

Gift-Wrapping Tips for Holiday Goodies

(NAPSA)—A package of personally wrapped homemade goodies is almost always a welcomed gift during the holiday season. However, keeping that special gift fresh and intact through the rigors of the mail system can be quite tricky if you're not sure how to prepare or pack your treat properly.

Help ensure that your hours in the kitchen are not wasted by using some of these simple packaging tips for your holiday breads and cookies.

Cookies

- Bar cookies and soft cookies are best for mailing. Avoid sending thin cookies, or those with frostings or pointed edges.

- Wrap cookies in pairs, flat sides together using foil or plastic wrap.

- Use rigid containers such as cookie tins, decorative cardboard, wooden boxes or even coffee cans.

- If packing a variety of cookies in one container, place several of one kind of cookie in separate paper or foil cupcake liners.

Quick Breads

- Loaf pans are not mandatory for bread baking. A 1½-quart casserole dish can be substituted for one 8 x 4-inch loaf pan. A 2-quart casserole dish can replace one 9 x 5-inch loaf pan.

- Most breads stay fresh for 5 to 7 days at room temperature if wrapped tightly.

- Always pad the bottom of your gift box with several layers of filler. Add the bread, then add more filler around the sides and on top before sealing your package.

Bake in the spirit of the season with this delicious recipe for Pumpkin Cranberry Bread, courtesy of Nestlé USA. This simple-to-make treat can be beautifully wrapped and sent to friends and family, no matter where they might be during the holidays.

For more holiday baking ideas and recipes, visit the Web site at www.VeryBestBaking.com.



PUMPKIN CRANBERRY BREAD

(Makes 5 or 6 mini loaves)

- 3 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice**
- 2 teaspoons baking soda**
- 1½ teaspoons salt**
- 3 cups granulated sugar**
- 1 can (15 ounces) Libby's 100% Pure Pumpkin**
- 4 large eggs**
- 1 cup vegetable oil**
- ½ cup Apple Flavor Libby's Juicy Juice 100% Juice**
- 1 cup sweetened dried, fresh or frozen cranberries**

PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Grease and flour five or six 5 x 3-inch mini-disposable or metal loaf pans.

COMBINE flour, pumpkin pie spice, baking soda and salt in large bowl. Combine sugar, pumpkin, eggs, oil and apple juice in large mixer bowl; beat until just blended. Add pumpkin mixture to flour mixture; stir just until moistened. Fold in cranberries. Spoon batter into prepared loaf pans.

BAKE for 50 to 55 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks for 10 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely.