

December 6, 2017



Making Memories in the Kitchen

by Sue Mosbacher, UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County

This holiday season, include kitchen memories as part of your gifts. Team up with a child or friend to make an edible gift for family members. In addition to having a delicious present, you'll also make happy memories of the time spent together in the kitchen.

If you're partnering with a young child, make something simple that doesn't require cooking – flavored popcorn, nuts, salt or grind up some dried peppers and garlic for some spice blends. Put scone, cookie or bread mixes in a jar and decorate with a pretty instruction gift tag. (Practice baking the product with the child so they can taste how good their gift will be!)

Jams & jellies are simple and a tasty hit. Try a wine jelly or a jelly with dried (edible) lavender leaves for a unique and delicious flavor. If you froze berries this summer, December's cold weather is the perfect time to heat up the kitchen while you can a jam. There are so many wonderful recipes available; just remember to process them in a boiling water or steam canner. If you want to make a low-sugar jam or jelly, use a pectin designed for low-sugar recipes. For research-based information on making jams and jellies, visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://nchfp.uga.edu/>.

For the more adventurous – and patient – person, make homemade mustards. They need to sit for about 3 weeks to build their full flavor, so start early. The [Lemon-Sage Wine Mustard](#) at [freshpreserving.com](#) has been a big hit for years in my family. (Last year Aunt Fran opened her gift jar for just a taste and before she knew it, everyone had grabbed a pretzel stick and dug in. She'll get two jars this year!)

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Don't stop at just making the product to give to someone. As you and your partner cook, savor the aromas in the kitchen and talk about how to share the final product as a gift. Look up recipes that use the product (if it's not a stand-alone snack) and include recipe cards with the gift. Take a picture of the smiling cook to include in the packaging.

Once the December holidays are over, continue the group food preservation activities throughout the year. Invite family and friends to join you at a food preservation demonstration or hands-on Make & Take mini workshop led by the UCCE Master Food Preservers. You'll get gift ideas all year. Our 2018 class schedule is online at <http://ucanr.edu/mfpcs>.

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message on our helpline at (530) 621-5506. For more information about our public education classes and activities or to make a donation, go to the UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmfp>. Sign up to receive our E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpenews/>. You can also find us on Facebook.