



## Creative Gift Giving

The holiday season can be fun and exciting but making time and money stretch can be very stressful. It's possible to give gifts to special people without spending a lot of money. Sometimes the most appreciated gift you can give is one that doesn't need to be shopped for.

- ✧ Give a coupon for an afternoon or evening of babysitting.
- ✧ Give an I.O.U. for a favorite meal or baked item.
- ✧ Copy a favorite recipe on a card and attach it to one item needed in the recipe (example: can of soup, vegetable or fruit).
- ✧ Fill an empty container with homemade cookies or cereal mix - tie a colorful ribbon on or use an old Christmas card to decorate the cover.
- ✧ Make play dough, put in a covered jar and give to your own or a neighbor's child.
- ✧ Give your child a coupon good for a trip to the zoo or other special outing.



### Plan Ahead for Next Year

- ✧ Take advantage of half-price, end-of-season sales for gift wrap and cards.
- ✧ Buy gift items on sale during the year and save.
- ✧ Recycle gift wrap, bows and ribbons. Cut off tape, fold and save larger pieces of gift paper.



### Realistic Ideas About Christmas

Help children to be more realistic about TV ads selling gifts. Don't think children will only be happy with lots of gifts under the tree. Traditions like baking cookies, decorating a tree or windows, singing carols, or reading a favorite Christmas story may be far more meaningful than the presents received.

Drawing names in a larger family can really cut costs and can add to the fun and suspense of finding or making a gift for that special person. Set a reasonable limit.

A few well-chosen toys will provide hours of creative play for children. Some ideas:

- ✧ Dress-up clothes  
(check rummage sales and thrift stores)
- ✧ Crayons or markers, sketch-book
- ✧ Puzzles, books and cds
- ✧ Card games





## Holiday Gifts From the Kitchen



### Easy Peanut Butter Chocolate Fudge Squares

- 1 - 12 ounce package peanut butter chips
- 1 - 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk - divided
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup chopped peanuts - optional
- 1 - 6 ounce package semi-sweet chocolate morsels

In a large pan melt peanut butter chips, 1 cup condensed milk and 2 tablespoons of butter, stir occasionally. Remove from heat, stir in peanuts. Spread mixture onto waxed paper lined 8 inch pan. In a small pan, melt chocolate morsels, the remaining condensed milk and butter. Spread over the peanut mixture. Chill 2 hours or until firm. Turn onto cutting surface, peel off paper and cut into squares. Store in an air-tight container.



### Holiday Fruit Bread

- |                               |                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup butter                | 2 cups flour                          |
| 1 cup sugar                   | 1 teaspoon baking soda                |
| 2 large, ripe bananas, mashed | 1/2 cup chocolate chips               |
| 2 eggs, beaten                | 1/3 cup maraschino cherries - chopped |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla            | 1/4 cup chopped nuts                  |

Cream butter and sugar together. Blend in bananas, eggs and vanilla. Blend in flour and baking soda. Add chocolate chips, cherries and nuts. Mix well. Grease and flour five empty soup cans (10-1/2 ounce size) that have been washed and the labels removed or use mini bread pans. Fill each one half full of batter. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 - 40 minutes, until done. Remove from cans. Cool thoroughly. Wrap in foil and store in refrigerator until time to use (up to 3 weeks) or freeze.



### Peppermint Brittle

- 1 pound white chocolate
- 15 small candy canes or round peppermint candies

Line a cookie sheet with wax paper. Cut white chocolate into smaller pieces. Crush peppermint in blender. Melt white chocolate on low heat over water in a double boiler or on medium power in the microwave. Stir peppermint into melted chocolate. Pour onto wax paper. When almost cool, score with a knife or a pizza cutter. Break apart and store in an airtight container.



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