

## Food gifts for the holidays

Continued from Page 19

The proverbial spiced, orange tea blend can be made up in decorative plastic pouches. Couple these tea blends with a favorite flavored-coffee mix and the recipient will thank you throughout the cold winter months whenever the blends are used.

Something that takes a little more time, a little more expense and just a tad more planning are the flavored cordials and flavored liqueurs. Unfortunately, these blends need at least two to three weeks to properly reach their "punch" and with the addition of alcohol, can get costly, especially if making a multitude for various gift giving needs.

So if your gift giving this holiday season is looking for a new twist, why not try one of these exciting, homemade personal gifts, from your kitchen to theirs. Bon Appetit!

### HERB-FLAVORED VINEGARS

Use fresh sprigs of dill, basil, tarragon or mint to fit height of bottle. Place herbs in bottle, using handle of wooden spoon to push through neck of bottle, if necessary. Fill bottle with white, cider or wine flavored vinegar. Cap; let stand at room temperature for 5 days to blend flavors.

### LEMON OIL

Place two long spiral strips of lemon

peel about 1/2 inch wide in bottle. Add olive or vegetable oil. Cover and allow to stand for five days to blend flavors. Use in salad dressings or to brush over fish or poultry before cooking.

### RUBY FRENCH DRESSING

(Couple this with a homemade green goddess for a green and red holiday gift that will be long remembered.)

1 cup vegetable oil  
1/2 cup oil  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup vinegar  
2 1/2 tablespoons finely chopped onion  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon pepper  
1 teaspoon dry mustard  
1 teaspoon paprika

Shake all ingredients together in a tightly sealed jar. Refrigerate no longer than four weeks. Serve on fruit or tossed salads.

### HOMEMADE COFFEE LIQUEUR

3 cups vodka  
2 cups water  
2 cups granulated sugar  
2 cups packed brown sugar  
1/4 cup freeze dried coffee crystals  
1 vanilla bean or 1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix all ingredients in a two-quart jar. Cover tightly and allow to stand at room temperature for two to three weeks. Pour liqueur into bottles and seal. Makes 7 cups.

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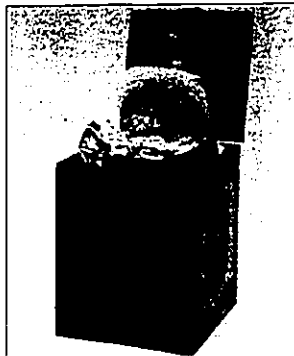
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