

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You



Spread Holiday Joy with Gifts that Keep Giving

For many of us, the holidays are a joyous time with family and friends, celebrating traditions and making favorite holiday recipes. The hustle and bustle of the season can bring added stress, especially when it's time to buy gifts. The pressure of trying to find the perfect gift for someone or a gift for the person who has everything, can steal some of your bliss. One way to hold onto the joy of the season and lower stress is to simplify gift giving with consumable gifts. A consumable gift is one that can be used up, often by eating or drinking. It can also be an experience. Think about the person you are buying a gift for, and the places and activities they enjoy.

Consumable gifts include food, drinks, lotion, soaps, colognes, acts of service, gift cards, books, massage, fitness or cooking classes, movies, and music. Consumable gifts can be homemade or store bought.

Some benefits of giving consumable gifts:

- They fit every budget
- It's an item the person already likes and uses
- It's an experience they can share
- The recipient won't need to find a place to display it, dust it, or store it
- Your gift won't add to their stuff or add clutter

Research shows clutter in the home decreases quality of life, reduces productivity, and adds to everyday stress.

Give a gift that keeps on giving after the holidays are over. Consumable gifts are useful, personal and meaningful. Giving someone a gift you know they will use, or an experience they can share with others, delivers more lasting happiness than an object. As the gift giver you'll have warm memories without the guilt, debt and stress. Have fun and get creative with your ideas.

Happy holidays and happy gifting!

Resources: [wellnessmama.com](https://www.wellnessmama.com); [webmd.com](https://www.webmd.com); [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

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Have an Attitude of Gratitude

An attitude of gratitude may be the best kept secret for an abundance of health benefits. It can improve your physical health, reduce stress, and improve your social connections. Expressing gratitude can enhance your self-esteem, improve sleep, and reduce negative emotions. The mind-shifting effects from having an attitude of gratitude can make you a happier person. Practice gratitude this holiday season and see how it positively impacts your life.

Here are some simple ways you can practice being grateful every day:

- **Journal:** Write down 3 things you are grateful for each night before bed.
- **Thank you notes:** Write a



thank you to co-workers, family members, or friends to let them know you appreciate them.

- **Stop and savor:** Pause when you feel a positive emotion and savor those feelings. Notice them, stay mindful in the moment, and keep doing that throughout your day.
- **Positive affirmations:** Repeat short phrases to yourself when you wake up in the morning, like "I am grateful for today" or "Today will be a great day."

- **Gratitude jar:** Keep a jar full of memories, encouraging quotes, or things you are grateful for in life. Pull one out each day or keep it handy to access when you need a pick-me-up.

Our brains are trained to notice the negative things that happen. If we practice expressing gratitude every day, we reinforce what's positive in our lives. Test it out this holiday season...you'll be glad you did!

Resources: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov); hsph.harvard.edu

Chicken and White Bean Soup (Serves 6)

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 leeks, white and light green parts only, cut into ¼ inch rounds
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage, or ¼ teaspoon dried
- 2 14-ounce cans reduced sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 15-ounce can cannellini beans, rinsed
- 1 2-pound roasted chicken, skin discarded, meat removed

from bones and shredded (4 cups)

Directions

Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add leeks and cook, stirring often, until soft, about 3 minutes. Stir in sage and continue cooking until aromatic, about 30 seconds. Stir in broth and water, increase heat to high, cover and bring to a boil. Add beans and chicken and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until heated through, about 3 minutes. Serve hot.



Make Ahead Tip: Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Recipe courtesy of [Eatingwell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com); for nutritional information click [here](#).

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