



## The Gift of Healthy Food

Looking for different gift ideas for this holiday season? Homemade food and cooking ingredients can be great gifts for friends and family. It is also the time of year when local food pantries need additional food items. This season try giving health-related gifts. There are many options and here are some suggestions to help get you started.

### Healthy holiday gifts:

- **Fruit and vegetable bouquet.** Try giving a colorful selection of fruits and vegetables, keeping them at peak quality by putting the basket together shortly before giving it. Examples of items to include are green and red grapes, apples, oranges, peppers, broccoli, cucumber, or zucchini.
- **Holiday snack jar.** Choose a clear, covered container and add healthy snacks such as small boxes of raisins, trail mix, packs of various crackers or snack mixes, dried fruit, baked chips and pretzels. Personalize it further by decorating the lid and/or jar with holiday cheer.
- **Holiday food or beverage mixes in a Jar.** Mixes for soups, cookies, and beverages are popular gift items that are fairly inexpensive to make. The gift recipient will appreciate the attractive and thoughtful gift and will value the convenience.
- **Personalized gift certificates/I.O.U.s:** Give a "gift certificate" for healthy food from your kitchen. You could promise to cook a meal for several people or provide a baked good once a month for the next year. Other ideas include "gift certificates" for getting active together such as going walking or jogging or signing up for group classes.
- **Donating food.** Help your local food pantry improve the quality of food it distributes by donating healthier items.



## Vegetable Snowman

### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup low-fat ranch dressing
- 1 cucumber, scrubbed with clean vegetable brush under running water
- 1 Tablespoon sliced olives
- 2 carrot sticks, scrubbed with clean vegetable brush under running water, peeled
- 3 cherry tomatoes, gently rubbed under cold running water
- 1/2 bell pepper, gently rubbed under cold running water

Place ranch dressing in a small cup for the snowman's head. Assemble vegetables in the shape of a snowman using cucumber slices for the body, carrots for arms and nose, cherry tomatoes for buttons, bell peppers for hat and scarf, and olives for the eyes. Be creative and feel free to use any vegetables you have on hand. A "Vegetable Snowman" is a great item to bring to holiday parties and family events

