

DECEMBER 2024

FOOD INSECURITIES NEWSLETTER



There's no better way to embrace the holiday spirit than by giving back. Local soup kitchens, food pantries, and food banks depend on volunteers to bring joy to families in need during this season. Whether you're serving meals on Christmas Day or assembling holiday meal boxes, your contribution can make a meaningful impact. Here are some resources to help you locate a food pantry or meal program if you need assistance affording food or would like to donate food.

Feeding America <https://www.feedingamerica.org/>

Food Pantries <https://foodpantries.org/>

United Food Operation

<https://unitedfoodoperation.org/participating-food-pantries/>

Mountaineer Food Bank

https://www.volunteermvc.org/agency/detail/?agency_id=57842

Local WFRN (WV Family Resource Network)

<https://wvfrn.org/>

Catholic Charities West Virginia

<https://www.cccwva.org/>

Local Community Churches

Local Community Action Agencies

Central WV Community Action

<https://centralwvaction.org/food-to-freedom/>

Nicholas County Community Action

<https://ncapwv.org/>

Raleigh County Community Action

<https://www.rccca.org/>

Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia

<https://www.casewv.org/>

Wyoming County:

God's Grace Ministry, 80 Orchard Avenue, Pineville, WV 24874

Matheny United Methodist Church, Rt. 10 Appalachian Hwy, Matheny, WV 24860, Phone (304)682-8480

Itmann Food Pantry, 306 Moran Avenue, Mullens, WV 25882 Phone (304)682-6061

Wyoming County Food Pantry, 155 Park Avenue, Pineville, WV 24874, Phone (304)-732-6446

McDowell County:

Five Loaves & Two Fishes Food Bank, Box 297, Roderfield, WV 24881, Phone (304)-585-7295

CREATE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS



The holiday season can be overwhelming. While movies show perfect holiday moments, the reality for many is stress and busyness. We want to create lasting memories but often get caught up in the frenzy of it all. With so many cherished traditions, it's impossible to fit them all into one day—but that's okay! Create a holiday bucket list with activities to enjoy throughout December. The traditions you grew up with create lasting memories, making the season even more nostalgic. It's never too late to start a new tradition, so check out these great Christmas activities to try this year and every year.



Have an Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest: Invite your whole crew to face off in their best one, and then pose for an awkward family photo that's guaranteed for a laugh!



Go for a Christmas Walk: Anyone can experience a sparkling touch of holiday magic by bundling up in a scarf and hat and strolling through the neighborhood to admire the homes adorned with Christmas lights. It's a tradition the whole family can enjoy!



Celebrate Sinterklaas: The Dutch tradition—known as Saint Nicholas Day—is celebrated on December 5 each year. The night before, children leave their shoes by the fireplace with carrots sticking out for Sinterklaas' horses. He then leaves a small gift, poem, or treat in exchange!



Hide the Pickle Ornament: In many families, Christmas Day begins with an exciting search. Both kids and adults eagerly search the tree for a small, green pickle-shaped ornament hidden among its branches. The lucky person who finds the pickle gets to open the first gift and boast about it until the following year. It kicks off the day with plenty of laughter and some friendly competition—just the way some families enjoy it. Plus, it's said to bring good fortune for the year ahead!



Set Out a Nativity Scene: Displaying a nativity scene is such a special Christmas tradition, especially for families with young children. This beautiful display will remind you of the true meaning of Christmas.



Host a White Elephant Gift Exchange: A White Elephant gift exchange is guaranteed to bring plenty of laughs. Your friends and family will have a blast competing for the best gifts during the game!



Create a Christmas Tablescape: Make your Christmas meal extra special by decorating your dining table. A holiday tablescape can be as creative as you like! Use a festive tablecloth, design a runner with a faux forest, or craft a unique DIY (Do It Yourself) Christmas centerpiece.

YOUR MAP TO A FOOD-SAFE HOLIDAY

Follow some simple food safety advice to keep you and your guests feeling festive this winter.

PROPER PREPPING

Just as you have a procedure for storing your holiday gifts when you get home, you should have a system for storing your food.

Make sure your fridge is set at or below **40 °F**. Chill perishable groceries within two hours of shopping.

Store raw meats in a container or dish to prevent juices from leaking and set below ready-to-eat foods.

Wash your hands for **20 SECONDS** with warm water and soap!

Be sure to separate raw meat from ready-to-eat foods and dishes.

Don't forget: You need two thermometers.



One for the fridge to ensure food is stored at 40 °F.



One for food, particularly meat, to ensure it's cooked to the right temperature.

HITTING THE ROAD

If you're bringing a dish to a get-together with coworkers, family or friends this holiday season, make sure you are transporting food safely.

KEEP COLD FOOD COLD

When transporting cold dishes, place items in a cooler with ice or gel packs to keep food at or below

40 °F

KEEP HOT FOOD HOT

Keep hot foods at or above

140 °F

by wrapping dishes in insulation bags or towels and newspaper.

DANGER ZONE



Perishable food kept in the Danger Zone (between 40 - 140 °F) for longer than 2 hours should be thrown out.

EXCEPTIONS

to Danger Zone include ready-to-eat items like



WELCOME TO *Roastville*

Always use a food thermometer to check that different holiday meats have been cooked to the right internal temperature.

- GROUND BEEF 160 °F
- VEAL* 145 °F
- DUCK 165 °F
- TURKEY 165 °F
- GOOSE 165 °F
- PORK* 145 °F
- LAMB* 145 °F
- STEAK* 145 °F

YIELD

*Don't forget resting time! Beef, veal, lamb, and pork should rest for **3 MINUTES** before carving or consuming.



For more food safety tips, go to FoodSafety.gov

HOT COCOA MIX



Ingredients

- 2 cups (250 g) confectioners' sugar*
- 1 cup (118 g) Dutch-processed cocoa powder
- 2 ½ cups (250 g) powdered milk
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

For Serving

- hot water (or milk)
- optional: mini marshmallows, whipped cream sprinkles, and candy canes

Directions

1. In a large mixing bowl, add the confectioners' sugar, cocoa powder, powdered milk, cornstarch, and salt. Whisk together to combine.
2. Store the mixture in an airtight container for up to a year. This will make 4½ cups of hot cocoa mix, or enough for about 18 cups of hot cocoa.

Making a Cup of Hot Cocoa

1. When making a cup of hot cocoa, use about ¼ of a cup of powder per cup of hot water or milk, or adjust to taste preference.
2. Top the powder with ¼ cup of mini marshmallows if adding.
3. Pour hot liquid over the cocoa powder, stirring until the powder has dissolved.

Serve and Enjoy!

Find the recipe online:

<https://iambaker.net/hot-cocoa-mix-recipe/#wprm-recipe-container-121471>

CHRISTMAS CRINKLE COOKIES



INGREDIENTS

- 1 White Cake Mx 13.25oz
- 2 Eggs
- 1/3 Cup Olive Oil
- 1/3 Cup Powdered Sugar
- Red Food Coloring
- Green Food Coloring

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 375°F.
- Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper, silicone baking mat, or coat with nonstick baking spray.
- In a large mixing bowl, mix the cake mix, eggs, and olive oil. Mix until all ingredients are combined. I used a Danish dough whisk, but a large mixing spoon will also work. Using an electric mixer can make the dough too thick.
- Separate the dough equally into 2 bowls. In one bowl, using a toothpick add the red food coloring and in the other bowl using a different toothpick, add in the

green coloring. Mix this well until the desired color is reached.

- Using a small cookie scoop, roll the dough into smaller balls 1 1/2 Tbsp size.
- Then coat the dough ball in powdered sugar.
- Place on the cookie sheet, leaving 1 1/2 inches between each ball to allow the cookies to spread.
- Bake in a preheated oven for 9-12 minutes.
- Cool on cookie sheet for 2 minutes before moving them to a cooling rack.

Serve and Enjoy!

Find the recipe online:

<https://www.mommyhatescooking.com/best-christmas-crinkle-cookies-recipe>

For more information or if you have any questions, please reach out to Linda Prutsok at linda.k.prutsok@wv.gov or call 304-872-9200 Ext. 104.

