

## Extension

### December 2014 Newsletter

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## Extend Your Gift-giving With Food Mixes in a Jar

Anne Zander, CSU Extension Boulder County, FCS Agent

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:



### Homemade mixes in a jar

Mixes for soups and cookies are popular gift items that are fairly inexpensive to make. Preparing homemade gifts of food allows you to control the final product, the nutritional value, and the quality and quantity of the ingredients. You can limit fat, sodium, sugar, and additives in your gift jars. The person that receives your gift will appreciate the attractive and thoughtful gift and will also value the convenience of the tasty item.

Try any of these three tasty and inexpensive recipes. You can decorate the jar with fabric and a ribbon. Copy the recipe directions on a card and attach it to the jar.

### Let's Talk

Bringing parents and children together to prepare nutritious food is one of the most effective ways of promoting healthy eating. The Family Matters monthly topics have been selected to encourage habits of healthy eating and physical activity so that they become part of your family's lifestyle. Your children have experienced the smells, color, and physical characteristics of a variety of foods. Continue to keep your child involved in the decision-making and being able to make their own choices about what's for dinner. Additionally, seeing them beam with pride because of being responsible for the food being served and getting complimented can and will reinforce healthy eating habits. Final thought .....create some food gifts in a jar with your children from the shopping, measuring the ingredients into the jars, sharing the meal.....and passing on the connection.



## Creating the Mixes

### Country Chili Mix

1 lb. kidney beans  
3 Tbsp. chili powder  
2 Tbsp. dehydrated onions  
1 Tbsp. garlic salt  
1 tsp. oregano  
¾ tsp. salt \*  
¼ 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.

### Homemade Cornbread Mix

1 c. flour  
¾ tsp. salt  
¼ c. sugar  
2 tsp. baking powder  
½ tsp. baking soda  
½ 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  
½ tsp. baking soda  
½ tsp. salt  
¼ c. brown sugar  
¼ c. white sugar  
½ c. dried cranberries  
½ 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.

**Resource:** *Mix It Up to Expand Your Gift-giving Dollar with Food Mixes in a Jar* -

*Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist NDSU, and Kendra Otto, Program Assistant.*

**Photographs:** *Alice Henneman, registered dietitian and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator*

## Preparation Directions for Mixes in a Jar

### Country Chili Directions

- 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 has 240 calories, 6 g fat, 21 g carbohydrate and 290 mg sodium.

### Homemade Cornbread Directions

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

Preheat oven to 425 °F. 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 an 8- by 8-inch 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 Directions

- 1 container Cranberry Oatmeal Cookie Mix
- Additional ingredients: ½ c. butter  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 egg

Preheat oven to 350 °F. 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.