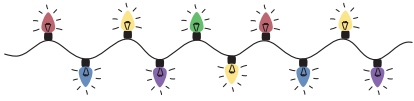


BREAKROOM BUZZ

December 2024



December can bring on many complex feelings. These feelings of excitement, boredom, joy, despair, comfort, worry, hope, etc., due to the hustle and celebration of holidays.

Self-care during the holiday season makes December less overwhelming. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

1. Keep a gratitude jar all year. Open the jar during December and read the writing each day. It's a great way to reflect on all the wonderful things that have happened throughout the year.
2. Try a new recipe. It can deepen knowledge about healthy foods and support the power of variety.
3. Think of something you want to improve. Make a challenge to try something new. Remember, it doesn't have to be perfect.
4. Take a break from your phone. Social media can be overwhelming, so take a break.
5. Downsize and declutter spaces. Having too many items that clutter the living space leads to stress. Identify more than one day to decide what to pitch, donate, sell, recycle, gift, put back, and decide later.
6. Find reasons to laugh. Watch a fun television program, listen to a podcast that brings joy, and spend time with those who can find the funny side of things.

Resources: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health>

Tips for Safely Mailing Holiday Food Gifts

- If mailing cold perishable foods, use a thicker polystyrene box and maintain temperatures at 40 F or below. Pack with either dry ice or an ice pack. Dry ice can be used via priority, express, or first-class mail.
- Pack baked goods like bars, cakes, cookies, and candies so they won't move around the box. Add bubble wrap or extra paper to pack the box tight and prevent the baked goods from crumbling.
- Wait until baked goods are cooled before packaging. For example, if brownies are still warm when packaged, that can cause condensation and mold before they are delivered.
- Mail perishable and baked goods at the beginning of the week. Mailing food on a Friday may cause it to sit in a warehouse over a weekend. This could be a food safety issue or cause the food to stale.

Source: Lisa Peterson, nutrition and wellness Extension educator, and usps.com.

Holiday Spice Nuts

Ingredients

- 1 cup of nuts (use all one kind or a variety)
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon butter (melted) or oil
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon of salt

Directions

Makes 4 ¼ -cup servings.

1. Wash hands and food preparation surfaces.
2. Preheat oven to 350 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. In a medium bowl, mix all the ingredients. Make sure all the nuts are coated well.
4. Spread the nuts evenly in one layer onto the baking sheet.
5. Bake for 10 minutes, stirring halfway through to ensure it is even cooking. When finished, the nuts should be golden brown.
6. Once cooled, store the nuts in airtight containers.



Quick Holiday Spending Tips

Use cash instead of credit to make purchases. Research shows that we spend up to 30% more when using a credit card than cash.

Experiences mean more. Think about the best holiday experiences with family; while gifts are appreciated, holiday experiences like baking cookies with grandma or making snow angels with children go much further than the newest action figure or doll.

Debt = bad, side hustle = good.

Consider reworking the budget to eliminate some expenses, finding ways to increase income, like with a side hustle, or using a website like extension.usu.edu/powerpay to plan to decrease debt.

Source: University of Illinois Extension, [Plan Well. Retire Well.](https://extension.usu.edu/powerpay)

facebook.com/Family.Finances.Food

instagram.com/family.finances.food

twitter.com/famfinancefood

youtube.com/user/UIExtension



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