



Kids In The Kitchen

Tips For Cooking Up A Family Tradition For The Holidays

(NAPS)—Whether enjoying roasted turkey with a glass of cranberry punch or pumpkin pie with a cup of eggnog, holiday meals are a wonderful time for families to come together to celebrate the season.

However, for many families, preparing a memorable holiday meal can be a stressful experience, especially when the kids are home from school during the holiday break. Rather than trying to keep them occupied so you can cook, bring your children into the kitchen to serve as your helpers and to create a new family tradition.

“Traditions establish ties that bind families together,” says Angie De La Cruz, a family and child therapist based in Dallas. “They provide continuity for children and help establish fond memories of their childhood, allowing them to re-create this sense of happiness when they have their own families later in life.”

According to De La Cruz, establishing a family tradition should be easy and fun for everyone involved, and should be designed to make your children feel a part of the whole holiday experience.

With the holiday meal often serving as a cornerstone during the seasonal festivities, allowing children to help with food and beverages and add their own creativity in the kitchen is a great way to establish lasting traditions. To help families get started, Canada Dry, maker of the well-known ginger ale, in conjunction with De La Cruz, offer the following tips and drink recipes to help children and adults create great holiday memories.

- **Start early.** Begin making plans at least one week in advance by deciding what you will be cooking and determining what part of the meal will be prepared by each family member. Poll the kids to see if they have a specific



A new family tradition: Involving the kids in holiday meal preparations.

dish or drink they'd like to make.

- **Shop 'til you drop.** Sit with the kids and make a list of all the necessary items for the meal, and consider taking the children with you shopping. This will guarantee the kids are involved from the start in preparing the meal.

- **Establish one-on-one time.** To keep the experience as stress-free as possible, schedule specific cooking times with each child. This allows you both to pay special attention to the dish or drink you're preparing as well as spend some quality time together during all the holiday hustle and bustle.

- **Involve the little ones.** Ensure that all the kids—regardless of age—are included in the preparations. Older children will certainly enjoy making their own special dishes, but for the little ones, assign specific tasks such as cracking eggs, pouring juice or stirring and mashing potatoes. This allows all your budding chefs to participate and gives you additional help.

- **Add a personal touch.** Encourage your kids to personalize their dishes—either by naming them or by adding their own special ingredients. To prevent Junior from adding hot sauce to the holiday punch, create a taste-testing

party before serving dinner. Everyone will love getting a sneak peek before the big event.

- **Remember to have fun.** With flour on the floor or cookie batter covering the dog, preparing a meal with kids is always an adventure, but it's a lot more fun to be cooking with company than to be stressed by preparing a big meal all by yourself.

To help you get started, try these easy, kid-friendly drink recipes from Canada Dry for your next holiday meal:

Easy Cranberry Punch

48 oz. cranberry juice
1 pint pineapple sherbet
2 liters Canada Dry
Cranberry Ginger Ale
Fresh cranberries

Combine first three ingredients together and chill. Garnish punch with fresh cranberries. Makes about 26 servings.

Santa's Surprise Punch

2 liters Canada Dry Ginger Ale
46 oz. pineapple juice
6 oz. frozen orange juice concentrate (thawed)
½ teaspoon peppermint extract
Maraschino cherries

Place one cherry in each cube of ice tray and fill with ginger ale. Freeze overnight. Combine chilled juices in punch bowl. Add peppermint extract and stir. Pour in remaining ginger ale and add prepared ice cubes. Makes 16 servings.

These simple tips can help create wonderful holiday traditions that your family will enjoy for generations to come.