Budget Friendly Gift Ideas: DIY Mason Jar Mixes
By Chef Jen, LDN/RDN, RYT-200

It has been quite the year! So much stress, so many jobs and livelihoods put on the line, so many upheavals and many deaths. But, 2020 is finally coming to an end, YAY! However, that means, it’s the holiday season; which could mean a very happy time to celebrate, or a sad time to celebrate without loved ones, or it may be the most dreaded time of year emotionally and/or financially. COVID has taken its toll on both those aspects. With that in mind, I have developed some easy, homemade, sustainable gifts that you can make for anyone without hurting your wallet. Yes– sustainable because you are re-using glass jars and utilizing products that most people already have in house!

If you refer back to my pantry staples blog, you can see what I recommend to have on hand for whipping up homemade meals and snacks. All-purpose flour (aka plain white flour), baking powder, salt, cocoa, cinnamon, sugar, brown sugar and oats are some of them used in these recipes. The items you may not have are: dried milk and/or buttermilk powder and powdered vanilla non-dairy creamer. But that’s ok! Those ingredients are affordable and can be found in any grocery store. Exception: buttermilk powder. I have found it in only one store and on Amazon. However, you can easily sub regular powdered milk in place of the buttermilk. So, do not stress if you can’t find it.

Why Do DIY?
Check out these perks listed below:

1. They leave the ingredients that are perishable and may cost more money, to the receiver. Those ingredients are eggs, vanilla, bananas and water.

2. You are reusing jars and saving the environment by using what you already have on hand. They can be old jelly, pickle or yogurt jars!

2. You can easily adapt to allergies. Here are allergen friendly swaps that you can suggest on the recipe card:

- **Egg allergy** (1 large egg)– 3 tbsp water + 1 tbsp ground flax meal or Chia seeds (whisk and let sit for 10 minutes before use)

OR 1 tsp baking soda + 1 Tbsp vinegar (distilled white or apple cider preferred for baking)

OR 1 small, ripe, mashed banana (keep in mind that this will give you banana flavor in recipe)

- **Milk allergy**– sub milk powder for powdered non-dairy coffee creamer

- **Instead of Oil**– use equal parts of unsweetened, plain applesauce.
3. No additives or other anti-caking agents or ingredients you cannot pronounce are in these.

4. You can use wax paper as a lid if you don't have the original lid. I recommend placing the wax paper first, then you can make it more of a gift by placing tissue paper over the wax or wrapping the whole jar in tissue paper.

OR you can put a simple bow on the lid.

5. These are gifts that you can give for any occasion!!!!!

6. Finally, the best part about gifts that are homemade, they really come from the heart. I hope that you all get to enjoy making these gifts for others or yourself! (personally I LOVE The hot chocolate mix 😂)

Have a safe and wonderful break!

Wishing you peace, love, happiness and good eats!!!

~~~~ Chef Jen.