

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

College of Agriculture

GIFTS FROM YOUR KITCHEN

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GIFTS FROM YOUR KITCHEN

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We all know what it is to shop for a gift of just the right sort and be unable to find it. The experience leaves us tired, disgusted, and with that feeling that tells us "it may not be worth it after all." Sometimes we give up and send money or some second-rate gift without personality, originality, or any of the qualities that make up the thoughtful gift.

We think most about gifts at Christmas time, but we often want to give at other times, too. Gifts show thoughtfulness for sick friends; they show our regard for neighbors and friends, and the concern we feel when someone we have come to care for leaves our neighborhood.

Here are simple suggestions that may help you to solve such a problem the next time you have to go "gift hunting." The materials are right in your own kitchen or garden. The gift will be the more appreciated because you had a hand in producing it rather than buying it from a store. Try some of the suggestions. Other folks have used them and have had a great deal of satisfaction from them.

GIFT IDEAS

- Tie a bright red ribbon on a huge winter squash to make a welcome gift.
- 2. Assemble small jars to carry a variety of your favorite salad dressing to a special friend.
- 3. Share a jar of mincemeat or a bottle of catsup from your pantry shelf.
- A pint of whipping cream can give your city cousins a real treat.
 Give a roll of unbaked cooky dough. Include directions for baking.
 Put a dozen farm-fresh eggs in a gaily decorated box. Tuck in your favorite omelet recipe if you want to.
- Make a jar of spicy barbecue sauce. Wrap it gaily. Send it with padded "barbecue mitts" to the "chef" of the family.
- Make up herb bouquets for gifts to those who "have everything."
 Use a large garden basket as the container for your home grown fruits or vegetables. Fill the basket with squash or apples. Decorate with shiny, green leaves and red berries.
- 10. Pack clusters of evergreen sprigs with jars of your choicest jams and jellies. 11. Sew two mesh dish cloths together to make a bag for fruits, vegetables or nuts.
- Decorate with cones or seedpods.
- 12. For friends with freezer storage space, wrap up a recipe's worth of your special casserole, or other frozen taste treat. Tape on instructions for final preparation.
- Give fragrant sugar-coated doughnuts in a gay, red cellophane-covered basket.
 Bake individual steamed puddings in custard cups. Tie the hard sauce in a waxed paper bag to accompany the gift-puddings.
- 15. Put salted or spiced nuts in paper cartons covered with aluminum foil.

 16. Wrap individual mincemeat pies in cellophane. Tag each one for the person to whom it is to go.
- 17. Bake tender loaves of oatmeal or bran bread in glass bread pans to give to your busy homemaker friends.
- 18. Make a gift box from an empty cereal carton for your cooky assortment.

HOLIDAY BAKING

For America, holiday baking can be a friendly mingling of Old World tradition with New World adaptations. In true neighborly fashion we have exchanged recipes with our friends around the world. Food speaks

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an international language and a friendly one, too. Originally many of our traditional holiday delicacies had their own stories. Gradually the stories have changed and been forgotten, but the bread and cookies still belong to holidays and gift giving. And many of us are finding such foods as good for summer time gifts or gifts in other seasons of the year as they are for Christmas or other holidays. Try some of them the next time you need a gift with individuality.

German Stollen looks like a huge Parkerhouse roll studded with fruits and nuts. Vanocka, made by piling braid upon braid of dough to form a scalloped loaf, is the Bohemian version. The Feast Cake of Greece is three round loaves baked together to resemble a three-petaled flower.

Basic sweet yeast dough is the foundation for all of these.

Foundation Sweet Dough

2 packages yeast (compressed or dry granular)

4 cup lukewarm water

I cup milk ¼ cup butter ½ cup sugar teaspoon salt

eggs, beaten teaspoon grated lemon rind, if desired

5 cups sifted flour (about)

Soften yeast in water between 95° and 105°. (Near 95° for compressed yeast and near 105° for active dry yeast.) Scald milk. Add butter, sugar and salt. Cool to lukewarm (95° or less). Add flour to make a thick batter. Add yeast, eggs, and lemon rind. Beat well. Add enough more flour to make a soft dough. Turn out on lightly floured board and knead until satiny. Place in a greased bowl, cover and let rise until double in bulk. When light, punch down. Shape into tea rings, rolls, or coffee cakes. Let rise until double in bulk. Bake in a moderate oven 375° for 25 to 30 minutes for coffee cakes, 20 to 25 minutes for rolls. Yield: Two 12-inch tea rings or about 3½ dozen rolls.

One of the most gracious "good neighbor" gifts imaginable is a fresh holly wreath coffee cake for Christmas breakfast. The Swedish tea ring with cinnamon roll petals becomes a really festive wreath when you decorate with sugar icing and dot it with candied cherries and bits of citron.

Try baking a Christmas tree coffee cake. You can make one simply by swirling rolls of dough back and forth on the baking sheet to form the tree. All sorts of holiday sweets anchored in the branches will give the tree sparkle. Wrap it in bright cellophane for the friend you want the tree sparkle. Wrap it in bright cellophane long spirit SITY OF IDAH

QUICK BREADS

Date Bread

1 cup chopped dates 1 teaspoon soda 1 cup boiling water

1 cup sugar 1 egg

½ teaspoon vanilla 1¾ cups all-purpose sifted flour ½ cup chopped walnuts 3 Tablespoons melted butter

Dissolve soda in water and pour over dates. Mash well with potato masher and cool. Combine all the remaining ingredients. Add the date mixture. Pour into well greased 9' x 5" x 3" loaf pan. Bake in a moderate oven (350°) for about 1 hour, or until a wooden pick thrust into the center comes out clean.

Cranberry Nut Bread

2 cups cranberries (washed and cut in half)

4 cup coarsely cut pecans

1 egg

1/3 cup orange juice

2/3 cup water

2 Tablespoons butter, melted

2 cups sifted all-purpose flour 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar 1¼ teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt ½ teaspoon soda

1 teaspoon grated orange rind

Mix the cranberries with half the sugar. Let stand while preparing rest of ingredients (about ½ hour). Sift remaining sugar, flour, baking powder, salt and soda together. Combine the well beaten egg with the orange juice and water. Add melted butter. Add liquid all at once to dry ingredients. Stir only enough to moisten all ingredients. Add nuts, orange rind and cranberries. Blend, but do not overmix.

Pour into well greased 9" x 5" x 3" loaf pan and let stand 20 minutes. Bake in moderate oven (350°) for about 70 minutes or until it tests done. Let set in pan 10 minutes before removing.

TREATS FROM YOUR COOKIE JAR

Holiday time is cooky time. Cookies make nice fill-ins for the boxes you send to the folks away from home. Many kinds of cookies are simple and fun to make. Here are some varieties that pack well:

Dream Bars

½ cup shortening ½ teaspoon salt ½ cup brown sugar 1 cup sifted flour

Mix ingredients well. Pat into unoiled $9" \times 12"$ pan. Bake 15 minutes in 350° oven or until slightly brown.

Blend following ingredients and spread over this layer:

1 cup brown sugar 1 teaspoon vanilla ½ teaspoon baking powder ½ teaspoon salt ½ cups coconut

2 beaten eggs 2 Tablespoons flour

2 Tablespoons flour 1 cup chopped nuts
Bake 15 to 20 minutes in 350° oven. Cut while still warm. Makes
30 cookies 1" x 2".

Chocolate Delights

2 cups sifted flour 1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

½ cup lard ¾ cup chopped nuts 1 cup sugar 2 eggs 1 teaspoon vanilla

1 (8-oz. pkg.) chocolate bits

Sift flour with baking powder and salt. Cream lard, add sugar and continue creaming. Add eggs and vanilla and beat until fluffy. Add sifted dry ingredients. Mix thoroughly. Spread in greased 8" x 12" pan. Sprinkle with chocolate bits, spread with meringue, sprinkle with nuts. Bake in 350° oven for 35 to 40 minutes.

Meringue

2 egg whites

1 cup brown sugar 1 teaspoon vanilla

Beat egg whites until stiff. Add sugar and vanilla slowly and continue beating until smooth.

When cookies are cool cut in 2-inch squares. Makes 24 squares.

Scandinavian Jelly Drops

½ cup shortening 1 egg, separated ¼ teaspoon salt

1 cup finely chopped nuts

¼ cup brown sugar cup sifted all-purpose flour flavoring tart jelly, preferably red

Cream shortening; gradually add sugar; beat in unbeaten egg yolk. Sift flour and salt and add to creamed mixture; blend well. Pinch off bits of dough and roll into balls. Dip balls in slightly beaten egg whites, then roll in chopped nuts. Using the end of a wooden spoon or your finger, make a depression in center of each. Bake in a slow oven (325°) for 25-30 minutes. On taking cookies from oven, immediately fill depression in each one with dab of jelly. Adding the jelly while the cooky is hot melts the jelly just enough to hold it in place.

CHEESE

Cheese, whether plain or combined into a "dip" or "spread," is a well-appreciated gift. During Christmas it makes a nice change from the many sweet desserts and tidbits.

Almond Cheese Logs

Everyone likes this cheese-nut combination. Wrap two cylinders or logs of the cheese and place them on both sides of a single row of crisp, cellophane-wrapped crackers. Tie all three together; add a card that says "Keep cheese in the refrigerator."

1 3-ounce package cream cheese ½ pound natural cheddar cheese

1 cup shelled almonds, finely chopped

1 pimiento, finely chopped 1 Tablespoon lemon juice

1½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon grated onion dash cayenne pepper paprika finely chopped almonds

Soften cream cheese at room temperature. Grate cheddar cheese. Combine all but last two ingredients; mix well. Shape into two rolls, each about 7 inches long; roll one in paprika, other in almonds. Wrap in waxed paper; chill. To serve, cut into thin slices; place on crisp crackers.

Clam and Cheese Dip

1 7-ounce can minced clams

2 3-ounce packages cream cheese

¼ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons grated onion

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

3 drops Tabasco sauce

2 teaspoons lemon juice 1 teaspoon chopped parsley

Drain clams and save liquor. Soften cheese at room temperature. Combine all ingredients except liquor; blend into a paste. Gradually add about 4 cup clam liquor and beat until consistency of whipped cream. Chill. Serve in a bowl surrounded by crackers or potato chips. Makes about 1 pint dip.

BEVERAGES

Beverages play many roles-as a basis for a social break in a working day, an informal get-together, or a fancy function. A friend in town would appreciate a jar full of a tasty beverage any time.

Hot Spiced Tomato Juice

4 cups tomato juice 2 Tablespoons catsup 1 lemon, juice and grated rind ½ teaspoon Tabasco sauce

Tablespoon Vorcestershire sauce
Combine all ingredients and bring just to the boiling point over
medium heat. Serves 6 to 8.

Cranberry Punch Concentrate

1 quart cranberries 1½ quarts water 2 cups sugar juice of 12 lemons (or equivalent in frozen lemon juice, or lemon juice concentrate)

Simmer cranberries in water until all skins pop. Strain. Add lemon

juice and sugar to hot juice. Mix.

This quantity is diluted to one gallon with water for serving. When using as a gift, include these instructions for diluting.

NOTE: For extra zip a quart of ginger ale plus some finely chopped ice can be added to the cold diluted punch. Stir well and serve.

CANDY

Candy-making is one of the happiest traditions in the art of cooking. Youngsters enjoy candy-making parties the year round, and homemakers find candies add to holiday festivities and gift lists.

There are two general types of homemade candies—the soft, creamy fudges with tiny crystalline structure, and the chewy or hard types such as caramels and brittles which have a noncrystalline texture. These give us our candy-making problems—how we can be sure to get only small crystals in creamy candies and no crystals at all in the chewy or brittle kinds.

Fortunately there are definite rules to help us. Let's consider them.

Soft, Creamy Candies

Fudge is probably the most popular of all our homemade, soft candies. There are many varieties—mocha, butterscotch, peanut butter, and chocolate, all rich and creamy. By "creamy" we mean that the texture is smooth but not grainy, soft but not sticky.

The secrets of getting this creamy consistency in candy are many but simple and easy to master with patient practice. For the cooking, choose a heavy, smooth-sided pan large enough to allow the syrup mixture to boil without boiling over. When you combine the sugar with the liquid, stir the mixture until the sugar dissolves and the mixture starts to cook. Cook quickly at first then lower the heat and cook slowly. Long, slow cooking seems to develop small crystals rather than the larger granules that cause "sugaring." Use a lid during the first part of the cooking period. The steam which collects will wash the crystals down from the sides of the pan. Do not continue stirring after the sugar has dissolved. A candy thermometer makes testing easier. Most experts like to use the cold water test as well.

When the syrup reaches the right consistency, remove it from the heat. Leave the syrup alone to cool to lukewarm or about 110°. Beating the syrup while it is too hot will cause large crystals to form. When

the mixture is cool add the flavoring. With a heavy spoon beat the syrup until it becomes creamy. The mixture will thin slightly and stiffen suddenly. At this point, you need to work rapidly to pour it into shallow, oiled pans before it loses its gloss. If creamy candies stiffen too quickly, knead them with your hands to soften them. Occasionally it may be necessary to add water and reboil candy that has "sugared."

Adding lemon juice, cream of tartar, corn syrup, honey, butter, or cream helps to retard crystal growth or "turning to sugar." Add two tablespoons of corn syrup to any fudge recipe to insure creaminess unless your recipe includes the syrup. The temperature to which you cook the candy to reach the soft-ball state will then be slightly higher. A large proportion of any one of these last-named ingredients will increase the cooking time. Too much of any one of them may cause the product to be sticky.

Hard or Chewy Candies

In these candies so much corn syrup, butter and acid are usually added that it is impossible for enough sugar molecules to get together to form crystals.

Soda, added to brittles, lessens the bitter flavor, gives a porous texture, and neutralizes the acidity.

There are tricks of the trade for noncrystalline candies, too. Follow a reliable recipe accurately. You need to stir frequently to prevent the mixture from sticking to the bottom of the pan. Pour the cooked syrup into well-oiled pans but do not scrape the cooking pan. Grainy streaks in the product may result if you do.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Greasing the edge of the kettle prevents the syrup from boiling over. Dipping scissors in hot water aids you in cutting marshmallows. Melting dipping-chocolate slowly over water prevents streaking. Be sure to remove the pan of candy from the heat when making the "cold-water test." This will prevent overcooking while you make the test. Be sure to read the thermometer while the bulb is in the liquid but not touching the pan. Have your eye on a level with the part of the scale you are reading.

Cut candy into squares when firm but not so hard that it cracks in the cutting process. Dipping the knife in hot water will make cutting easier.

TEMPERATURE TESTS FOR CANDY MAKING AT VARIOUS ALTITUDES Degrees F. on Candy Thermometer

Product	Test in Cold Water*	Sea Level	2,000 Feet	5,000 Feet
Fudge, Panocha Fondant	Soft Ball (can be picked up but flattens)	234° to 240° F.	230° to 236° F	224° to 230° F.
Caramels	Firm Ball (holds shape unless pressed)	242° to 248° F.	238° to 244° F.	232° to 238° F.
Divinity, Taffy and Caramel Corn	Hard Ball (holds shape though pliable)	250° to 268° F	246° to 264° F.	240° to 258° F.
Butterscotch, English Toffee	Soft Crack (separates into hard threads but not brittle)	270° to 290° F	266° to 286° F.	260° to 280° F.
Brittles	Hard Crack (separates into hard and brittle threads)	300° to 310° F.	296° to 306° F.	290° to 300° F.

^{*}Drop about ½ tsp. of boiling syrup into one cup cold water and test firmness of mass with fingers.

In parts of Idaho it is necessary to make corrections in thermometer readings for altitude. The simplest way is to immerse the thermometer bulb in boiling water for about 2 minutes and note the temperature at which the water boils. From 212° , subtract the temperature at which the water comes to a boil at your altitude. Then subtract this difference from the temperature given in the recipe. For example, if water boils at 208° at your altitude the difference is 4° . If the recipe indicates that you should cook the mixture to 270° , you will cook it to 170° minus 4° or 266° instead of 270° .

The food value of candy

Wholesome candy is a source of quick energy, and has a real place in our diets. Eaten in moderation and after meals, it is a good food. The habitual eating of even the purest candy is sure to put on pounds for adults, and, eaten between meals, it is sure to dull the appetites of children and grownups alike. Delay until as late as possible the day your child eats his first piece of candy. Too many sweets between meals makes a condition in the mouth favorable for tooth decay. Keep candyeating on a health basis. Overindulging between meals is not a good health habit.

CANDY RECIPES

Chocolate Fudge

1 Tablespoons corn syr

2 Tablespoons corn syrup ¾ cup milk

½ teaspoon salt

1 cup broken nut meats, optional

2 cups sugar 2 squares (oz.) unsweetened chocolate grated or 6 Tablespoons cocoa

1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine all ingredients except vanilla and nut meats in large heavy sauce pan. Stir constantly until sugar and chocolate are melted, then cook to 234° (soft ball). Remove from fire and cool to lukewarm (110° F). Add vanilla and beat until fudge is firm enough to hold its shape when a little is dropped from the spoon. Stir in nut meats, if used, and turn into oiled pan. Cut into squares when firm.

Mexican Fudge

3 cups sugar Pinch of salt
1 cup milk ½ cup butter
½-1 orange 1 cup nuts, chopped

½—1 orange

Caramelize one cup of sugar in a heavy skillet until golden brown.

Do not scorch it. Thin and dissolve the caramel syrup in one cup of milk. Stir over heat until dissolved. Add two cups of sugar and cook to 240° (soft ball). Remove from heat and add ½ cup butter, grated rind of orange, pinch of salt and chopped nuts. Do not stir. Cool to 130°; then beat until creamy. Drop from a teaspoon on oiled paper or pour into oiled pan. Cut into squares when firm.

Date Roll

2 cups sugar 1½ cups pitted dates 1 cup milk 1 Tablespoon butter 1 teaspoon vanilla 1 cup nuts, chopped

Cook sugar and milk to soft ball stage (236°). Add dates cut in thirds and cook until they seem to melt (about 5 minutes). Remove from heat and add butter, vanilla and nuts. Cool slightly. Beat while warm till creamy, pour into a wet cloth and roll up into a sausage shape about 1½ inches in diameter. Tie each end and hang or leave on table till cold. Cut into slices of desired thickness.

NOTE: This candy is an exception to the rule "cool creamy type candy to lukewarm or about 110° before beating." Beat date roll while still warm,

Divinity

3 cups sugar 2 egg whites ¾ cup light corn syrup 1 teaspoon melted butter ½ cup water 2 cup nuts

1 teaspoon flavoring

Mix sugar, syrup and water. Boil to soft ball stage (240°). Pour half of this syrup over the stiffly beaten egg whites, beating constantly. Boil the remaining syrup until it reaches the hard ball stage (256°). Pour into the first mixture and beat until it holds its shape. Add nuts, butter and flavoring just before turning out. Dip out by spoonfuls and drop on waxed paper or pour into buttered pan and cut into squares. Candied cherries, dates or other fruits may be added. Brown sugar seafoam can be made from this recipe. Use equal parts of brown and white sugar.

Butter Nut Crunch

Combine: ½ teaspoon salt ½ cup butter

¼ cup water

Cook to soft crack stage (278°). Pour onto greased cookie sheet.

Do not scrape the pan. Cool.

Melt one 6 oz. package of chocolate chips. Spread half the chocolate mixture over the candy. Sprinkle with ½ cup finely chopped nuts. Cool.

Turn and spread other side with chocolate and sprinkle with nuts. When cool, break into pieces to serve.

Marshmallows (Mixer method)

1 envelope gelatin. $^{1\!\!/}_{3\!\!/}$ cup cold water. Place over boiling water and stir until gelatin is in:

dissolved.

½ cup sugar and stir until dissolved. Remove from heat. Add: 2/3 cup light corn syrup into large bowl of electric mixer.

1 teaspoon vanilla and the gelatin and sugar mixture.

Beat on highest speed of electric mixer until mixture becomes thick and of soft marshmallow consistency, about 15 minutes. While mixture is beating, thoroughly cover bottom of pan (about 7" x 10" x 12") with mixture of equal parts powdered sugar and cornstarch. Pour in the marshmallow. Let cool about 1 hour. Cut in squares with a sharp knife moistened in cold water. Roll squares in additional sugar mixture.

Chocolate Dipping

For Nuts, Fruits and Cookies

Add chocolates to your list of homemade candies and cookies. They are easy to do.

There are three kinds of dipping chocolate-sweet, milk and bitter, each in a number of different qualities. Milk chocolate is preferred as it does not mask flavors of food being dipped, and has just enough waxiness to cool smooth and glossy.

You may make your own dipping chocolate by combining 1 pound bulk milk chocolate, sold in grocery stores, with a 4 ounce package of semi-sweet chocolate drops.

For each pound of candy \(\frac{1}{3}\) to \(\frac{1}{4}\) pound of dipping chocolate is required.

To melt chocolate:

Cut chocolate in small pieces into top of double boiler. Place over water in double boiler. Heat water to nearly boiling for sweet chocolate, or to about 140° F. for milk chocolate. Caution—do not boil water.

Stir chocolate until it begins to melt, remove double boiler from heat and stir until melted. If chocolate becomes too warm remove top of double boiler from water.

When chocolate is melted remove from hot water and cool to about 85° F. or until it begins to harden around the edges. It may be cooled in pan or on oiled marble slab. Marble slab is suitable for large quantities.

Caution—do not use chocolate while it is still too warm—the coating will be white streaked.

To dip:

The items to be dipped must be dry before starting.

Room temperature should be between 65° - 70° F. as should items to be dipped. If centers are too cold, the candy will turn gray; if room is too warm, coating will be too thin or will not harden.

Hard centers to be dipped can be held between fingertips or on a two-tined fork. Place on waxed or oiled paper to harden. Cool at room temperature. When chocolate becomes too thick through cooling, place over hot water and stir until it softens.

STORING CANDIES

Keep creamy-type candies such as fudge or fondant fresh for several weeks by wrapping in waxed paper, cellophane, plastic wrap, or aluminum foil; then store in tightly covered container. Candies keep best when stored in cool dry place.

Wrap "chewy" candies, such as taffy or caramels, individually in waxed paper or aluminum foal to prevent them from becoming sticky. Store the same as fudge.

Wrap rolled candy in waxed paper, cellophane plastic wrap, or aluminum foil and store in refrigerator; slice off pieces as needed.

MAILING CANDIES

Make candies that will travel well, such as fudge, fondant, pralines, caramels, taffy and candied fruits and nuts.

Use sturdy cardboard or metal box lined with waxed paper for packing candies. Place cushion of crushed paper on bottom of box.

Wrap each piece of candy individually in waxed paper or aluminum foil. Arrange pieces of candy in rows in box and place crushed paper between layers and on the top to keep candy from breaking.

Tape box shut with brown paper tape. Print name and address plainly on front of package and label "Fragile, Handle With Care."