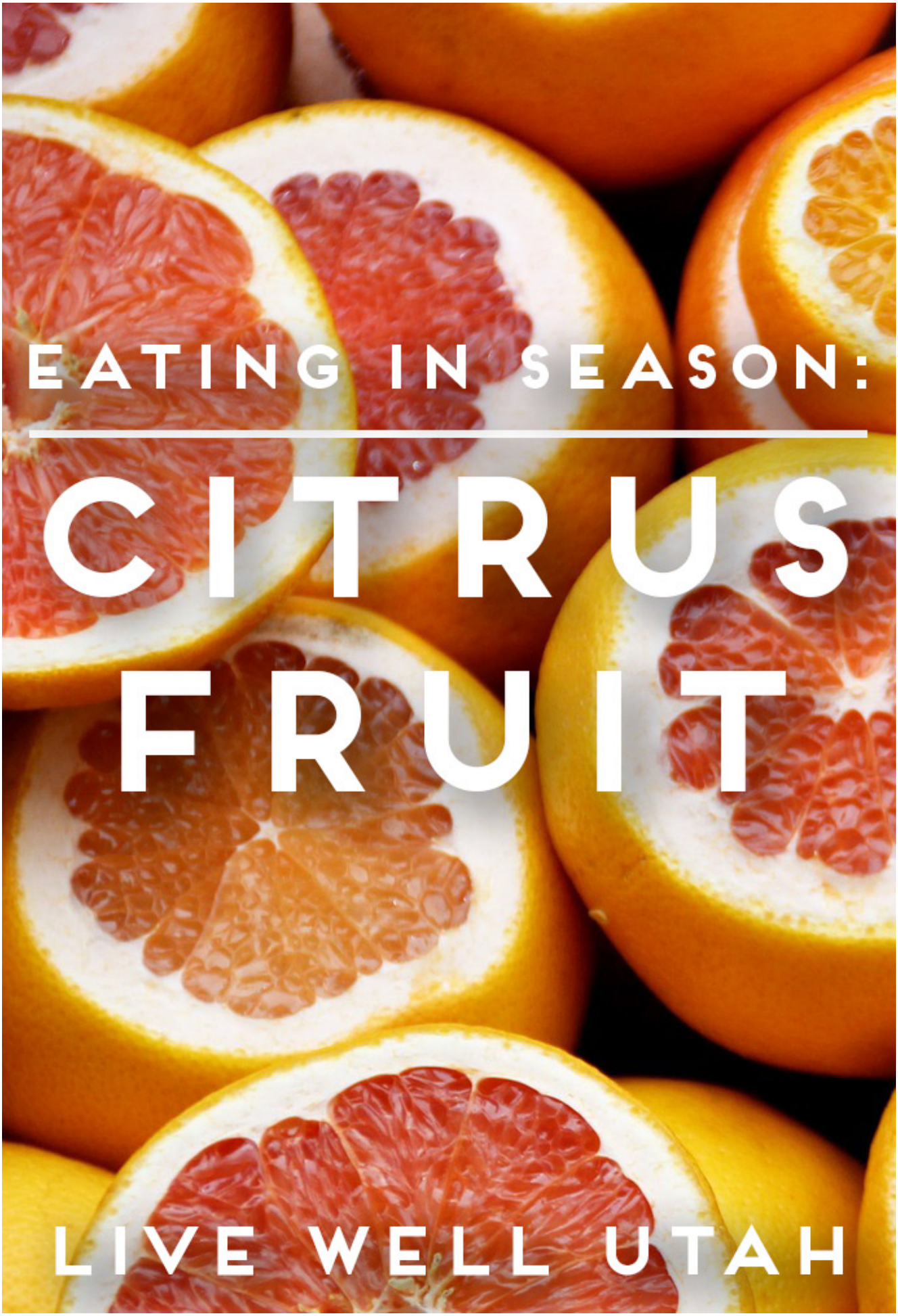
Eating in Season // Citrus Fruit



EATING IN SEASON:

CITRUS FRUIT

LIVE WELL UTAH

Its citrus season! Grab some oranges, grapefruit, lemons or limes the next time you're at the grocery store and give yourself a health boost for the new year. Read up on the amazing health benefits of citrus fruits in today's post.

You may have noticed the abundance of citrus fruits in stores this time of year. The prime harvest time for most citrus fruits is in the late fall and early winter months. Fruits have been consumed for thousands of years and the health benefits of these foods are continually showing that eating a piece of fruit is a wise lifestyle choice. Now is the peak time for enjoying plenty of these healthful foods.

Health Benefits

Citrus fruits can have a positive effect on your life. They are full of vitamin C that is needed to maintain a strong immune system and they help protect against scurvy. They promote heart health and reduce the risk of some chronic diseases. Citrus fruits can help in cancer prevention and are also useful in diabetes sugar level control. Citrus fruit skin is high in essential oils that are removed to be used in flavorings or as fragrant essences in aromatherapy oils, cosmetics and soaps. Even the acidity of lemons is a good remedy for the alkaline bee sting, and a few drops of a lime are squeezed by martial artists into the corner of their eyes to help their vision. Other important nutrients found in citrus fruits are fiber, folate, lypocene, potassium, Vitamin B6, polynutrients and more.

The color of the fruit is very important. Each color provides different nutrients that our bodies need. It is important to include a variety of colors every day for these important nutrients. Consider this information.

- Red contains antioxidants that help fight heart disease,

cholesterol and some cancers.

- Green provides phytochemicals to help protect eyes and prevent cancerous tumors. Greens have essential vitamins including folate, minerals and fiber.
- Orange and yellow contain beta-carotene that is essential for a good immune system. It is rich in Vitamin C, folate and Vitamin A.
- Blue and purple provide phytochemicals which are antioxidants for the body that protect against cancer and disease. The blue and purple also provide Vitamin C, folic acid and fiber.
- White provides allicin, sulfaforaphanes, polyphenols and hytochemicals that help in fighting cancers, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol.

Citrus on Display

Citrus fruits are also objects of beauty and decor. A bowl of fresh fruits as a centerpiece can brighten the day while also reminding you that selecting a piece of fruit instead of candy or a cookie for a snack is a wise choice. It is an excellent idea to keep fresh fruit within reach to encourage daily consumption. The food guide pyramid recommends that you have at least four servings of fruit a day. This may be in the form of juice, fresh, canned and dried fruits.

Increase Your Daily Intake

There are many ways to increase fruits in your daily diet. Add oranges and lemons to water and allow infusing overnight. Add fresh lemons and limes to drinks. Eat half a grapefruit every morning for breakfast. Have a citrus snack every day. Prepare salads using citrus fruit with lettuce and spinach. Top meal entrees with a fruit sauce.

Preserving Citrus

As the peak fruit season begins to level off, you may want to try home canning your own grapefruits and oranges. This simple and fast process provides you with home canned fruit that makes a wonderful breakfast fruit mix and prevents the waste of fruits. Begin by selecting firm, sweet fruit (grapefruits and oranges). Peel and remove the white tissue from the fruit. Break the fruit into sections and fill jars with the fruit. Next, fill the jars with water or hot syrup, according to your taste. Water works well, but a light syrup of 1 cup sugar to 4 cups of water provides an enriched flavor. Pour the liquid over the fruit in the jars leaving one-half inch headspace. Apply the lids and rings and process pints or quarts in water for 15 minutes for an elevation of 2,000 to 4,000 feet (adjustments will need to be made for other elevations). Further information can be found in the Blue Ball book or from your county Extension office.

This article was written by Carolyn Washburn, Utah State University Extension family and consumer sciences agent, Washington County

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Resolutions for the New Year

HAPPY
NEW YEAR!
8 TIPS FOR RESOLUTIONS
LIVE WELL UTAH

Let these tips spark some ideas for New Year’s resolutions.

New Year, New You

Have you made your resolutions for the new year? Here are some tips and ideas to help you succeed in your 2-17 resolutions.

1. Make sure your goals are SMART:

If you plan to set goals, make sure they are SMART goals: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and have a time frame. Add as many intermediate action steps to your goal plan as possible. A written goal with these elements puts your brain to work faster than if you merely have the thoughts in your mind. A few minutes each day taking action on your goals can put you farther ahead in attaining them as opposed to spending hours periodically. There are many goal setting resources on the internet to help you with the goal setting, planning and completion process.

2. Make your goals visual:

Create a vision board with pictures and words of your goals. Put a frame around, which can be as simple as painter’s tape, to give your brain parameters on which to focus. Spending a few minutes a day concentrating intently on the images and words, 2-3 minutes in the morning and at night can be very effective. As you attain your goals, put your completed goals in a binder with the date you accomplished them. This will give you momentum to complete your goals faster. Again, there are many resources on the internet on vision boards, but one I like is 3KeyElements.com.

3. Check your credit report:

Even more important than knowing your credit score, which is often provided for free by credit card companies, is knowing that your credit history is secure and accurate. Incorrect information and fraudulent activity can affect your credit standing greatly. Annualcreditreport.com is the official site to get your free annual credit report for the three credit reporting bureaus, Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian. If you stagger pulling your report throughout the year it will help keep a monitor on your credit. Consider getting your report in January, one at tax time and one in the fall.

4. Make some positive health changes:

You can find useful tips and tools for healthy activity and food choices on ChooseMyPlate.gov. Consider shopping more on the perimeter of the grocery store where you can find healthier choices such as fruit and vegetable produce and dairy and meats. Choose lean dairy and meats. Choose more whole grain products. Making your changes gradually is more effective than trying to do too much and giving up.

5. Monitor your activity level:

Get a good device to track your activity level. If you are tracking steps, 7,500 – 10,000 is considered active, with 10,000 being the better goal of the range. Start where you are and add steps gradually till you reach your goal. Smart phones often have activity tracking options and there are many apps to help with tracking your activity and food intake. Be sure to check with a doctor before beginning an exercise program.

6. Strengthen your family relationships:

Eating dinner together is a great way to increase family togetherness. The benefits of eating together are better communication, better nutrition and better well-being. Eating

dinner around the table has greater benefits than watching TV while eating.

7. Make a plan:

If you have a business or plan to start a business, make sure you have a plan and the know how to run a successful business. Be sure you have thought everything through before starting a business. Many small businesses end within the first two years after owners have put extensive amounts of time and resources into them. There are many business planning tools available through SBA.gov and SBDC.gov. Watch for the Garfield County Business Conference in March, which is open to everyone to attend.

8. Use your USU Extension office as a resource:

Check with your Utah State University Extension county office for classes, resources and information on these and other topics. Or check the state USU Extension website extension.usu.edu for additional information, fact sheets and articles.

This article was written by SuzAnne Jorgensen, Extension Agent, Garfield County

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Sustainable New Year’s

Resolutions

SUSTAINABLE NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

LIVE WELL UTAH

Have you started thinking about resolutions for the new year? Consider working these sustainable resolutions onto your list, and go green for the new year.

Challenge yourself to try simple lifestyle changes each month of the new year. Each aspect of sustainable living presented is not only good for the environment, but good for your health and wallet as well. Whether you dust off your bike, explore vermicomposting or simply update your light bulbs, each small change you make can have lasting impacts.

January: Lose paper weight this year. Go paperless with your bills and unsubscribe from junk mail through Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service at www.dmachoice.org.

February: Be a cool Valentine. Save on your heating bill and turn your thermostat down while your house is empty during the day. See if you can sleep better with the thermostat down a few degrees at night as well.

March: Start your (natural) spring cleaning. Make your own cleaning products to minimize toxin exposure, save money and be healthy. For tips and recipes, visit www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/MP492.pdf.

April: Let rain showers water your flowers. Build garden swales instead of mounds to capture natural water flow. Find pictures, explanations and books on how to do it at http://www.harvestingrainwater.com/.

May: Be bright with LED and natural light. Switch the light bulbs in your home to more efficient LED lights and use natural light to brighten your home/office.

June: Avoid June bugs with natural pest control. Create your own garlic and dish detergent mixture for aphids, or experiment with other natural pest control recipes to improve

your landscape and your family's health. Visit http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in197 for tips on natural pest control.

July: Beat the heat with a native or drought tolerant garden. Plant drought and heat tolerant native edibles and ornamentals this year to add natural Utah beauty to your landscape.

August: Be thrift chic. Prepare your "new" work or school wardrobe with a visit to your local thrift store. While there, drop off clothes you no longer wear to keep the cycle going. Learn more about how to give clothes a second chance.

September: Head back to school/work with alternative transportation. Opt to bike, walk or ride the bus for your daily commute.

October: Happy Halloworms! Start your own household vermicompost system with red wigglers, a container, bedding, dirt, moisture and your daily food scraps. See Extension's vermicomposting fact sheet.

November: Give thanks through local giving. Sign up for a community-supported agriculture program, and buy your Thanksgiving meal from local sources to reduce your family's food print (the carbon footprint associated with how your food was produced and the miles your food has traveled between production and consumption).

December: Give more while consuming less. Reuse newspaper and other paper scraps to make homemade upcycled (converting used materials into new items) gifts for your friends and family. Opt to draw names with family and friends to reduce the quantity and increase the quality of gifts. Host creative craft nights with friends and catch up while repurposing products that are typically thrown away. See Extension's "Reuse" fact sheet.

For general information on sustainability,

visit www.extension.usu.edu/sustainability.

This article was written by Roslynn Brain, USU Extension sustainable communities specialist, republished from 2014.

Ask an Expert // Are Extended Warranties Worth It?

ASK AN EXPERT:
ARE EXTENDED WARRANTIES WORTH IT?
LIVE WELL UTAH

Are extended warranties worth the extra cost? Watch this video from Family Finance Pro Amanda Christensen to find out.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- As yourself: Does the item come with a manufacturer's warranty? How long does it last and what does it cover?
- Read the fine print.
- Keep the receipt or proof of purchase.
- Do the follow up, or the warranty is for naught.

Be sure to watch the video for the details on each tip.

Amanda Christensen is an Extension Assistant Professor for Utah State University. Follow her on Twitter: @FamFinPro, Facebook: Fam Fin Pro, Instagram: @FamFinPro.

Ask an Expert // Five Tips for Safe Holiday Eggnog

ASK AN EXPERT:

5 TIPS FOR SAFE HOLIDAY EGGNOG

LIVE WELL UTAH

Holidays are a fun but hectic time. By amending your eggnog recipes for safety, you'll have one less thing to worry about.

Since the early 1800s, eggnog has been considered a social Christmas drink that adds to the festivities of the season. To many, it brings back fond memories of Christmases by the firelight, real Christmas trees and the grandest of holiday meals.

Although your traditional eggnog recipe may be a family favorite, if the recipe includes raw eggs, it is recommended that you alter it. Eating raw eggs can not only be dangerous, but deadly, since they may contain the bacterium salmonella, which can cause food-borne illness. Anyone can fall victim to food-borne illnesses, but some people are at a higher risk, including infants, young children, pregnant women, older adults and individuals with weakened immune systems who suffer from chronic illnesses, such as HIV, liver disease, diabetes or cancer.

Be aware that refrigerated eggs with clean shells that don't have cracks can still be contaminated with salmonella bacteria. To safely make holiday eggnog, use one of the following substitutions:

1.) In place of raw eggs, use an equivalent amount of pasteurized (frozen or refrigerated) egg product that has never been opened. Because of the risk of bacterial contamination after opening, any leftover egg product should be used only in cooked products.

2.) Use cooked eggs in your eggnog recipe. Combine raw eggs with half of the milk and sugar in a 4-quart double boiler. Cook and stir over medium heat, approximately 10-15 minutes, until the mixture coats a metal spoon and the temperature reaches 160 F. Continue preparing your recipe as directed.

3.) If a recipe calls for folding raw, beaten egg whites into the eggnog, use pasteurized eggs. It has not been proven that raw egg whites are free of salmonella bacteria.

4.) Use commercially prepared eggnog, which contains pasteurized eggs and does not need to be cooked.

5.) Try the safe recipe below:

Holiday Eggnog Recipe

5 cups skim milk

3/4 cup sugar

1 cup pasteurized, refrigerated egg product
or 1 cup pasteurized frozen egg product (thawed in the refrigerator)
or 4 eggs

12-ounce can evaporated skim milk

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1/4 teaspoon rum extract (optional)

1 pint low-fat frozen vanilla yogurt, softened

Ground nutmeg to taste

1. In a 4-quart double boiler, combine milk, sugar and egg product (or eggs).
   2. Cook and stir over medium heat, approximately 10-15 minutes, until the mixture coats a metal spoon and the temperature reaches 160 F. Remove from heat.
   3. Stir in the evaporated skim milk, vanilla extract and rum extract (if desired). Cover and chill 4-24 hours in the refrigerator.
2. To serve, place softened frozen yogurt in a punch bowl.

Gradually whisk in chilled eggnog mixture until smooth. Sprinkle with nutmeg to taste.

NOTE: If using eggs, follow recipe steps 1, 2, 3 and 4. If using pasteurized egg product, follow steps 1, 3 and 4 only.

Adding alcohol will inhibit bacterial growth, but it cannot be relied upon to kill bacteria. Once alcohol is diluted, it no longer effectively kills bacteria. You will still need to use pasteurized eggs. Keep in mind that simmering eggnog over heat will remove the alcohol.

This article was written by Carolyn Washburn, Utah State University Extension professor, 435-534-2692, Carolyn.washburn@usu.edu

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Decorating with Fresh Greenery

LIVE WELL UTAH

DECORATING WITH FRESH GREENERY

Join Live Well Utah editor Marta Nielsen as she talks with Studio 5's Brook Walker about how to keep your fresh wreath or garland looking beautiful through Christmas, and learn how to put together your own holiday wreath using fresh greenery.

Fresh holiday wreaths can be found just about everywhere—even at your local grocery store. Whether you've purchased a fresh wreath or made one yourself, there are a few things you can do to extend the life of your decorations and keep them looking beautiful.

Display fresh wreaths and garlands outside. Once you've cut the plant off from its water source, it begins to dry out. As it dries it may begin to drop leaves or needles and lose its vivid color. The warm environment in your home speeds up the drying process. Indoors, a wreath will last about a week, while decorations kept outdoors should last a month.

Use an anti-transpirant. Products such as Wilt Pruf help fresh

greenery retain its moisture and can prolong the life of your decorations. You can find products like this at most nurseries.

Choose the right materials. If you’re making a wreath, choose materials that will retain their color as they dry. Good options are eucalyptus, olive, magnolia, bay leaf, and boxwood greenery. All of these can be ordered or purchased from a florist. Eucalyptus can often be found in a well-stocked grocery store floral department. Boxwood is common in residential landscaping, and dries to a lighter green that is beautiful for display in the springtime. If you want to make your own evergreen wreath, most Christmas tree lots will sell you a bag of boughs for just a few dollars. Adding in some other natural materials like pine cones, pepper or juniper berries, and a festive bow complete the look for a welcoming front door display.

This article was written by Marta Nielsen, Live Well Utah Blog Editor.

Tips to De-Stress Your Holiday Season

DE-STRESS YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON

LIVE WELL UTAH

The finish line is in sight– Christmas is almost here. Don't let the stress of the holidays get you down. Try these tips to manage your stress, and better enjoy the holiday season.

Perhaps it's the first time you hear "Jingle Bells" on the radio or see Christmas lights go up on a neighbor's house. Whatever the moment may be, you have the realization that the holiday season is in full swing. You may experience childlike feelings of excitement that accompany the season, but at the same time, a very adult feeling may sneak up on you – stress.

Counting down the days left to shop, making travel plans and organizing family get togethers can leave you feeling frazzled and overwhelmed, rather than full of holiday cheer. The holiday season brings many responsibilities, and even the fun activities can leave you feeling tired and stressed. According to the American Psychological Association, the main sources of holiday stress are related to relationships, finances, and physical demands. By following a few practical tips, you can reduce and manage the stress that accompanies the holiday season.

Relationships can create stress at any time, but tensions and conflicts are often intensified during the holiday season when increased demands are placed on family members. On the other hand, facing the holidays without a loved one can create feelings of sadness and loneliness.

- Take time for yourself. Spend 15 minutes alone to refresh and clear your mind.
- Have realistic expectations. Families change and grow, so traditions and rituals may change as well. Hold on to the most special traditions, and be open to creating new ones.
- Reach out to others. Community agencies and social events offer support and companionship for those who may

feel lonely and isolated during the holiday season. Volunteering and helping others can lift your spirits and put your family life into perspective.

- Make time for fun.

Financial issues often arise during the holiday season, leading to undesirable stress. Gifts, travel, food and entertainment expenses add up quickly and can lead to unexpected debt.

- Stick to a budget. Consider how much you want to spend in total for the season, and set a spending limit. Keep track of how much you spend on the holidays, including decorations, travel, holiday entertainment and meals, and cards and postage.
- Plan ahead. Before shopping, look through newspaper ads and store circulars to find which stores are running specials and where the prices are lowest. Comparison shop on the Internet to find out which stores carry the items you want at the best price.
- Make homemade gifts or give gift certificates for your time and talents.

Physical demands of the holiday season can initiate or increase stress. Shopping for gifts, attending social gatherings, and preparing holiday meals can be exhausting.

- Know your limits. Give yourself permission to say no to extra holiday activities.
- Don’t abandon healthy habits. Continue to get plenty of sleep and stay physically active. Avoid overindulging at holiday meals by preparing a healthy snack ahead of time.

The holiday season can be stressful and overwhelming, but taking small steps to combat the stress can help you to relax and enjoy the season.

This article was written by Shannon Cromwell, M.A., Extension Assistant Professor, Family & Consumer Sciences, Utah State University Extension, Sanpete County, 435-283-3472, shannon.cromwell@usu.edu

Resources:

The American Psychological Association. www.apa.org

A Fruitcake for Christmas

CHRISTMAS FRUITCAKE

LIVE WELL UTAH

Have you ever received fruitcake as a gift? When a research firm polled some 1,000 adults about what they did with fruitcake, 38 percent said they gave it away, 28 percent actually ate it, 13 percent used it as a doorstop, 9 percent scattered it for the birds, 4 percent threw it out, and 8 percent couldn't remember. Which category will you fall into this season?*

Sun-ripened raisins, plump, juicy cherries, delicious pineapple, home-grown pecans, walnuts and almonds, a little tang of lemon and orange peel added, blended into a rich pound-cake batter and baked to a golden brown. This could be your traditional Christmas fruitcake. This moist Christmas cake is a festive favorite full of tasty bits of fruits and nuts, the ratio of which is fairly high, with just enough cake batter to hold it all together. This naturally results in a very dense, moist cake, no doubt giving rise to the "heavy" jokes. Fruitcakes range from light to dark, are made with and without alcohol and are delicately spiced.

Fruitcake dates back to the early Roman years, and you may hear jokes about them being 125 years old. I've been asked what the shelf life of fruitcake is. No one has come up with an exact amount of time, and each recipe is different. These cakes contain high amounts of sugar, which means that water activity will be low, keeping mold from growing and making the cake last a long time. The spices and fruit in the cake also contain antioxidants, which will help extend the shelf life of the fruitcake. The alcohol content in the cake may have only a small effect on the shelf life, as most of the alcohol is lost during the baking time, and the rest is lost over a long storage time. The recommended shelf life is usually a few months, with additional life added by storing it in the freezer. You may also want to keep it in the refrigerator for easier slicing.

Fruitcake is also an excellent choice to send in the mail. It does not spoil and is solid enough to maintain its shape and form. Now you know why your distant relatives choose to send you one each Christmas.

Most of your traditional Christmas fruitcakes are started in October allowing for the softening of dried fruits and the blending of flavors. These cakes are usually prepared with a syrup mixture, then the fruits and alcohol are added. However, many fruitcakes are non-alcoholic and much simpler to make.

Several old legends of the fruitcake have been passed on for centuries. From England it was told that a single woman could put a slice of fruitcake under her pillow to dream of the man she would marry. Crusaders carried fruitcake on their journeys because of its ability to withstand long trips and months of storage. In Egypt, the fruitcake was considered an essential food for a mummy to take into the afterlife, always being placed inside the tomb.

So, if you were lucky enough to receive a fancy fruitcake confection this holiday season, get ready to open up the tin, box or wrapper and enjoy. The fruit and fiber make it a more nutritious food than some holiday treats.

Holiday Fruitcake

From McCall's Cooking School

2 cups chopped walnuts or pecans
1/2 cup maraschino cherries, quartered
2 cups light or dark raisins
1/2 cup brandy
3 1/2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp nutmeg
1 1/2 cups butter or regular margarine, softened
2 cups sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract
7 eggs
1/2 cup brandy

In large bowl combine walnuts, cherries and raisins with 1/2 cup brandy. Allow to stand overnight at room temperature. Sift flour with baking powder and nutmeg. In a large electric mixer bowl, beat butter/margarine, sugar and vanilla at medium speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat at medium speed for 4 minutes, occasionally scraping sides of bowl. Batter will become thick and fluffy and lighter in color. At low speed, gradually beat in flour mixture until smooth. Add cherry/raisin/nut mixture to batter and mix well with wooden spoon.

Heat oven to 350 F and grease pan of your choice and flour well. Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes in bundt pan or 1 hour 10 minutes in tube pan. As an alternative, use 5-inch diameter by 2-inch- high souffle dishes and bake for about 45 minutes. Cake is done when long skewer inserted into center comes out clean. Cool pan on wire rack for 20 minutes. Use small spatula to loosen cake around inside. Invert on wire rack and cool. Soak cheesecloth in 1/2 cup brandy, stretch on large piece of heavy-duty foil, place cake in center and wrap with cheesecloth. Wrap foil tightly around cake. Store in refrigerator several days to several weeks. To serve, slice thinly and let warm to room temperature.

This article was written by Carolyn Washburn, retired Utah State University Extension professor, carolyn.washburn@usu.edu.

*Russell Baker, *The New York Times*

Ask an Expert // Are Holiday Layaways Worth It?

ASK THE FINANCE PRO:
ARE HOLIDAY LAYAWAYS WORTH IT?
LIVE WELL UTAH

What’s the deal with layaway programs? Learn how to assess if layaway is a good option for you and how to set up your own layaway savings plan from USU Extension finance pro Amanda Christensen.

Layaway Highlights:

1. Read the fine print
2. Look at the cancelation policy
3. Will the payments fit into your budget?
4. Is there a sale price credit?
5. Will you be tempted to overspend?

Set Up Your Own Layaway Savings Plan:

1. Set a goal and stick to it
2. Make a plan
3. Set up an automatic transfer
4. Watch sale prices
5. Stick to your list

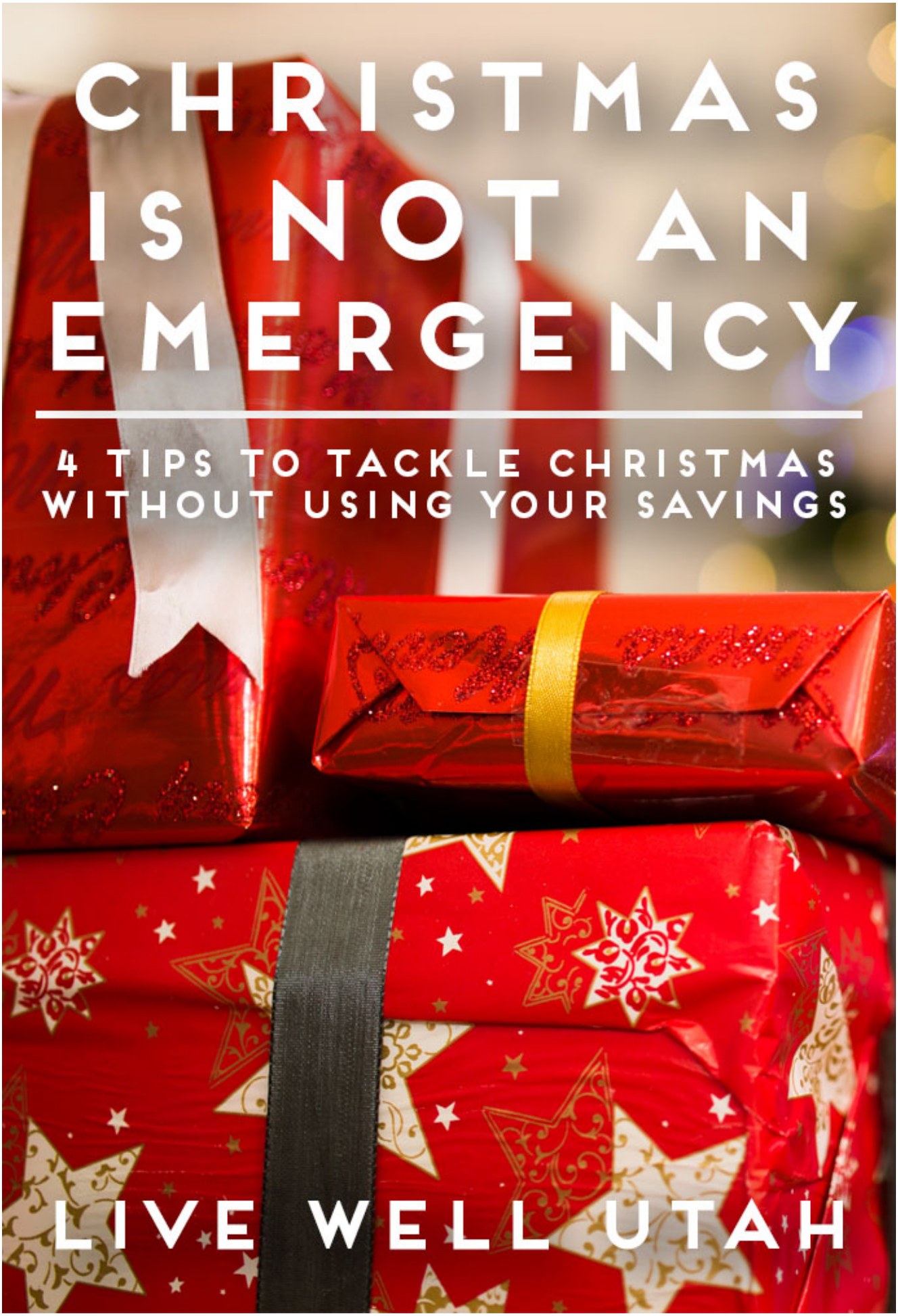
Be sure to watch the video for the details on each tip.

Amanda Christensen is an Extension Assistant Professor for Utah State University. Follow her on Twitter: @FamFinPro, Facebook: Fam Fin Pro, Instagram: @FamFinPro.

Christmas is NOT an Emergency: 4 Tips to Tackle Christmas Without Using Your Emergency Funds

CHRISTMAS IS NOT AN EMERGENCY

4 TIPS TO TACKLE CHRISTMAS WITHOUT USING YOUR SAVINGS



LIVE WELL UTAH

It’s an emergency! My house is on fire… there’s been an earthquake… my furnace is broken! These are emergencies—Christmas is not. Check out this video from our finance pro Amanda Christensen and follow her tips to plan ahead for Christmas and save your emergency fund for a real emergency.

Highlights:

1. Christmas is not an emergency!
2. Set reasonable expectations.
3. Shop early and after.
4. Plan to give to those in need.

Be sure to watch the video for the details on each tip.

Amanda Christensen is an Extension Assistant Professor for Utah State University. Follow her on Twitter: @utahmoney moms, Facebook: Utah Money Moms, Instagram: @utahmoneymoms.