

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

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*“Share in the Baking Fun!”*

Time in the kitchen is a great family activity. Although, we have been blessed with some warm weather lately, with more on the way, our outdoor activities can be limited in the winter months. Baking as a family is not one of those! We missed it by a smidge, but February is Bake for Family Fun Month, promoted by the Home Baking Association. Check out their website for more information:

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

Each week, they have developed baking activities, recipes and opportunities to get the family together to bake. This can be a multi-generational activity with tasty treats to share with family and friends. The Home Baking Association has resources, recipes and activities to help families start in the kitchen. Week one focuses on the basics of baking and provides tips for those starting in the kitchen and feature videos and lessons for teaching kids to bake.

Baking is a great way to teach basic food safety practices that can apply to all food preparation. Parents can be teachers to show the importance of hand washing, cleaning equipment, appliances and baking surfaces often, checking for doneness of foods with a food thermometer and more.

Another week is designed to build family baking traditions and learn about baking history. The final week encourages positive connection by baking for others, featuring unique recipes and guides for allergies and other special food needs when baking. Giving baked goods to other family members, neighbors or teachers is a great and tasty way to keep in touch with them or thank a teacher.

When preparing food, one common food safety issue is sampling raw dough or batter. There have been several foodborne illness outbreaks traced to consuming raw dough or batter. All flour is raw, just like eggs, so it is important to cook or bake dough or batter first before eating. Always wash your hands, utensils and surfaces after mixing and handling raw batter and dough.

A neat way of adding fun to the kitchen is by wearing a fun apron or matching aprons, having a cookie decorating competition, testing kids' math skills by reading a recipe and determining what tool should be used to measure ingredients, or having a theme or special event to bake tasty treats.

Information comes from Kansas State University food scientist, Karen Blakeslee.

If you are looking for Family and Consumer Sciences programming through Extension, please consider liking our Greenwood County Extension Facebook page to follow along and learn more about upcoming programs.

For more information regarding upcoming programs, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Ben Sims, at [benjam63@ksu.edu](mailto:benjam63@ksu.edu), or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.