

2021 HOLIDAY

Gift Guide III

ADDING A TOUCH OF HOMEMADE TO YOUR GIFTS

Gifts from the heart are among the most coveted and appreciated come the holiday season. Few gifts may be as welcomed as those that can be eaten.

Turn extra time in the kitchen into opportunities to create festive treats that are ideal for gifting. But which items are the best of the best? These items will appeal to most foodies and others on your gift list.

Jams and preserves: Fruit jams and preserves are as at home on toast and biscuits as they are as fillings in cookies and tarts. Jams and preserves can be made with relatively few ingredients - gift them in a decorative jar that will be used again.

Cinnamon rolls: Warm, sticky and full of aromatic spice, cinnamon rolls are the

perfect comfort foods. These rolls do not typically have a long shelf life, gift them promptly on a pretty plate before they get stale.

Pancakes (or cookies) in a jar: If you have a fantastic recipe that you can't resist sharing, try turning it into a gift. Measure and package the ingredients into mason jars, tie with ribbons and include directions for preparation and cooking.

Mini bundt cakes: Fruit cakes may be a holiday standard, but bundt cakes make for great and traditional offerings as well. Miniature bundts filled with chocolate chips, dried fruits or even those soaked in a favorite boozy-butter glaze can be moist and delicious.

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Gather the kids and deck the halls with DIY decor

A day spent making homemade ornaments is a great way to decorate and spend quality time together as a family during the holiday season. Though families can let their imaginations run wild when making ornaments at home, the following are some great starting points that can serve as springboards for holiday crafting sessions.

Snowmen: The holiday season simply wouldn't be the same without snowmen. Homemade snowmen can be made out of ping pong balls, which are the ideal size when making ornaments for the Christmas tree. Those who want to go a little bigger can glue wiffle balls or large polystyrene balls together or create their own paper maché snowmen to display on mantles or on tables in a foyer or hallway.

Santa Claus: Another staple of holiday decor, Santa Claus has inspired many a DIY holiday ornament over the years. A paper plate Santa Claus with a cotton ball beard glued on can make for a fun Christmas craft, especially for young children who can't wait for the big guy to appear on Christmas Eve.

Penguins: Though they might not have a direct link to the holiday season, penguins evoke feelings of cold weather, making them an ideal addition to holiday decor schemes. Make your own penguin family using polystyrene craft balls in assorted sizes and then hang them on the tree or place them around the house.

Reindeer: Santa would not be able to get the job done each Christmas Eve without

his trustworthy team of reindeer. Popsicle stick reindeer projects can be fun for kids of all ages and a great way for youngsters to recognize the efforts of Dasher, Dancer, Comet, Cupid, and, of course, Rudolph, among others.

Cookie cutters: Family baking sessions are a holiday tradition for millions of people. Though that often leads to batches upon batches of tasty cookies, it also means families tend to have a surplus of holiday cookie cutters around the house. Surplus cookie cutters tend to be discarded or relegated to the miscellaneous items drawer in kitchens, but a more awe-inspiring fate can await them. A coat of paint, some glitter and a little bit of string or twine is all families need to transform their extra cookie cutters into colorful tree ornaments.

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ADDING A TOUCH OF HOMEMADE TO YOUR GIFTS



Continued from page 1G

Chocolate barks or fudges: Seasonal flavors come to life in chocolate treats. White chocolate filled with peppermint pieces or dark chocolate and cherry chunks are tasty pairings. Break apart portions of the bark or cut the fudge with cookie cutters and gift

inside cello bags tied with ribbons or in cardboard candy boxes.

Cocktail syrups: Create spicy or sweet syrups that are tailor-made for enhancing cocktails. Anyone on your gift list can then become a master mixologist. Gift with drink glasses.

Cookie ornaments: Cookies in Christmas shapes

can be decorated with royal icing to look like Christmas ornaments. They can be eaten or even placed on trees to complete holiday decor.

Festive cookie pops: Cookie pops can be made by mixing homemade or purchased crumbled cake with

frosting or softened cream cheese and formed into balls. Insert a lollipop stick and dip the balls into melted chocolate or candy melts. Add sprinkles and gift in a set of new coffee mugs or another holiday container.

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Have yourself a healthy and happy holiday

During this year's holidays, families are looking forward to celebrating a closer-to-normal season. However, that means staying healthy and keeping all kinds of germs at bay, including seasonal cold and flu bugs.

"With life getting back to normal, we are expecting a more severe cold and flu season than we encountered last year," said Dr. Jennifer Caudle, family physician. "It's important to both take preventative measures and stay prepared for keeping symptoms at bay. I recommend looking for over-the-counter medicines with active ingredients like dextromethorphan and guaifenesin, which help relieve both cough and chest congestion."

Practice good hygiene

Washing your hands has become a common refrain throughout the pandemic because it's a simple and effective way to keep germs away, whether they're of the global pandemic variety or a common cold. As you're out shopping and mingling this holiday season, you're likely to come into contact with more germ-laden surfaces than usual. Shopping carts, doors and public restrooms are major culprits, so carry sanitizer and be sure to give your hands a thorough wash when you get home.

Treat symptoms

While addressing the symptoms of an illness won't necessarily make it go away, it can ease your discomfort while it runs its course. An option like Mucinex 12 HR Extended Release Tablets provides relief for 12 hours by helping thin and loosen mucus to relieve chest congestion. The tablets are also available in a DM formula, which provides relief for both wet and dry coughs.



Protect your immune system

A healthy immune system helps your body fight off germs so you don't get sick, or if you do come down with a cold or the flu, you may have a milder, shorter illness. Getting plenty of rest, staying well hydrated, eating well-balanced and nutrient-rich meals and getting plenty of regular physical activity can all help keep your body in good condition to fight off seasonal germs.

Keep your medicine cabinet stocked

There's hardly anything worse than waking in the middle of the night with a cough or sinus trouble and discovering your medicine cabinet is empty. Be proactive by restocking on over-the-

counter basics to help keep your symptoms in check. It's also a good idea to check the expiration dates of any medications you do have on hand and replace anything that is out of date.

Be mindful of spreading germs

If you do get sick, you can take steps to protect your loved ones. If possible, stay home until your symptoms have passed and you're less likely to be contagious. Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or sneezing into your elbow if you don't have a tissue, can be effective in preventing the spread of germs.

Know when to consult a doctor

In most cases, minor cold symptoms don't require a visit to the doctor (unless you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19 and need to arrange for testing). However, if symptoms don't resolve within a week, grow worse in a short period of time or aren't responding to over-the-counter medicines to ease your symptoms, it's a good idea to schedule an appointment with your doctor or at least speak with a triage nurse for advice.

(Family Features)

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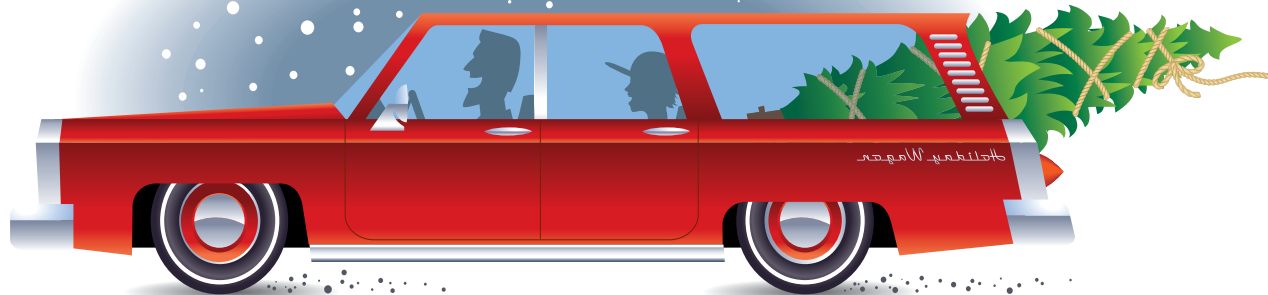
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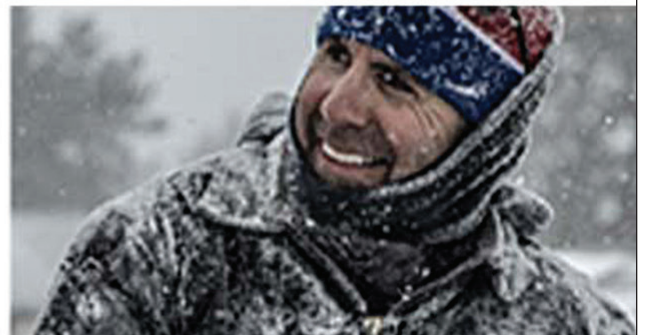
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