

# Better Living for Texans

Newsletter for District 5 Counties Families



December 2014

## Homemade Gifts

The holidays are a time for sharing. Small children are often thinking about what gifts they will receive during the holiday season. Children also need to feel the joy of giving gifts to others. Help your child learn the true meaning of the holidays. Make gifts for family and friends. Deliver the gifts to their homes. Share the joy of the holiday season.



- \* Fruit Bowl - Fill a colorful bowl with apples, oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, bananas, pineapple, kiwi, canned fruits, and dried fruits.
- \* Healthy Snack Jar - Fill a clear, covered container with a healthy snack mix or granola. Write the recipe on a card. Tie the recipe card to the top of the container.
- \* Holiday Nut Jar - Fill with pecans you have gathered from your own pecan tree or inexpensive roasted or honey peanuts from a local store. Tie a festive ribbon on the jar.
- \* Popcorn Bowl - Fill a large popcorn bowl with low-fat popcorn packets and seasonings. Tie on a large bow and give!
- \* Family Cookbook - Create a cookbook with your children. Write your favorite recipes in a journal. Let your children draw or color on some of the pages. Grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends love homemade gifts from children!
- \* Holiday Food Stocking - Fill a Christmas stocking with some of your favorite foods - canned sauces, soups, pasta dishes, noodles and more.
- \* Red Oven Mitt - Stuff a red oven mitt with popular kitchen utensils - wooden spoons, vegetable peelers, small grater, whisks, and spatulas.
- \* Family Mixing Bowl - Fill a large mixing bowl with homemade gifts of muffins or bread. You can add a wooden spoon, measuring cups and spoons, and more.
- \* Bird Treats - Coat a large pinecone with peanut butter and roll in birdseed. Tie a string on the pinecone to hang in a tree. Wrap pinecone in plastic wrap and put into a homemade gift bag. Give to any bird lovers! Feed the birds during the winter.
- \* Puppy Treats - Don't forget a family pet! Fill a container with puppy treats. Create a colorful label for the container such as, "Buddy's Treats"

Source: Adapted from University of California, Placer-Nevada Cooperative Extension, Kid Food, Nutrition Matters, December 2014.

## National Pear Month!

The USDA has proclaimed December as National Pear Month. Pears are among the most popular fruits in the world, and it's no wonder why! They are an excellent source of fiber and a good source of vitamin C for only 100 calories per serving. And, they're sodium free, fat free, and cholesterol free. That's a lot of nutrition in one sweet and juicy package!

Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is the foundation for a healthy lifestyle, and pears are a delicious part of this menu. But what makes pears so healthy?

- \* Pears are an excellent source of fiber.
- \* Pears are a good source of Vitamin C.
- \* Pears are fat free and cholesterol free.
- \* Pears are sodium free and provide 190 mg of potassium.
- \* Pears are a nutrient-dense food.

### Almond-Chicken Pear Salad

This salad carries big flavor with diced pieces that bring just the right amount of crunch. Also works well as sandwich filling.

**What you need:**

- 2 medium chicken breasts, grilled and cut in ½ inch cubes
- 1/2 cup green bell pepper, sliced lengthwise
- 1/4 cup diced celery
- 1/4 teaspoon seasoning salt
- 1/2 cup low-fat plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- ½ teaspoon prepared mustard
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 fresh Comice, Anjou, or Bosc USA Pears, cored and cut into 1 inch cubes
- 1 head Butter Lettuce
- 2 tablespoons toasted, slivered almonds

**Directions:**

Toss together chicken, green pepper, and celery. Sprinkle with seasoning salt. Combine yogurt, mayonnaise, mustard, and ginger; add to chicken mixture. Gently mix in pears. Serve on individual lettuce-lined salad plates. Sprinkle with almonds.

Source: USA Pears