in a large pot and add the water and tomatoes. Add soup mix except macaroni. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for one hour. Add macaroni and continue cooking for another 10 to 15 minutes (until macaroni is done). For best flavor, use this mix within one year.

Note: To avoid overcooked pasta in leftovers, add the appropriate amount of macaroni to the portion being served.

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 4 g fat, 12 g carbohydrate and 390 mg sodium.