

## **Wise Notes for Consumers**

Submitted: 12-1-17

### **Healthy Gift Giving Ideas**

Do you have a friend or family member who is a fitness fanatic...or, one you would like to lovingly nudge toward a healthier lifestyle? Do you need some fresh, fun new gift ideas to inspire you? Are you a DIY kind of gal or guy? Whatever the case, AgriLife Extension's Walk Across Texas program recently suggested some great gift ideas that I thought were worthy to pass along.

You'll find that all the ideas are geared towards healthy holiday gift ideas – some for the obvious fitness buff, while others are subtle, so as not to offend, while hoping to move loved ones toward a healthier lifestyle. Some allow you to be creative and put your own touches on, while others can be picked out, wrapped and ready to go.

Kitchen gadgets can be a great gift, whether you're looking for an inexpensive stocking stuffer, or a gourmet chef's delight. Here are some ideas that would make great gifts:

For flavor, a microplane herb mill allows you to place fresh herbs inside and then simply twist, like a pepper grinder. It cuts foods into your cooking or atop any dish to add flavor without a lot of calories or salt.

A grater-spoon is a device that goes right into a spoon, so if you need to grate, for example, fresh garlic or ginger, you can just stir it right into your dish – one tool, little expense, little clean up, and lots of flavor.

*Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national orientation. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.*

For food safety, colorful rings cutting boards that are non-porous and resistant to stains and odors would make a great gift. Nonporous surfaces like plastic or acrylic are easier to clean than wood, which is porous and more likely to harbor bacteria. So, choose any nonporous cutting board design you like for your gift. You might even choose two, since it is a good idea to have a separate cutting board for your fresh fruits, veggies, and bread, and another for your raw meat. Hutzler Food Savers (in the shape of fruits or vegetables, or just colorful containers if you prefer), are designed to extend the shelf life of your fruits and veggies.

For portion control, measuring cups would make a great gift. They can be found in many shapes so there is something for everyone. A digital food scale for the person trying to control portions, can really keep you on track. Seeing exactly how much is in an appropriate portion can be a great step to healthy portion control over a lifetime...it can also be used to measure healthier food substitutions for not-so-healthy recipes, and is a fun gadget to have for the kids to see, too.

An indoor herb garden with herbs that can be snipped, washed, and added fresh into dishes is a unique gift that can be purchased or made personal with a little DIY (Do-It-Yourself) ingenuity.

Culinary herbs are ideal for growing indoors because they don't need a lot of space and can thrive on sunlight from a bright window. Recommended herbs for indoor gardening include: Basil, Bay, Chervil, Chives, Cilantro, Dill, Garlic Chives, Lemongrass, Mint, Mustard, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Savory, Sweet Marjoram, Tarragon, Thyme, and Vietnamese Coriander.

For a little personalization, you can plant herbs yourself in fun jars, a monogrammed mug, colored bottles, etc. This way you get to choose the herbs and personalize for your friends. You can choose a theme, like Italian, by giving basil and oregano. Just remember to use a good potting mix and provide holes for appropriate drainage.

Happy gifting!

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