

# Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

[geary.k-state.edu](http://geary.k-state.edu)

December 2021

## Ask the Agent

**Q:** Let's see how many of you read this section of the FCS Connection Newsletter.\* Instead of a question...I have an answer I would like to share. I had a client email me with a tradition they have recently brought to their family to celebrate Christmas or any other special occasion you are sharing with family and friends.

**A:** *My husband and I are at the age where we really don't need any more knick-knacks or things of that nature. So, when our daughter asked me what we would like for Christmas, I told her I.O.U.s.*

*For example: **I O U** whatever time it takes to plant potatoes in the Spring, **I O U** 2 hours on a Saturday afternoon to help clean the room of your choice in your house. **I O U** an afternoon at the mall. The options are endless. Specific dates are not required, only a time line. This is a great gift that a grandchild/child could give to a grandparent/parent.\* Email me an IOU idea and your name will be put into a drawing for a special K-State Research & Extension token of appreciation.*

For more information call the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office at: **785-238-4161**

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## Peace on Earth and Good Will to All

December 2021

The holiday season offers many opportunities to gather with friends and family. For many families, it's not just a single gathering, but rather a hectic race to meet with in-laws, parents, grandparents, co-workers, and close friends. Instead of being "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year", the stress of travel, timing, and toting gifts from here to there can make you want to hum "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch!"



The past 18 months have stretched families and individuals in many ways. We have had to change every aspect of our lives in some way. Our communication styles have been tested to the limit. We have had times when we were happy to stay home in quarantine, while at other times we have been frustrated with having to stay home. The way we shop, socialize, connect, and share space has changed. Many of us have experienced the loss of a loved one or friend this year, which only compounds our feelings during this time of year. Why wouldn't we expect that the holiday season may be especially challenging this year?

Knowing how stressful this time of year can be, the Mayo Clinic came up with a list of ways to prevent holiday stress and depression. Here is a brief summary of their staff's recommendations:

First, you want to acknowledge your feelings. It's okay to feel and express sadness if you've experienced loss this year. You can't make yourself be happy when you're grieving. Give yourself permission to experience the feelings you have. We are all going through a lot right now and we need to deal with those feelings so we can move on.

Staying connected is important in handling stress and depression. Make sure to reach out to others in the community, at social events, and through volunteer opportunities. Grabbing a quick cup of coffee with a friend might just be the right pick-me-up.

Be real and honest. Don't try to measure yourself up against others who may also have had loss. Everyone handles loss, stress, and conflict differently. Don't look on social media and think everyone else's life or holiday is perfect. We all are different with different families and traditions.

Seek peace—for yourself and those around you. Set aside differences with friends and families and focus on being grateful for what you do have in life. Even if you have an important issue to resolve, this may not be the right time to "go there." Be intentional in tackling the issue by setting a day and time after your social gatherings to address it.

Don't be afraid to say no. This single two-letter word can be a great strategy for handling all the hustle and bustle that comes with the season.

Last, but not least, make time for yourself to relax and don't forsake all of the things you need to do for yourself to stay healthy.

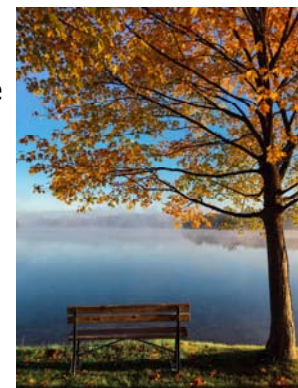


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**K-STATE**  
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Family & Consumer  
Sciences

## Save Time by Freezing Bread and Cookie Dough

# Holiday Tips

### Holiday Tips: Save time by freezing dough for yeast bread, cookies

By Emily Halstead, K-State Research and Extension news



The holiday season can get busy, and being able to prepare yeast bread dough ahead of time and freeze it for later use could save time, said Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee.

Blakeslee said preparing and freezing yeast bread dough must go hand-in-hand with proper food safety practices.

"When making any kind of baked good, remember to wash your hands before and after handling flour and the dough," said Blakeslee, who is coordinator of [K-State's Rapid Response Center](#). "Raw flour has been linked to several foodborne illness outbreaks, so it is important to keep hands clean."

"To save time during the holidays, or any time of the year, prepare yeast bread dough ahead of time and freeze into dough balls for rolls to bake later," Blakeslee said. "The trick is using a dough with extra yeast because slow freezing can damage yeast."

Blakeslee's advice for safely freezing yeast bread dough includes:

- Increase the yeast by  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon per 3 cups of flour to your favorite bread recipe. Dough that has extra yeast can compensate for potential freeze damage.
- Consider recipes high in yeast and sugar, and low in salt, which are best for freezing.
- After kneading the dough, place it in a freezer-safe package and freeze. Dough can be frozen up to four weeks.
- Thaw frozen dough at room temperature, shape, let rise and bake as directed.

Cookie dough also can be prepared and frozen to save time when baking for the holidays. Some tips for freezing cookie dough include:

- Drop cookie dough can be prepared, scooped onto a cookie sheet then frozen.
- After freezing, cookie dough can be removed from the cookie sheet and stored in freezer packaging to be baked later.

Always remember to wash your hands after handling raw cookie dough.

Blakeslee cautioned against the urge to snack on raw cookie dough, "because of the foodborne illness risks due to eating raw flour and eggs." Instead, she said, wait until cookies are fully cooked and cooled before enjoying.

Another holiday option: Instead of freezing dough, bake the products first, allow them to cool completely then tightly wrap them and freeze. Let them thaw in the wrapping before using.

"Rewarm baked goods with a quick zap in the microwave for that just out of the oven taste," Blakeslee said.

Blakeslee publishes a monthly newsletter called [You Asked It!](#) that provides numerous tips on food safety. More information is also available from the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office.

Photo by [Shine](#) Photos on [Unsplash](#)

# Holiday Tips

Time is running out to make your final gift giving and purchasing decisions. Sometimes the simplest gifts are the best choices for those who are difficult to buy for.

If you are grappling with gift ideas for those who seem to have everything or for children you don't know clothing sizes for, here are a couple of ideas that might help.

Books: People of all ages can enjoy having a new book to look at or read. Children's picture books are a hit with the very young but coffee table books for adults is another good gift idea. Picture books of animals are fun to

## Grappling with Gift Giving

share with the young and allow you to create a story to tell your child or grandchild as you look through the images.

Travel books open up the imagination for adults as they look at images of beautiful mountain by-ways, rustic barns, or stellar skyscrapers. A big thank you shout out to Marie-Anne for sharing her gifting ideas with me. Email me what your favorite book is and your name will be put into a drawing for a special K-State Research & Extension token of appreciation.



# Live Well Geary County—Communal Meals Holiday Wish List

## Supplies

Kitchen Timer  
Kitchen Scale  
10-12 Cup (or more) Coffee Maker  
Muffin Pans (12 Ct)  
Bib Aprons (Up to 10)

Sealable Food Storage Bags  
(Sandwich to 2 Gallon Size)  
Food Storage Containers  
(1 quart to 1 gallon size)  
Dish Clothes  
Paper Towels

## Shelf Stable Foods

Nonfat Dry Milk  
Old Fashion Oatmeal  
No Sugar Added Applesauce—48 oz. jars  
Canned Beans (29oz or #10 Cans)  
(Red, Kidney, Navy)

Low Sodium Broth  
(Chicken, Beef or Vegetable)  
Canned Vegetables (#10 Cans)  
(Mixed Vegetables or Green Beans)  
Whole Wheat Flour  
Bread Flour

## Perishable Foods

Hamburger/Ground Beef (increments up to 50 lbs)  
Chicken (increments up to 50 lbs)  
(Whole, Pieces, or Breasts)  
Frozen Vegetables (Need 10 Lbs/Meal)  
(Mixed Vegetables, Carrots, Green Beans)

**Cash donations can be  
made out and mailed to:**



PO Box 28, Junction City, KS 66846

Accepting **NON-  
PERISHABLE** Food and  
Supplies at Dorothy  
Bramlage Public Library at  
230 W. 7th, Junction City  
thru December 23, 2021

Accepting perishable **AND**  
non-perishable Food &  
Supplies at Geary County  
Extension office at 119 E.  
9th St., Junction City thru  
January 7, 2022



## simple granola gift jar

Your child can help stir ingredients, spoon the granola into a jar and make a gift tag.

- ¼ cup canola oil
- ½ cup honey
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup sliced almonds or sunflower seeds
- 1 cup raisins (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. In a liquid measuring cup, mix oil, honey, cinnamon and salt.
3. In a large bowl, mix the oats and almond or sunflower seeds.
4. Pour the honey mixture over the oats. Stir well.
5. Spread onto a large baking sheet pan in an even layer.
6. Bake for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and stir gently. Bake for another 5 to 10 minutes, or until the granola is lightly browned.
7. Remove from the oven. Stir in raisins. Let cool.

### Make a gift!

Pack in a tightly covered container, like a mason jar. Add a ribbon and gift tag.



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## frasco de regalo con granola sencilla

Tu hijo puede ayudar a mezclar los ingredientes, meter la granola en un frasco y hacer la etiqueta de regalo.

- ¼ de taza de aceite de canola
- ½ taza de miel
- ½ cucharadita de canela molida
- ½ cucharadita de sal
- 3 tazas de copos de avena
- 1 taza de almendras fileteadas o semillas de girasol
- 1 taza de pasas (opcional)

1. Precalienta el horno a 325°F / 162°C.
2. En un vaso medidor, mezcla el aceite, la miel, la canela y la sal.
3. En un bol grande, mezcla la avena con las almendras o las semillas de girasol.
4. Vierte la mezcla de miel sobre la avena. Revuelve muy bien.
5. Extiende la mezcla en una bandeja de horno grande en una capa uniforme.
6. Hornea durante 15 minutos. Retira del horno y mezcla suavemente. Hornea durante otros 5 a 10 minutos, o hasta que la granola esté ligeramente dorada.
7. Retírala del horno. Agrega pasas de uva. Déjala enfriar.

### ¡Haz un regalo!

Envásala en un recipiente bien tapado, como un frasco de vidrio tipo "mason". Añade una cinta y una etiqueta de regalo.



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# Food Safety

## Recent Power Outages Raise Questions

Recent storms that rolled through Kansas left many without power for an extended period of time. The Food Safety and Inspection Service of the US Department of Agriculture offers the following guidance on how to determine what needs thrown out and what should be saved.

### During a Power Outage

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.
- The refrigerator will keep food safe for up to 4 hours. If the power is off longer, you can transfer food to a cooler and fill with ice or frozen gel packs. Make sure there is enough ice to keep food in the cooler at 40°F or below. Add more ice to the cooler as it begins to melt.
- A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full).
- Obtain dry ice or block ice if your power is going to be out for a prolonged period. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic-foot freezer for 2 days. (Caution: Do not touch dry ice with bare hands or place it in direct contact with food.)
- In freezers, food in the front, in the door, or in small, thin packages will defrost faster than large, thick items or food in the back or bottom of the unit. During a snowstorm, do not place perishable food out in the snow. Outside temperatures can vary and food can be exposed to unsanitary conditions and animals. Instead, make ice. Fill buckets, empty milk containers, or cans with water and leave them outside to freeze. Use the homemade ice in your refrigerator, freezer, or coolers.



### After a Power Outage

**Never** taste food to determine its safety.

**When In Doubt, Throw It Out!**

### REFRIGERATED FOODS Unsafe Foods

- Discard the following if your refrigerator has been without power for more than 4 hours:
  - raw, cooked, or leftover meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and egg substitutes;
  - luncheon meat and hot dogs;
  - casseroles, soups, stews, and pizza;
  - mixed salads (i.e., chicken, tuna, macaroni, potato);
  - gravy and stuffing;
  - milk, cream, yogurt, sour cream, and soft cheeses;
  - cut fruits and vegetables (fresh);
  - cooked vegetables;
  - fruit and vegetable juices (opened);
  - creamy-based salad dressing;

- batters and doughs (i.e., pancake batter, cookie dough);
- custard, chiffon, or cheese pies;
- cream-filled pastries; and
- garlic stored in oil.
- Discard opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, and horseradish if they were held above 50 °F for over 8 hours.
- Discard any foods like bread or salad greens that may have become contaminated by juices dripping from raw meat, poultry, or fish.

In general, if any food has an unusual odor, color, or texture, **throw it out.**

Even if you didn't experience a power outage from recent storms, winter weather is sure to come that could lead to another outage. Here is what you need to do to make sure you are prepared:

- Keep an appliance thermometer in both the refrigerator and freezer. Make sure the refrigerator temperature is at 40 °F or below and the freezer is at 0° F or below.
- Group foods together in both the refrigerator and freezer. This helps foods stay cold longer.
- Keep the freezer full. Fill empty spaces with frozen plastic jugs of water, bags of ice, or gel packs.
- Freeze refrigerated items that you may not need immediately, such as leftovers, milk, and fresh meat and poultry. This will keep them at a safe temperature longer.
- Have a large, insulated cooler and frozen gel packs available. Perishable foods will stay safe in a refrigerator only 4 hours.
- Find out where dry ice and block ice can be purchased.

### Frozen Foods Safe-to-Eat Foods

- Frozen foods that have thawed, but still contain ice crystals.
- Foods that have remained at refrigerator temperatures — 40 °F or below. They may be safely refrozen; however, their quality may suffer.
- Foods that don't actually need to be frozen. These foods may be used unless they turn moldy or have an unusual odor:
  - dried fruits and coconut;
  - baked goods including fruit pies, bread, rolls, muffins, and cakes (except for those with cream cheese frosting or cream fillings);
  - hard and processed cheeses;
  - butter and margarine;
  - fruit juices; and
  - Nuts

**Never** taste food to determine its safety.

**Geary County**

P.O. Box 28  
119 E. 9th Street  
Junction City, KS 66441

**Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs**

**\*\*Requires pre-registration. Call 238-4161 to pre-register\*\***

**December 2021**

23-24, 31

Geary County K-State Research and Extension office is closed for the holidays. We will be open for regular business hours on December 27-30. We will be closed on December 31, as well. Our staff is staggering time away from the office to share time with their families and friends during the holiday season. We hope you have the same opportunity and look forward to seeing you in the new year.

**January 2021**

- 3 Healthy Together Meals—Hosted by Live Well Geary County at the Larry Dixon Center, 920 W. 6th, Junction City from 5:30 –6:30pm. Free hot and healthy meals offered to seniors. No reservations required. "To Go" meals offered. For more information on this communal meal site and others, go to: <https://www.livewellgearycounty.org/community-meals>. The Healthy Together communal meals program will continue each Monday through the winter, and hopefully beyond. Please join us at the Center! Email me with a menu idea for the Healthy Together Meals and your name will be put into a drawing for a special K-State Research & Extension token of appreciation.
- 4 Reader Appreciation Day—Deb will draw names for reader appreciation recognition and send out an email to those selected.
- 10, 17, 24, 31 Healthy Together Meals—Hosted by Live Well Geary County at the Larry Dixon Center, 920 W. 6th, Junction City from 5:30 –6:30pm.



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