



## Cooperative Extension Service

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### Holiday Giving

With the New Year upon us and the holiday season coming to a close it is a good time to reflect upon time spent and gifts shared. Though I suppose my interests make me slightly biased I have a strong appreciation for the simple gift of food. A nourishing gift from the heart can be a great way to show someone how much you care.

There are many ways to share a gift of food and with some creativity (and a bit of work) food gifts can be put together on a pretty tight budget. Here are just a few options:

- Invite a friend, neighbor, or someone in need to share a meal with you. This can be at a restaurant, at your home, or theirs. For an even greater gift prepare enough food to feed your recipient for at least one more meal as well.
- Bake a loaf of whole grain bread. There is no shortage of sweet treats during the holiday season-- to make your gift stand out share something that is nutritious *and* delicious!
- Share friendship soup-in-a-jar (or any other food that may fit). Not interested in baking or cooking yourself? Just put the ingredients together and they can do the work (just don't forget to include the recipe)!
- Volunteer your time. Food banks, soup kitchens, and other service organizations are always in need of good volunteers. Even if you're not a great cook there are many ways you can lend a hand to help their cause.
- Give your compassion. Share holiday companionship with those in need. Ask your local hospice, children's hospital, or nursing home how you can lend a hand during mealtime.

While the holidays are great time for sharing don't forget that food can be a welcome gift any time of the year. If you're interested in some great advice on gifts of food visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search: *last minute holiday gifts (from your kitchen)*. The first choice will be a short clip with some wonderful tips from our nutrition educator (and Registered Dietitian) in Rawlins, WY, Diane Saenz.

For this holiday season, and those to come, remember that gifts from the heart are more powerful than fancy packages and large checks. Note: this column was based upon an article entitled 'Sharing Food a Holiday Gesture' by Dayle Hayes, a Registered Dietitian in Billings, MT. *Kentz Willis, M.S., is the University of Wyoming Extension Educator in Nutrition and Food Safety for Northeast Wyoming. He can be reached via email at [kwillis3@uwyo.edu](mailto:kwillis3@uwyo.edu).*