



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/mailling-holiday-food-gifts>

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K-State food scientist shares tips for mailing holiday food gifts

Ship perishable foods overnight, Blakeslee says

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – If you’re thinking about mailing food gifts for the holidays this year, there are some extra precautions you should plan for beforehand, according to Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee.

“It is highly recommended to ship perishable food overnight,” said Blakeslee, who is also the coordinator of [K-State’s Rapid Response Center for Food Science](#).

Also, for perishable foods, Blakeslee said packages should be marked as “Keep Refrigerated” or “Keep Frozen,” depending on the particular food item. “And always let the recipient know that the package is on it’s way,” Blakeslee said.

Some additional tips:

- Ship in a sturdy box with packing to prevent breakage.
- Pack with a cold source, such as frozen gel packs or dry ice.
- Use permanent markers to write the address on the outside of the box.
- Do not send to business addresses or where there will not be adequate refrigerator storage.
- Send packages at the beginning of the week so that they’re not sitting in a post office or delivery facility over the weekend.
- When possible, send foods that don’t require refrigeration.

Mailing perishable foods is more risky than non-perishable goods, according to Blakeslee. She also suggests avoiding foods packaged in glass containers, such as jelly, which can break and the added weight increases shipping costs.

“Instead of shipping foods items yourself, leave it to the companies that sell and mail food items,” Blakeslee said.

If you receive perishable foods, Blakeslee suggests checking the temperature of the food when it arrives: “Cold foods should be below 40 degrees Fahrenheit,” she said. “If there are any problems related to temperature, contact the company and do not eat the food.”

Blakeslee cited [information from the extension service at the University of Minnesota](#) which notes that some foods that ship best include dried beef; dehydrated soups and drink mixes; condiments such as hot sauce and other seasonings packets; canned foods; dried fruits; and hard candies, or sturdy homemade sweets.

When sending cookies, bars and homemade candies, consider wrapping each piece individually and pack items in commercially popped corn, foam packing ‘peanuts,’ or bubble wrap.

More food safety tips are available online from K-State’s [Rapid Response Center for Food Science](#). Blakeslee publishes a monthly newsletter, called [You Asked It!](#), with timely tips for safe food in and out of the home.

More information is also available at [local extension offices in Kansas](#).

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FOR PRINT MEDIA: Links used in this story

Rapid Response Center for Food Science (Kansas State University), <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu>

Shipping food safely (University of Minnesota), <https://extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/mailling-food-gifts>

You Asked It! food safety newsletter, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension statewide locations, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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