

Try some gifts that pamper



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

Taken gifts — you remember them. They used to run about \$3 or \$4 — scarves, padded hangers, cologne, candy — gifts for teachers, co-workers, distant relatives.

These same gifts are still being exchanged but now they run more in the \$10 range. Whatever the price, "taken" gifts are a perennial problem — too often frustrating the giver and disappointing the recipient.

I once read a good piece of advice about gift buying: buy the best. This is the exact opposite of the approach most people take, buying the least expensive version of an item in the vain hope that it will be mistaken for a more expensive counter-part.

The result is a vast reserve of gifts consigned to oblivion in dresser drawers, jewelry, cologne, scarves, ties, leather-look wallets.

Rather than buying the bottom of the line, why not switch lines and pamper someone with the Cadillac of that line. Foods and cooking-related items are perfect for this.

It is possible to go top of the line here without spending large amounts. In this week's column, I will suggest foods which are especially appropriate for gift-giving. Next week I will concentrate on kitchen utensils.

A simple, thoughtful gift could, for example, be made by filling a pretty jar or glass mug (try Wells Cargo) with whole spices and accompany it with a recipe for hot mulled cider or its spirited counter-part, Wassail — perfect for even convinced non-cooks.

A more elaborate variation, suitable for the gourmet baker was suggested by Yvonne Gill: wrap a stick of angelica, two vanilla beans, and an antique cinnamon jar filled with meringue mushrooms (the perfect finishing touch for a rich torte, \$5 for 4 oz.) in a napkin.

All these items are available at Twenny's Cafe in Birmingham.

Yvonne Gill has, in fact, assembled a wide assortment of special spices, fruit and herb vinegars, breads, chutneys, jellies, puddings, and gift baskets for holiday gift-giving. A pot of jam or jelly — your own or the Cafe's — could be accompanied by a basket of home-baked English muffins for a lovely gift set.

If you had about \$200 to spend, you could delight some fortunate gourmet cook with an electric pasta machine.

On the other hand, for a paltry \$4 or \$5, you could delight anyone — gourmet cook or not — with a pound of home-made pasta.

Until recently, you could not have given such a gift unless you were willing to: a) make the pasta yourself (guaranteed to convince you that the aforementioned machine is worth every penny), or, b) travel to New York to

pick up a batch. This year it is available for take-out from Twenny's. Simply tuck in a recipe for a lightly-sauced pasta dish and you have a delicious, tempting gift in the awkward \$5 price range. If your budget allows, you could accompany the pasta with a pint of home-made sauce from the Cafe, priced at \$5 or \$6 — a gourmet dinner for four for about \$10.

Gifts of food (gourmet or otherwise) are welcome at any time of the year. I have a very dear and thoughtful friend, George Thomas, who regularly surprises me with gifts of food — fresh bread from Greentown, canned fava beans, fresh pomegranates and persimmons, individual spinach pies from a favorite restaurant — always accompanied by cooking suggestions and the history and cultural significance of each food.

An assortment of similar, interesting foods would make the kind of gift that is not only fun to open but which continues to give pleasure as each food is "played with" and enjoyed.

Some suggestions are: canned lychees, a fresh kiwi fruit, a jar of sour salt (available in Greek Town — sometimes, a bottle of tomato (natural soy sauce) together with a package of rice noodles (both available at Oriental markets or health food stores), a can of good olive oil, or a jar of imported Dijon mustard.

Fresh fruit is the perfect alternative. Either visit Detroit's Eastern Market yourself to pick out the best fruit in the city or arrange for Tom to do it for you by calling him at 647-0821.

HOT MULLED CIDER

1 tsp. whole allspice
1 tsp. whole cloves
Dash ground nutmeg
3 inches stick cinnamon
All these, \$5 for 4 oz. in a napkin.

Combine allspice, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, and cider in large saucepan. Slowly bring to boiling; cover and simmer 20 minutes. Remove spices. Serve in warmed mug with a clove-studded orange wedge in each. Serves 8.

WASSAIL

Follow the directions for Hot Mulled Cider, adding ¼ cup lemon juice. After removing the cider from the heat, stir in 1 cup vodka and ¼ cup brandy. About 18 four-ounce servings.

WHOLE WHEAT ENGLISH MUFFINS

2 pkg. active, dry yeast
2½ to 3 cups unbleached flour
1½ cups whole wheat flour
¼ cup cracked wheat
¼ cup wheat germ
2 cups milk
¼ cup shortening
2 tsp. salt
Cornmeal



In a large mixer bowl, combine the yeast, ½ cup of the unbleached flour, the whole wheat flour, the cracked wheat, and the wheat germ. Heat the milk, shortening, and salt just until warm. Add to the dry mixture. Beat at low speed for ½ minute, scraping sides of the bowl constantly. Beat three minutes at high speed. By hand, stir in enough of the unbleached flour to make a moderately stiff dough. Turn out onto a floured surface, knead eight to 10 minutes, or until smooth and elastic. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the surface. Cover; let rise 1½ hours or until doubled. Punch the dough down; cover and let rest 10 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough to slightly less than ½-inch thick. Cut with a 4-inch round cutter, rerolling scraps. Dip both sides of the muffins in cornmeal. Cover; let rise 30 minutes or until very light. Bake over low heat on an ungreased griddle or in unheated skillet about 25 to 28 minutes or until the muffins are done, turning frequently. Cook thoroughly on a wire rack. Makes 12 muffins.

SPAGHETTI WITH BROCCOLI, TOMATOES, AND WALNUTS

1 lb. this spaghetti or linguine
½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
4 tsp. butter or margarine, divided
2 tsp. olive oil
1 pint cherry tomatoes
1 large clove garlic, minced
¼ tsp. salt
Pinch red pepper flakes
1 tsp. basil

medium-size bunch broccoli, (about 6 cups), cut into 1-inch pieces
½ cup chicken broth
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

Cook pasta in boiling salted water. Toss the walnuts for 5 minutes at 350.

Melt 2 tsp. of the butter and the oil over moderate heat in a medium-size skillet. Add the tomatoes and cook, stirring often, 5 minutes, until tomatoes are tender but still hold their shape. Stir in the garlic, salt, pepper flakes, and basil and cook 2 minutes longer. Remove from heat; cover and keep warm. Add the broccoli to the pasta during the last 5 minutes of cooking time. Drain. Melt the remaining 2 tsp. butter in the pasta kettle and return the pasta and broccoli to the kettle. Toss to coat with the butter. Add the tomatoes, chicken broth, cheese, and parsley and toss to blend. Divide among four serving plates; sprinkle each serving with a fourth of the nuts and serve immediately, with more Parmesan. Four servings.



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Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

Elegant creation serves 30

So, you're planning a Christmas party and you want it to be really special, the one party everyone remembers after the holidays have ended.

Maybe even the one they recall in 1981 as having been the highlight of the 1980 season.

Probably you have developed your own style of entertaining and adapted it to your surroundings.

For example, you know how many people your home will accommodate, whether your abode is a small apartment, a medium-sized house, or a 57-room mansion. And you know where to set up the buffet table and the Christmas tree so that when the guests crowd around the goodies, they won't bump into the tree and send it crashing to the floor.

You probably also know the mood you would like to create, as well as the amount of time you have to work toward that goal. Often, during the Christmas holidays, the most sought-after mood is elegance.

That elegance can center on and branch out from a magnificently decorated tree, a treasured holiday decoration, or from the dish you choose to feature on the buffet table.

One dish that makes an elegant presentation is Turkey Breasts Champs Elysees. It serves 20 to 30 people, and although it takes a little time to prepare, all of the parts can be prepared in advance, then assembled shortly before time for the guests to arrive.

TURKEY BREASTS CHAMPS ELYSEES

15 to 20 slices cooked celeriac (celery root)
5 large raw green peppers, cut in julienne strips
½ cup olive oil or salad oil
½ cup wine vinegar
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. ground black pepper
15 to 20 two-inch tomatoes, peeled and centers removed
2½ cups Waldorf salad
1¼ cups jellied stock
16 artichoke bottoms
9 to 10 lbs. roast turkey breast
30 slices poultry galantine

30 tangerine sections
15 pistachio nuts, halved
7 Truffles Surprise
1 baked 4-inch tart shell
about 55 radish ryes

I include the galantine because it appears in the original recipe. However, when I made this, I used a pate that had been bought already prepared. They are available in gourmet food stores, or the specialty food counter of the grocery store. Also, some restaurants, such as Twenny's in Birmingham, sell such products on a carry-out basis.

Although a galantine recipe is not included here, if you wish to make this to the original recipe, any good French cookbook would include one. In fact, there are some quite good ones in the book this recipe is taken from, "Modern French Culinary Art," by Henri Paul Pellaprat, reprinted in 1974 by Cahners, Boston, \$72. This book is a joy to read and experiment and learn from. It would make a gorgeous Christmas present for someone who loves to cook.

Now back to the recipe.

Marinate the celeriac and green pepper for two hours, in separate bowls, in the oil, vinegar, salt and black pepper.

Set aside. Sprinkle the inside of the tomatoes with salt and black pepper, then invert to drain well. Fill the tomato cavities with Waldorf salad. Place a slice of marinated, well-drained celeriac over the open top of the tomato, like a cap, then turn upside down so that the celeriac is the base and the rounded part of the tomato is on top. Glaze with the jellied stock. Chill.

Fill the artichoke bottoms with well-drained green pepper. Glaze and chill. Slice the turkey breast and place one piece on each slice of galantine, or purchased one. Garnish each slice with a tangerine section and one-half pistachio nut. Glaze with jellied stock and chill. Glaze the trifles and chill.

To serve, fill the baked tart shell with Waldorf Salad and place it in the center of a large round tray. Around this arrange, in circles, the other given, Truffles Surprise, artichoke bot-

oms with green peppers, stuffed tomatoes on celeriac slices, slices of poultry galantine, or pate, and turkey breast and radish roses.

WALDORF SALAD

1 cup diced celery
1½ cups diced raw apples
1 tsp. lemon juice
dash salt
¼ cup mayonnaise (more, if necessary)
¼ cup walnuts

Blanch celery in boiling water one minute. Drain and rinse in cold water. Add to apples along with lemon juice and salt and let the mixture stand one hour. Add mayonnaise and mix well. Turn into a salad bowl. Slice nuts and toss with the apple mixture.

ASPIC — Quick Method

(use for jellied stock)
1½ envelopes (4½ tsp.)
unflavored gelatin
½ cup water, stock, or dry white wine
2 cans (10½ oz. each) consommé or bouillon, or the equivalent in concentrated homemade light stock

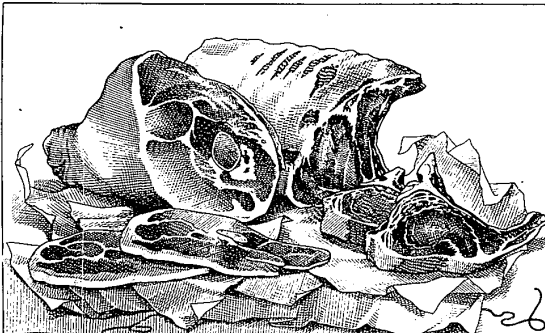
Soften gelatin in ½ cup cold stock, water, or wine. Heat consommé or bouillon to boiling point, remove from heat, and stir in gelatin. Cool slightly. Use as glaze for above recipe.

TRUFFLES SURPRISE

7 rounded tsp. goose liver pate
¼ stick butter, softened
7 small truffles, finely chopped
¼ cup of Aspic (above)

Blend the goose liver pate with the softened butter. Cool and chill. Shape into walnut-size balls and roll them in the finely chopped truffles until well coated. Dip in aspic and chill until set.

If truffles don't appeal to you, finely chopped black olive meats will achieve the same appearance, but the flavor will be slightly different, although it is quite a pleasant flavor.



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Her recipes are easy as 1-2-3

Marcia Bass is a gourmet cook who doesn't spend all day in the kitchen.

She has assembled the recipes from her years of experience under one title in "Cooking With Confidence," a book which will instill confidence in fledglings in the kitchen as well as the uncertain cook.

Each recipe has been kitchen-tested by the author and each has been rated according to ease of preparation. Mrs. Bass claims these recipes are "as easy as 1, 2, 3" and her directions leave no doubts about the methods of preparation.

In addition to the 1-2-3 key used throughout the book, the easy to read preface to each recipe contains other important information which helps eliminate error — size of pan, utensils, number of persons recipe will serve, and so on.

For example, a glance at her recipe for French Cream Fantasy Cake Topped With Mint Whip gives information which would involve an hour's conversation if one were getting the recipe from a friend.

The reader knows immediately that it is rated 2 in ease of preparation, that it serves 6-8 persons, that it requires an 8 inch by 8 inch by 2 inch baking pan greased and floured, that it should be made a day ahead, and that it is a flourless cake.

DEDICATED cookbook readers will enjoy the comments which preface some of the recipes. It's almost like talking to an old friend.

Of the Cherry Cheesecake she writes, "Not the best appearing cookie but makes up for it in taste." The Tahitian Chicken is recommended as "The perfect entree for a dinner party, delicious and not too heavy which allows room for a rich dessert." The Stuffed Baked Potatoes are "A delicate blend of wine, cheese and bacon."

Potato salad recipe: "This is my own recipe. It's not fancy, but I get a lot of compliments on it." The Marinated Dilled Shrimp is marinated two days ahead and she says, "This recipe goes fast in our house. I'm always nibbling before our guests arrive."

The remarks add a personal touch which is pleasing to the novice as well as the seasoned cook.

"Cooking with Confidence," Harlow Press, \$7.95, is in the book stores in time for holiday gift giving. It is available at Dicken's Den in Evergreen Plaza, Southfield; Berin's Book Store, Birmingham; Metro News Center, Birmingham; Book People, West Bloomfield; Border's Book Store, Ann Arbor; I. Browne, West Bloomfield; Book People, West Bloomfield; What's Cooking, Southfield; and the Little Professor's outlets.