

## Homemade Gifts: From Your Kitchen with Love

Written by ?Written by Melissa Larsen / Photographed by Iggy M.

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**Sometimes, the most wonderful presents of all require sugar and flour, instead of waiting in long lines and organizing gift receipts. Here are a few giftable recipes—from supereasy to deliciously advanced—by some of our favorite local chefs, along with helpful wrapping how-to.**

### ?Apple-Cranberry Chutney



The flavors in this sweet-and-sour chutney, from Executive Chef Michael Shea at The Stockyards Restaurant and 1889 Saloon, are a lovely accompaniment to savory holiday dishes. We think your neighbors will gobble it up.

- 1 Red apple, medium dice
- 1 Green apple, medium dice
- 6 oz. Orange juice
- 6 oz. Apple juice
- 2 T Butter
- 1/3 of a Large red onion, small dice
- 1/3 C Brown sugar
- 1 C Dried cranberries
- 1/3 C Raspberry vinegar
- 1 tsp. Cinnamon, ground
- 1 T Molasses
- 1 T Maple syrup
- 2 T Karo corn syrup
- 1 T Clove powder
- Slurry (equal parts cornstarch and water)

Dice the apples and place them in a bowl with the orange juice and apple juice. Set aside. In a large saucepan, heat the butter over medium heat and sauté the onion until it is just starting to brown. Add the apples, the juice and all of the remaining ingredients to the saucepan and bring to a boil. Turn down heat and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes. Add the cornstarch slurry a little at a time until you achieve the desired thickness. It will continue to thicken for a short time after adding it, so wait before adding more. Cool for a few minutes at room temperature and then refrigerate uncovered until completely cool.

Wrap it up: Be sure to use an air- and liquid-tight container to house chutney. "People love the quality and safety of glass containers," says Kelly Vrtis, spokesperson for The Container Store. She even suggests scooping the chutney into smaller cracker jars, gussied up with ribbons and a label, and presenting them as favors at a holiday party. A tie-on, like a serving spoon or a holiday ornament, hanging from a glass jar would make the gift twice as nice, Vrtis adds.

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### Peppermint Bark



Chef Christine D'Angeli, of Slice Cake Designs, shows us how to create a time-honored holiday favorite for your child's teacher or a sweet-toothed co-worker.

- 10 oz. Dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 14 oz. White chocolate, finely chopped
- 8 oz. Candy canes, crushed
- 1/4 C Heavy cream
- 1/2 tsp. Peppermint extract (optional)

In a double boiler, melt dark chocolate, heavy cream and peppermint extract. Melt gently until it is smooth. Pour the chocolate onto a wax-lined cookie sheet and spread evenly with a spatula. Chill in the refrigerator for about 10 minutes. Melt the white chocolate over a double boiler until smooth and melted. Pour all of the white chocolate over the top of the cool-set dark chocolate. Spread evenly with a spatula. Sprinkle crushed

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peppermint candy canes over the top. Chill in the refrigerator until set, about 25 minutes. Then break into pieces of desired size.

**Wrap it up:** "The neat thing about peppermint bark is that it isn't really one shape or size," Vrtis says. Traditionally, bark is packaged in a tin, which is an excellent option because it is easy to ship and can be reused, Vrtis explains. Plus, tins can simply be dressed up with ribbons and holiday stickers. She also suggests a colorful Amac box, a great option for teachers because they can house pencils or other school supplies post-holiday (your tots can write directly on them for an extra personal touch). For an old fashioned look, glass cracker jars, with a ribbon tied around the lid, are a perfect solution. Lastly, be sure to pick packages that are food-safe. If the container is not food-safe, wrap the bark in wax paper.

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### ?Red Fondant Cake



Pastry Chef Christine Wieland of the Bakery Café at el pedregal shows off her pastry prowess with this whimsical cake. If you're a true baking buff, forgo the ubiquitous bottle of wine and gift a hostess—and the rest of the party guests—with this jaw-dropping dessert. (bonus: This treat's so pretty, a simple cellophane wrapper will do!)

#### For chocolate cake:

1 1/4 oz. Cocoa powder  
7 oz. Sugar  
2 1/2 oz. Cottonseed oil  
2 1/4 oz. Eggs  
1 tsp. Vanilla extract  
2 1/2 oz. Cake flour  
2 1/2 oz. All-purpose flour  
1/2 tsp. Salt  
3/4 tsp. Baking soda  
7 1/4 oz. Boiling water

#### For buttercream:

1 1/2 lbs. Granulated sugar  
1 C Water  
1/4 tsp. Cream of tarter  
6 Eggs  
2 lbs. Butter  
3/4 lbs. Cocoa powder  
(if you want chocolate flavor)

#### For rolled fondant:

2 lbs. Powdered sugar  
1/4 C Water  
1 T Unflavored gelatin  
1/2 C Glucose  
1 1/2 T Glycerin  
1 tsp. Vanilla  
(Color fondant with powdered sugar and food coloring, if desired.)

**Cake:** Mix together sugar, eggs and oil in a mixer. Add all dry ingredients. Add water. Bake in a nine-inch circular pan at 325 degrees for 25 minutes. **Buttercream:** Whip eggs until mixture is thick. Boil sugar and water in a pan until it reaches 240 degrees. Add to egg mixture and whip both mixtures together. In another bowl, cream together butter until it's soft and add cocoa powder. Mix all ingredients together. Spread on top of cake for icing. **Fondant:** Mix powdered sugar and water. Add gelatin, glucose, glycerin and vanilla. Remove dough mixture and knead until smooth. Wrap cake with the fondant. Add food coloring and powdered sugar, if desired.