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## THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT!



# Kitchenphile

## Spoil the cook with new gadgets, cookbooks, videos

**C**OOKING AND Christmas — what a perfect combination. It's important to remember the good cooks we know at Christmastime. They feed us well and add to our holiday pleasure.

There are many wonderful gifts of cooking utensils, recipe books, videos and specialty items that will brighten the kitchen of any cook preparing for the holidays or even every-day cooking.

Williams-Sonoma has a good pan for baking cookies. Of double construction, the Cushion-Aire cookie sheet has an air space between the top and bottom to prevent over-browning.

There's also a cookie gun that makes it child's play to produce heart and flower shapes. Another way to carve dough into amusing shapes is with a rolling cooking cutter, which runs across the cookie dough and creates a kind of Egyptian frieze of 10 shapes, including Santa's boots.

A GLASS BUNDT pan for kugelhopf, a holiday cake, is also available.

Many retailers carry glass cake stands and platters. A standout comes from Romania, trimmed with a touch of blue that freshens the whole presentation. Platters that match the cake stand can hold cookies.

Add to a cook's glassware by selecting bottles and jars for canned fruits and vegetables, jams, jellies and chutneys. Given empty or full, these jars would make any homemade product look wonderful.

Affix a homemade label for a personal touch. Williams-Sonoma has a good selection of faceted vinegar jars and squat jelly glasses.

Unusual dishes to serve regional specialties would be a nice gift for some good cooks. Pack along the necessary spices, and the gift becomes even more unusual.

Try buying brownware for the Tex-Mex cook and then fill a big platter with wreaths of chiles. Or, buy blue earthenware from Provence and provide the cook with the wonderful fresh herbs of southern France.

FOR THE COOK and hostess, there is no better gift than a cookbook

or video that can increase the range of imagination for the coming year. This season, nothing seems more appropriate than Julia Child on video. Her six one-hour video cassettes allow you to watch her demonstrate her recipes at your own pace in your own kitchen.

Another suitable video is Richard Sax's "Secrets of Great Dinner Parties: Entertaining Without Anxiety." The well-known chef and food consultant demonstrates a wide variety of basic culinary techniques to create elegant dinner parties.

Books on cooking and entertaining look better than ever this gift giving season. "Tiffany Taste," a hardcover volume by John Loring (Doubleday) doesn't offer a single recipe. Shown instead are place settings and how to create atmosphere for entertaining and private dining. Such famous designers as Else Peretti give how-to-tips.

THE BASIC "HOW to Cook" by Raymond Sokolov (Morrow) would be the ideal book for college students or singles just starting out. It leads the reader from coffee and orange juice right on through the day. Suggestions are offered that can wean the novice away from fast food and into the kitchen.

For the truly outrageous, the book of the season may well be Billi Gordon's "You've Had Worse Things in Your Mouth" (West Graphics). It's a spoof on all the down-home cookbooks and regional cuisines we've seen in the past few years. It comes complete with campy photos of the author dressed as such noted personalities as Aunt Jemima.

John Hadanuscin's "The Holiday's" focuses on the Christmas season. It offers party-givers more than 200 easy-to-follow recipes that are elegant or casual. He begins at Thanksgiving and takes us up to the Twelfth Night, helping all the way with timetables, table-setting tips and beverage suggestions. He recognizes that organization is the key and moves the reader along to success.

With all of these good food ideas and marvelous ways to serve, you can look forward to the year ahead. After all, there are loads of recipes just waiting to be tried.