

# SEASONAL SUGGESTIONS

## WINTER 2000

Food for Fun and Fitness - December 2000

**Holiday Greetings!** *Once again we have worked together to suggest ideas that will contribute to a memorable holiday season for you, your family and friends. There are food, snack, gift and activity suggestions. As always, we encourage you to have adults actively involved in the lives of children.* Jan Temple and Janet Martin

### Shake Up Your Snacks – PICK A BETTER SNACK

Be sure to try the Featured Produce items for December. There are suggestions for using broccoli, dried figs, kiwi and star fruit (carambola) for snacks. Within this letter you will find that we have a few additional ideas. You can get the December Pick A Better Snack information by contacting the Iowa State University Extension Office nearest you OR get it from the web at: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/food/>

### GIFTS FROM THE KITCHEN

Last January we had information about making Casserole Sauce Mix. It is a low fat (can also be made low sodium) alternative to canned creamed soups. We also used it for making a quick hearty soup. A thoughtful gift for someone special may be decorative jar of the mix along with the directions for using. Here's the recipe:

**CASSEROLE SAUCE MIX** (Makes 9 'cans' of soup)  
*Modify the herbs to suit your personal preference.*

- 2 cups instant nonfat dry milk crystals
- ¾ cup cornstarch
- ¼ cup reduced sodium chicken bouillon
- 2 tablespoons dried onion flakes
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ½ teaspoon basil, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon pepper



Combine all ingredients and store in airtight container.

To use as a substitute for one can condensed soup, mix 1/3-cup dry mix and 1 ¼ cups water in saucepan. Cook and stir until thickened.

### G.O.R.P. IN A JAR

*Food gifts in a jar seem pretty popular. Both the young and old on your gift list may like receiving this GORP that requires no preparation by the recipient.*

In a quart jar, layer the following items:

- ¾ cup corn and rice cereal squares
- ¼ cup raisins
- ¾ cup honey graham cereal
- ¼ cup mini marshmallows
- ¾ cup toasted oat cereal
- ¼ cup candy coated chocolate pieces
- ¾ cup miniature pretzels
- ¼ cup peanuts



Put a colorful lid on the jar and you're ready!

### HOLIDAY DIPS AND SPREADS

*Presentation can make an ordinary food become extraordinary. Following are several examples.*

#### TACO DIP STAR

*A colorful and hearty hors d'oeuvre served to be quite festive.*

- 1 15 oz. can (about 2 cups) fat-free refried beans
- 1 cup picante sauce
- 1 cup (4 oz.) reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 medium tomato chopped
- 1 can (4 ½ oz.) chopped black olives
- 1/3 cup chopped green onions
- Baked tortilla chips.



Combine beans and picante sauce.

Spread evenly into a glass pie plate. Sprinkle cheese over top and microwave until hot—about 2 minutes depending on wattage of oven. Sprinkle tomato on top in the shape of a star. Outline the star with the olives and green onions. Serve with baked tortilla chips.

#### HOLIDAY BURGER AND FRIES

*If holiday shopping leaves you rushed at mealtime, here's an idea for making even a carryout meal say, "You're Special."*

Use green catsup (available in most grocery stores) to draw a pine tree on the dinner plate. Use red catsup to make ornaments and a slice of star fruit or yellow mustard to be the star on top of the tree.

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## CRYSTAL BALL HOLIDAY SPREAD

*This simple recipe has been a tradition with my family for years, but we always garnished it with paprika and pecans. Using red peppers and olives gives it a whole new identity.*

8 oz. reduced fat cream cheese  
½ cup butter (no substitutions)  
¼ teaspoon garlic powder  
Sweet red pepper  
Black olives, sliced



Cream together cheese, butter and garlic. Refrigerate several hours or overnight. Form into a ball shape. Use metal cookie cutters to cut star shapes from red pepper. Put stars and olive slices all over the cheese ball. Serve with Melba rounds or other low-fat crackers.

*Adapted from Holiday Food Fun, Publications International, Ltd., 1993*

## HOLIDAY SNACKS AND TREATS

*Get the kids to help you make these festive treats.*

### RED AND GREEN ORNAMENTS (Makes 12)

*Unsweetened applesauce adds a texture to this jigglers® variation*

1-4 serving size sugar free raspberry gelatin  
1-4 serving size sugar free lime gelatin  
1-cup water, divided  
2-cups unsweetened applesauce, divided  
Non-dairy whipped topping  
6 red and 6 green maraschino cherries



In a bowl, dissolve raspberry gelatin in ½ cup boiling water. Stir in 1-cup applesauce. Pour into 6 muffin cups (about 1/3 cup each) that have been coated with nonstick cooking spray. Repeat, filling six more cups with lime gelatin. Refrigerate for 4 hours or until firm. Loosen gelatin around the edges with a sharp knife; invert onto waxed paper and then transfer to serving plate. Use a plastic bag with a hole snipped from the corner as a pastry bag to pipe topping on each ornament. Add cherries. *Adapted from Taste of Home, Nov/Dec 1999.*

### STAR FRUIT TREES

Make each person their own 'tree' using a thick slice of kiwi fruit as the trunk, a thick slice of orange for the bottom of the tree, a thick slice of apple for the middle to the tree, and half a kiwi fruit as the top of the tree. For a star on top, use either a piece of cheese cut with a star shaped cookie cutter, or a slice of star fruit – carambola.

### LAYERS OF RED AND GREEN

For a colorful, quick and nutritious snack or dessert, alternate layers of vanilla yogurt, chunks of kiwi and frozen strawberries or raspberries. Garnish with a slice of star fruit.

## FAMILY GATHERING IDEAS

*Before the family comes to your home for the holidays, find a couple of "corners" to set up these youth/adult activities.*



Tape short segments of holiday music, put the tape in a recorder, and have a guessing contest.

At a card table, put a box of "non-messy" art supplies (stickers, paper, colored pencils, washable markers, scissors that cut in interesting patterns, etc.) and encourage the children to create place cards, decorations for the table, paper airplanes, or a bookmark for each person. Check the web site ([www.janbrett.com](http://www.janbrett.com)) for printable bookmarks and ideas related to her books.

Set up a 100-1000 piece jigsaw holiday puzzle; adults and youth will both be attracted to the puzzle.

On a table, put 2-3 age appropriate board or card games. Set one up and you'll see youth and adults start playing.

Put a basket of holiday books by a cozy chair, and encourage older children to read to younger ones.

On a poster board display "old" family photos; put a number by each and ask the family to guess the name of the person in the photo.

At a computer, check out the website ([www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com)); you can make a word search with the names of each person in the family. Or for holiday word searches or puzzles go to [www.kidsdomain.com](http://www.kidsdomain.com); click on kids, then holiday, then printable activities.

After a family meal, head outdoors and encourage the adults to pull the sleds or have everyone write his/her name in the snow!



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