

# Healthy LIVING while aging!



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## Food Customs and the Holidays

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The holidays are often a time to remember childhood memories and traditions. It may be putting up decorations, visiting with family or preparing a favorite holiday dish. All the holidays have certain things in common, including unity, celebration and sharing. They are celebrated with a feast and family members and loved ones are invited to join the festivities. The major differences include how each holiday is celebrated and the reason it is celebrated. While Christmas includes exchanging presents, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa are not traditionally associated with gift giving. The Winter Solstice is celebrated with a gathering and seasonal harvest. Below you will find the food customs typically prepared and eaten for each holiday.

### Christmas

A traditional Christmas dinner main dish often consists of prime rib, baked ham or roast turkey. This main dish is served with a side dish of scalloped potatoes, green bean casserole and/or cranberry sauce. Celebrations can begin on Christmas Eve or after the arrival of Santa on Christmas morning. Stockings often are filled with oranges, nuts and a few pieces of chocolate or coal if you were naughty.



### Hanukkah

Latkes are a traditional favorite during Hanukkah. A latke is a potato pancake, usually fried in oil. The latke is extremely versatile, and it can take on different flavors, textures and seasonings. It is typically served with applesauce and sour cream. Another Hanukkah favorite is jelly donuts known as sufganiyah and chocolate coins or gelt are given out to children.



### Kwanzaa

The two most significant foods served during Kwanzaa are black-eyed peas and collard greens. They symbolize good luck and good fortune. Kwanzaa is known for its integration of African creole and jerk seasonings in its holiday recipes. You will likely find main dishes like catfish or jerk chicken on the table. Side dishes include cole slaw, grits, beans, okra and rice.



### Winter Solstice

From Ancient Romans to Indigenous Americans, cultures around the world have long held feasts and celebrated holidays around the winter solstice. In the United States, informal winter solstice gatherings often include a feast. Although there is no particular menu for winter solstice, the focus is often on fall harvest foods such as berries, nuts, squash, potatoes and wild game.





## Holidays = Scams

Scams can happen to anyone — don't be ashamed if you or someone you know has been a victim. Scammers are savvy and persuasive, and their scams are designed to catch people off guard. Some common scams aimed at older adults include:

- \* Government impersonator scams, such as someone posing as a Medicare representative asking for account info
- \* Fake prize, sweepstakes, and lottery scams, when you are asked to pay money or provide account info to claim a prize
- \* Computer tech support scams, someone says your computer has a problem and asks you to pay to fix it over the phone
- \* grandparent scam in which the caller pretends to be a grandchild or other relative in distress

Scammers tend to target older adults since they are less likely to report suspected fraud. Learn about steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones from scams. For more information on scams, visit the [nia.nih.gov](http://nia.nih.gov) website.

Many of the items below can be purchased with **SNAP benefits** allowing you to share the **gift of healthy nutrition!**

### Festive Fruit Bark

*An easy-to-make & healthy gift!*

#### Ingredients:

- 1, 32-ounce container vanilla Greek yogurt
- 2 cups each frozen blackberries, whole and strawberries, sliced
- 4 tablespoons each strawberry and blackberry jelly

**Directions:** Line a 10 by 15 by 1-inch cookie sheet with parchment paper. Spread the yogurt on top of the paper. Place strawberries and blackberries on the yogurt. 3) Drizzle with the strawberry and blackberry jellies. Tap on the counter slightly to help the fruit settle in the yogurt. Freeze for four hours. Take the bark out and cut or break into pieces. 4) Store in a zip-close bag in the freezer until ready to eat or gift. Consider thawing 5-10 minutes before eating.

<https://food.unl.edu/recipe/festive-fruit-bark>.

### Mixed Berry Chia Jam

*A quick jam to help you sweeten up gift-giving!*

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups berries, fresh or frozen, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon honey

**Directions:** 1) Place all fruit in a small saucepan over medium heat. Stir occasionally until the fruit begins to soften and boil. 2) With a fork or potato masher, crush the fruit to your desired consistency. 3) Stir in the chia seeds and honey until well combined. 4) Remove from heat and let it cool. 5) Serve and enjoy or store in a tightly sealed jar or container.

<https://eatfresh.org/recipe/snacks/mixed-berry-chia-jam>

## Herb or Fruit Vinegars – Easy to make and fun to give!

To make herb-vinegar, you need fresh or dried herbs (mint, basil, dill, oregano, chives, tarragon), sterilized glass jars/lids, vinegar, decorative labels, and small jars to put the vinegar in when done. Flavorings such as berries, lemon peel or garlic may also be added. To make fruit-flavored vinegars, it is best to use frozen fruit (raspberries, blueberries or cranberries).

#### Steps to making herb-flavored vinegars:

- Sterilize large (quart to gallon) glass containers to prevent microorganisms from clouding the vinegars.
- Insert the herbs into sterilized glass jar. Fill with vinegar (white vinegar has a milder flavor and apple cider vinegar is better with dark-colored herbs). Use one pint of vinegar per three to four sprigs of fresh herbs or three tablespoons of dried herbs.
- Loosely cap the jar (plastic lids or corks make the best seals, metal jar tops will rust).
- Store in a cool, dark place for a couple of weeks to blend.
- Filter with a cheesecloth or paper coffee filter and put into smaller containers for gifts.

#### Steps to making fruit-flavored vinegars:

- Put frozen fruit in a non-metal bowl and pour vinegar over the fruit.
- Cover and let it set in a cool, dark place for a couple of weeks to blend.
- Filter with a cheesecloth or paper coffee filter and put into smaller containers for gifts.

[https:// bit.ly/Herb-or-FruitVinegars](https://bit.ly/Herb-or-FruitVinegars).



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