

GIFTS IN A JAR

Complete Instructions for
More than 60 Fabulous Gifts
from Your Kitchen



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Gifts in a Jar

and Other Fabulous Gifts from
Your Kitchen

*Just about anything you can stuff into a Mason jar
can become a unique and cherished gift. Here's all you
need to know...*

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Gifts in a Jar

and Other Fabulous Gifts from Your Kitchen

Everything you need to know to make fabulous gifts from your kitchen that are sure to please everyone on your gift list.

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Gifts Layered in a Jar

General instructions and important safety tips

Strictly speaking, you can make a gift from anything you can stuff into a glass canning jar. Embellish it with fabric, ribbon or raffia, add a tag that gives the recipient specific instructions on what to do with it and you've just made a Jar Gift. Some Jar Gifts contain ingredients with instructions for the recipient to finish the product; others are finished and ready to go as in cakes and quick breads baked in the Jar.

The great thing about Jar Gifts, especially when the contents are edible, is they are perfect repeat performers. People of all ages love these gifts, so you can give them year after year with confidence they will be received with rave reviews.

You can buy new jars for about \$12 a dozen at grocery stores, Walmart and some craft stores. You can also purchase replacement rings and lids for old jars. Always use new lids.

All cookie recipes use one-quart wide-mouth glass canning jars. Jars also come in smaller sizes which are perfect for spice blends, herbed mixes, potpourri and bath salts. Always prepare a tag for the Jar Gift that explains what it is and how to use it. You will find FREE printable tags for each of the recipes that require specific instructions at EverydayCheapskate.com/jartags.

You can make jar gifts one at a time or take care of your entire gift list in one marathon-like event using the assembly line method. I've lined up as many as two dozen jars at a time and found that it goes quickly and efficiently. Just make sure that you measure carefully and in the case of layered jars, pack the contents very tightly so there's no room for shifting.

Jars containing the dry ingredients for cookies or other sweets can be stored in a cool dark place for up to six months. To keep longer, store in the refrigerator or freezer. (One of my cookie jars baked up perfectly after two years in the freezer.)

You will help your recipients when you add a "Best if used by" date. Of course, this will be determined by how long you have stored the finished product prior to presentation. It is best to err on the side of caution, suggesting the item should be used within three months.

Baked cakes and breads make wonderful Christmas gifts but you'll want to wait until closer to gi-giving time, since these last only a couple of weeks in the refrigerator. For Jar Gifts of cookie mixes and and savory mixes, you can start up to 6 months ahead.

Jar Gifts are perfect for singles, kids (even young children can follow the directions and make cookies with some adult supervision), seniors, teachers, co-workers—everyone on your list. The only problem you may encounter is a recipient who simply cannot bear to use the Jar Gift because it is so beautiful. In that case, I suggest you give another on the next appropriate occasion. And you know what that means? You've started a tradition.

Disclaimer: Gifts in a Jar is offered as information only and without any representation or warranty that this information should be used in your home. This information should not be taken as a suggestion or advice that any recipe, instruction or solution should take the place of sound medical advice. Always seek the advice of healthcare, dietary and nutritional professionals before attempting any do-it-yourself method or procedure. Always test any potential method or procedure first in a non-reactive and safe place. Neither Mary Hunt nor *Debt-Proof Living* warrants or guarantees the effectiveness or assumes any liability in connection with the formulas, instructions, recipes and suggestions in this book.

Cookies, Brownies and Sweet Treats

Chocolate Chip Cookies

Layered to look like “sand art,” this fabulous cookie mix makes the perfect gift for anyone on any special occasion.

1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 cup chocolate chips
1 cup packed brown sugar
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour,
mixed with 1 tsp baking soda
and 1/4 tsp salt

Layer ingredients in the jar in the order given, pressing each layer firmly in place before adding the next. Everything will fit if you are diligent to pack each layer tightly, particularly the brown sugar and all-purpose flour. Measure carefully.

Attach this message to jar:
Empty cookie mix into large mixing bowl. Thoroughly blend mix with spoon. Add 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter or margarine

(not diet or tub variety), 1 egg and 1 tsp vanilla.

Mix thoroughly. Shape into walnut sized balls and place 2 inches apart on greased cookie sheets. Bake at 350°F for 7 to 10 minutes, or until just slightly golden. Do not overbake. Cool 10 minutes on baking sheet. Remove to racks to finish cooling. These cookies will not firm up until completely cooled. Yield: 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

Trail Mix Cookies

1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar
3/4 cup wheat germ
1/3 cup quick cooking oats
1 cup raisins
1/3 cup packed flaked coconut
1/2 cup all-purpose flour, mixed
with 1 tsp baking powder

Layer ingredients in the jar in the order given, pressing each layer firmly in place before adding the next.

Attach this message to jar:
Empty cookie mix into large mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly with spoon. Add 1/2 cup butter, softened. Mix in 1 egg, slightly beaten and 1 tsp vanilla. Mix until completely blended. Shape into walnut-sized balls and place

2 inches apart on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F for 12 to 14 minutes until edges are lightly browned. Cool 5 minutes on baking sheet. Remove cookies to racks to finish cooling. Yield: 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

Easiest Ever Chocolate Chip Cookies

1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 tsp baking soda
1/2 cup white sugar
2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
1/2 cup packed brown sugar

Combine the all-purpose flour, baking soda, white sugar, and the chocolate chips. Place 1/2 of the mixture in the jar, and pack firmly. Place the brown sugar on top, again packing firmly.

Finish with the remaining all-purpose flour mixture on top.

Attach this message to jar:
Empty cookie mix into a large bowl. In separate bowl combine 3/4 cup of butter, 2 eggs, and 1 tsp vanilla. Beat until creamy. Add to dry mixture. Drop by spoonfuls onto an ungreased cookie sheet, and bake in a preheated 375°F oven for 8 to 10 minutes.

Chunky Chocolate Cookies

3/4 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar
1/4 cup cocoa powder
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 cup jumbo chocolate chips
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt

Mix together the all-purpose flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Set aside. Layer ingredients in order given. Make sure you pack each layer firmly before adding the all-purpose flour mixture. It will be a tight fit. (Wipe down the inside of the jar after you add the cocoa powder.)

Attach this message to jar:
Empty cookie mix into a large mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly. Add 3/4 cup butter or margarine (not diet), softened. Add 1 egg, slightly beaten, and 1 tsp vanilla. Mix until completely blended. The dough will be sticky. Shape into walnut-size balls and place 2 inches apart on parchment-lined or greased baking sheets. Bake at 350°F for 11 to 13 minutes. Cool 5 minutes on baking sheet. Remove to racks to finish cooling. Yield: 3 dozen cookies.

Reese's Peanut Butter Cup Cookies

3/4 cup white sugar
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, mixed with 1 tsp baking powder and 1/2 tsp baking soda

8 large Reese's Peanut Butter Cups candies cut into 1/2 inch pieces (wrap in plastic wrap to make a small bundle before adding as a layer)

Layer ingredients in jar in order given. Press each layer firmly in place before adding next ingredient.

The wrapped candy pieces should be added as the final layer.

Attach this message to jar:

Remove candies from jar and set aside. Empty cookie mix in large mixing bowl; mix thoroughly. Add 1/2 cup softened butter, 1 egg slightly beaten and 1 tsp vanilla; mix until completely blended. Stir in candies. Roll dough into walnut-sized balls. Place 2 inches apart on a lightly-greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375°F for 12 to 14 minutes, or until edges are lightly browned. Cool 5 minutes on baking sheet. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

Oatmeal Raisin Spice Cookies

3/4 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar
3/4 cup raisins
2 cups uncooked quick oats
1 cup all-purpose flour, mixed with 1 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 tsp nutmeg, 1 tsp baking soda and 1/2 tsp salt

Layer ingredients in jar in order given. Press each layer firmly in place before adding next ingredient.

Attach this message to jar:

Empty cookie mix into a large mixing bowl; mix thoroughly. Add 3/4 cup softened butter (not diet margarine), 1 egg slightly beaten and 1 tsp vanilla; mix until completely blended. Roll heaping spoonfuls into balls. Place 2 inches apart on a lightly-greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F for 11 to 13 minutes until edges are lightly browned. Cool 5 minutes on cookie sheet; remove to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 3 dozen cookies.

Orange Slice Cookies

3/4 cup white sugar
1/2 cup packed brown sugar

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour,
mixed with 1 tsp baking
powder and 1/2 tsp baking
soda

1 1/2 cups orange slice candies,
quartered (wrap in plastic
wrap)

Layer ingredients in jar in
order given. Press each layer
firmly in place before adding
next ingredient. The wrapped
candies should be added as the
final layer.

Attach this message to jar:

Remove candies from jar and set
aside. Empty cookie mix in large
mixing bowl; mix thoroughly. Add
1/2 cup softened butter, 1 egg
slightly beaten and 1 tsp vanilla;
mix until completely blended. Stir
in orange candies. Roll dough
into walnut-sized balls. Place 2
inches apart on a lightly-greased
cookie sheet. Bake at 375°F for
12 to 14 minutes, or until edges
are lightly browned. Cool 5
minutes on baking sheet. Remove
to wire racks to cool completely.
Yield: 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

Chocolate-Covered Raisin Cookies

3/4 cup white sugar
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup chocolate-covered raisins
1/2 cup milk chocolate chips
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour,

mixed with 1 tsp baking
powder and 1 tsp salt

Layer ingredients in jar in
order given. Press each layer
firmly in place before adding
next ingredient.

Attach this message to jar:

Empty cookie mix in large mixing
bowl; mix thoroughly. Add 1/2
cup softened butter, 1 egg slightly
beaten and 1 tsp vanilla; mix
until completely blended. Roll
heaping spoonfuls into balls.
Place 2 inches apart on a lightly-
greased cookie sheet. Bake at
375°F for 13 to 15 minutes until
tops are very lightly browned.
Cool 5 minutes on cookie sheet;
remove to wire racks to cool
completely. Yield: 2 1/2 dozen
cookies.

Hawaiian Cookies

1/3 cup white sugar
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1/3 cup packed flaked coconut
2/3 cup chopped macadamia
nuts
2/3 cup chopped dates
2 cups all-purpose flour, mixed
with 1 tsp baking soda and
1 tsp baking powder

Layer ingredients in jar in
order given. Press each layer
firmly in place before adding
next ingredient.

Attach this message to jar:
Empty cookie mix in large mixing bowl; stir to combine. Add 1/2 cup softened butter, 1 egg slightly beaten and 1 tsp vanilla; mix until completely blended. Roll dough into walnut-sized balls. Place 2 inches apart on a lightly-greased cookie sheet. Press cookie down slightly with the heel of your hand. Bake at 350°F for 11 to 13 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool 5 minutes on baking sheet. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

Raisin Crunch Cookies

1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup raisins
1 1/4 cups packed flaked coconut
1 cup crushed cornflakes
3/4 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup quick oats
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour,
mixed with 1 tsp baking soda
and 1 tsp baking powder

Layer ingredients in jar in order given. Press each layer firmly in place before adding next ingredient.

Attach this message to jar:
Empty cookie mix in large mixing bowl; mix thoroughly. Add 1 cup softened butter, 1 egg slightly

beaten and 1 tsp vanilla; mix until completely blended. Roll dough into walnut-sized balls. Place 2 inches apart on a lightly-greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F for 10 to 12 minutes, or until edges are lightly browned. Cool 5 minutes on baking sheet. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 3 to 4 dozen cookies.

Dreamside Cookies

1/2 cup Tang Instant Breakfast
drink powder
3/4 cup white sugar
1 1/2 cups vanilla chips
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour,
mixed with
1/2 tsp baking soda and
1/2 tsp baking powder

Layer ingredients in jar in order given. Press each layer firmly in place before adding next ingredient.

Attach this message to jar:
Empty cookie mix into a large mixing bowl; mix thoroughly. Add 1/2 cup softened butter, 1 egg slightly beaten and 1 tsp vanilla; mix until completely blended. Roll heaping spoonfuls into balls. Place 2 inches apart on a lightly-greased baking sheet. Bake at 375°F for 12 to 14 minutes, or

until tops are very lightly browned. Cool 5 minutes on cookie sheet. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

M&M's Cookies

1 1/4 cups white sugar
1 1/4 cups M&M's
2 cups all-purpose flour, mixed
with 1/2 tsp baking soda and
1/2 tsp baking powder

Layer ingredients in jar in order given. Press each layer firmly in place before adding next ingredient.

Attach this message to jar:
Empty cookie mix in large mixing bowl; mix thoroughly. Add 1/2 cup softened butter, 1 egg slightly beaten and 1 tsp vanilla; mix until completely blended. Roll dough into walnut-sized balls. Place 2 inches apart on a lightly-greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375°F for 12 to 14 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool 5 minutes on baking sheet. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. Yield: 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

Sand Art Brownies

3/4 tsp salt
5/8 cup all-purpose flour

1/3 cup cocoa powder
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
2/3 cup packed brown sugar
2/3 cup white sugar
1/2 cup chocolate chips
1/2 cup white chocolate chips
1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Layer the ingredients in jar in order given (Note: There are two layers of all-purpose flour, which is correct). Press each layer firmly in place before adding in next ingredient.

Attach this message to jar:
Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease 9 x 9-inch baking pan. Pour the contents of the jar into a large bowl and mix well. Stir in 1 tsp vanilla, 2/3 cup vegetable oil and 3 eggs. Beat until just combined. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 20 to 25 minutes.

Butterscotch Brownies

1/2 cup packed flaked coconut
1/2 cup white sugar
2 cups packed brown sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt

Mix together all-purpose flour, salt and baking powder. Set aside.

Layer ingredients in order given, adding all-purpose flour mixture last. Press each layer firmly in place.

Attach this message to jar:

Empty brownie mix into large mixing bowl and blend together thoroughly. Add: 3/4 cup butter or margarine, softened. (Do not use diet margarine.) Mix in 2 eggs, slightly beaten and 2 tsp vanilla. Mix until completely blended. Spread batter into a greased 9- x 13-inch pan. Bake at 375°F for 25 minutes. Cool 15 minutes in baking pan. Cut brownies into 1 1/2 inch squares. Cool completely in pan. Yield: 2 dozen brownies.

egg and 2 tblsp vegetable oil. Add mix. Whisk until moistened but still lumpy. Make pancakes as usual.

Cinnamon Pancakes

3 cups all-purpose flour
4 tsp ground cinnamon
2 1/4 tblsp white sugar
2 tblsp baking powder
1 1/4 tsp salt

Layer ingredients in jar in order given. Press each layer firmly in place before adding the next ingredient.

Attach this message to jar:

Empty pancake mix into a bowl. Mix thoroughly. Measure out 1 1/3 cup of the mix and set aside. Return the balance of mix to the jar for future use. In a medium bowl, combine 3/4 cup milk, 1

Savory Mixes

Grilling Spices

- 3 tblsp whole coriander seeds
- 3 tblsp cumin seeds
- 3 tblsp dill seeds
- 3 tblsp yellow mustard seeds
- 6 tblsp whole fennel seeds
- 6 tblsp white sugar
- 3 tblsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp fresh ground pepper

Combine all seeds in a skillet over medium heat. Toast, shaking pan, about 4 minutes. Using a spice grinder or food processor, coarsely grind seeds. Transfer to a small bowl. Add sugar, salt and pepper. Stir well to combine. Makes about 1 1/2 cups. Works well in small decorative jars.

Attach this message to jar:
These grilling spices give meat, fish, or poultry an intensely flavorful, slightly crunchy outer layer while sealing in the meat's juices. Simply rub in the spices and cook—no waiting time is required. Store tightly closed at room temperature for up to 6 months.

Cajun Spices

- 3/4 cup salt
- 1/4 cup ground cayenne pepper
- 2 tblsp ground white pepper
- 2 tblsp ground black pepper
- 2 tblsp paprika
- 2 tblsp onion powder
- 2 tblsp garlic powder

Put each ingredient into a separate cup or small bowl. While holding a pint canning jar at an angle, add ingredients to create a "sand art" look. The salt and cayenne may be divided into smaller portions and used to separate other spices, creating more "stripes."

Attach this message to jar:
Can be used on potatoes, eggs and meat.

Country Soup

- 1/2 cup barley
- 1/2 cup dried split peas
- 1/2 cup uncooked rice
- 1/2 cup dry lentils
- 2 tblsp dried minced onion
- 2 tblsp dried parsley
- 2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp lemon pepper
- 2 tblsp beef bouillon granules
- 1/2 cup uncooked alphabet pasta

1 cup uncooked twist macaroni

In a wide mouth one-quart jar, layer the barley, peas, rice and lentils. Then, layer around the edges the onion, parsley, salt, lemon pepper, bouillon and the alphabet pasta. Fill the rest of the jar with the twist macaroni. Seal.

Attach this message to jar:

Add contents of jar to 3 quarts of water, 2 chopped celery stalks, 2 sliced carrots, 1 cup shredded cabbage (optional) and 2 cups diced tomatoes. Cover and simmer over medium-low heat, until vegetables are tender.

Corn Bread in a Bag

1 cup yellow corn meal

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 cup white sugar (optional)

4 tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp salt

Sift together all ingredients and transfer to a plastic bag. Idea: Corn Bread in a Bag goes very well with Country Soup in a Jar as part of a gift basket.

Attach this message to bag:

Pre-heat oven to 425°F. Empty cornbread mix into a bowl. Add 1 egg, 1 cup milk and 4 tblsp shortening. Beat until smooth (about 1 minute with egg beater).

Pour batter into a greased 8 x 8-inch baking pan. Bake for 20 minutes or until a knife inserted at the center comes out clean.

Herbed Rice

1 3-lb bag long grain rice

2 cups dried celery flakes

2/3 cup dried minced onion

1/2 cup dried parsley flakes

2 tblsp dried chives

1 tblsp dried tarragon

3 to 4 tsp salt

2 tsp black pepper

In a large bowl, mix all of these ingredients together. Place two cups into each pint jar. Idea: Herbed Rice would make a great addition to a themed gift basket.

Attach this message to jar: *To prepare one serving: In a saucepan over medium heat bring 2/3 cup water and 1 tblsp butter to a boil. Add 1/4 cup rice mixture. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat; let stand for 5 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Multiplies well.*

Southwestern Fiesta Dip Mix

1/2 cup dried parsley

1/3 cup dried onion flakes

- 1/4 cup dried chives
- 1/3 cup chili powder
- 1/4 cup ground cumin
- 1/4 cup salt

In a large bowl, combine the spices and fill small jars.

Attach this message to jar:
 Combine 3 tbslp dip mix with 1 cup mayonnaise (regular or low-fat) and 1 cup sour cream (or yogurt). Whisk until smooth. Refrigerate 2 to 4 hours. Serve with tortilla chips or fresh vegetables. Yield: 2 cups.

Hearty Friendship Soup

- 1/3 cup beef or chicken bouillon granules
- 1/4 cup dried onion flakes
- 1/2 cup dried split peas
- 1/2 cup alphabet pasta (any small pasta is fine)
- 1/4 cup barley
- 1/2 cup dry lentils
- 1/3 cup non-instant white rice tricolor spiral pasta

In a one-quart wide mouth jar, layer ingredients in the order given above. A funnel makes the job easier. Add enough tricolor spiral pasta to fill the jar.

Attach this message to jar: In large kettle, brown 1 pound

ground beef (or stew beef or chicken which has been cut into bite-size pieces) in a little olive or vegetable oil. Remove the tricolor pasta from the jar and put aside. Add the rest of the jar contents to the pot with 12 cups water. Bring the soup to a boil and simmer 45 minutes. Add the tricolor pasta and simmer 15 minutes longer. Serve with your favorite bread or rolls and a tossed salad. Yield: 8 servings.

Turkey Noodle Soup Mix

- 1 cup uncooked fine egg noodles
- 1 1/2 tbslp chicken bouillon granules
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp dried whole thyme
- 1/8 tsp celery seeds
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder
- 1 bay leaf

Combine all ingredients in medium bowl. Transfer to a small jar.

Attach this message to jar:
 Combine this jar of mix and 8 cups of water in a large stockpot. Add two diced carrots, two diced celery stalks, and 1/4 cup minced onion and bring to a boil. Cover the soup and reduce the heat to a simmer. Simmer for 15 minutes. Discard the bay leaf. Stir in 3 cups turkey and simmer an

additional 5 minutes. Salt to taste.

Hush Puppy Mix

1 1/2 cups yellow corn meal

3/4 cups all-purpose flour

3 tblsp dried minced onion

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp white sugar

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp baking soda

1/4 tsp ground red pepper

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients and mix well. Transfer to one-pint glass jar.

Attach this message to jar: In a deep skillet heat 1 1/2 inches of vegetable oil to 350°F. In a medium bowl, combine mix with 1 1/2 cups buttermilk and 1 beaten egg. Stir until well blended. Drop mixture by spoonfuls into hot oil. Fry until golden brown and cooked through. Drain on paper towels and serve.

Gifts Baked in a Jar

General instructions and important safety tips

These cakes are all baked in canning jars. You can do that, really! These cakes are baked in a hot oven then sealed securely in the jars by the heat created during baking.

It is safe to prepare and preserve cakes this way provided you follow these instructions carefully.

You will need wide-mouth pint-size canning jars, metal rings and lids for baking cakes and breads. Don't use any other size jars for baking.

Sterilize jars, lids and rings according to manufacturer's directions. Grease the inside of the jars, but not the rim of jars. Pour one cup of batter into each of the prepared jars. Do not use more than one cup or batter will overflow and the jars will not seal.

Place jars evenly spaced on a cookie sheet. While cakes are baking, bring a saucepan of water to a boil and carefully add jar lids. Remove pan from heat and keep lids hot until ready to use. Remove jars from oven one at a time keeping remaining jars in oven. Make sure jar rims are clean. (If they're not, jars will not seal correctly.) Carefully, place lids on jars and screw rings on tightly (remember, these jars are very hot). Jars will seal as they cool. Cakes will slide right out when ready to serve.

The cake and bread recipes you will find in this section can be stored safely in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Be sure to pass along any storage tips to the recipient if you give the cakes as gifts.

Cakes and Quick Breads

Lemon Poppy Seed Cake

- 2 2/3 cups white sugar
- 2/3 cup shortening
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 cup water
- 3 tblsp grated lemon peel
- 1 tsp lemon extract
- 1/2 cup poppy seeds
- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt

Preheat oven to 325°F. In large bowl cream sugar and shortening with electric mixer.

Add eggs and mix well. Add lemon juice, water, lemon peel, extract and poppy seeds. Place dry ingredients in a separate large bowl and blend with a whisk. Add creamed ingredients to dry ingredients and mix with whisk and spoon.

Place 1 cup batter each into 7 well-greased pint-size jars. Wipe batter from rims. Place jars on a baking sheet. Bake at 325°F for

55 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Never under bake cakes. Wipe rims. Place hot, sterilized lids and rings on hot jars. Place jars on a wire rack; they will seal as they cool. Keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Apple Cake

- 2/3 cup shortening
- 2 2/3 cups white sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup water
- 3 cups grated, peeled apple
- 2/3 cup raisins
- 2/3 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 325°F. Sift together all-purpose flour, baking soda, salt, nutmeg and cinnamon. Set aside.

Cream shortening and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs and beat well. Add flour mixture alternately with water; mix until smooth. Fold in apples, raisins and nuts.

Place 1 cup batter each into 8 well-greased pint-size jars. Wipe batter from rims. Place jars on a baking sheet.

Bake at 325°F for 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a cake comes out clean. Never under bake cakes. Wipe rims. Place hot, sterilized lids and rings on hot jars. Place jars on a wire rack; they will seal as they cool. Keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Pumpkin Spice Bread

1 cup raisins
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
2 tsp ground cloves
2 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp ground ginger
4 eggs, whipped
2 cups white sugar
1 cup butter, softened
2 cups canned pumpkin purée

Preheat oven to 325°F. Combine raisins, all-purpose flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cloves, cinnamon and ginger in a mixing bowl. In another mixing bowl, combine eggs, sugar, butter and pumpkin. Gradually add dry mixture to egg mixture and continue mixing until well combined.

Place 1 cup batter each into 8 well-greased pint-size jars. Wipe batter from rims. Place jars on a baking sheet. Bake at 325°F for 40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Never under bake cakes. Wipe rims. Place hot, sterilized lids and rings on hot jars. Place jars on a wire rack; they will seal as they cool. Keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Gingerbread

2 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
3/4 cup white sugar
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
2 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground cloves
3/4 cup butter, softened
3/4 cup water
1/2 cup molasses

Preheat oven to 325°F. Place a baking sheet onto middle rack and remove top rack from oven.

Combine all-purpose flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt, ginger, cinnamon and cloves in a mixing bowl. In another mixing bowl, combine butter, water and molasses. Stir in dry ingredients and mix well to combine.

Place 1 cup batter each into 5 well-greased pint-size jars. Wipe batter from rims. Place jars on a baking sheet. Bake at 325°F for 40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Never under bake cakes. Wipe rims. Place hot, sterilized lids and rings on hot jars. Place jars on a wire rack; they will seal as they cool. Keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Zucchini Bread

2 cups white sugar
1 cup oil
3 eggs
2/3 cup water
1 tsp vanilla
3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
1 1/2 tblsp cinnamon
3 cups peeled zucchini, grated
1 cup chopped nuts

Preheat oven to 325°F. In large bowl cream sugar and oil. Add eggs and mix well. Add water and vanilla and mix well.

Place dry ingredients in a separate large bowl and blend with a whisk. Add creamed ingredients to dry ingredients and

mix well. Fold in zucchini and nuts.

Place 1 cup batter each into 6 well-greased pint-size jars. Wipe batter from rims. Place jars on a baking sheet. Bake at 325°F for 50 to 55 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Never under bake cakes. Wipe rims. Place hot, sterilized lids and rings on hot jars. Place jars on a wire rack; they will seal as they cool. Keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Banana Nut Bread

2/3 cup shortening
2 2/3 cups white sugar
4 eggs
2 cups mashed bananas
2/3 cup water
3 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
2 tsp baking soda
1 1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground cloves
2/3 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 325°F. In a large bowl, cream shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, bananas, and water. Sift together flour, baking powder, soda, salt, cinnamon

and cloves. Add to banana mixture. Stir in nuts.

Place 1 cup batter each into 8 well-greased pint-size jars. Wipe batter from rims. Place jars on a baking sheet. Bake at 325°F for 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Never under bake cakes.

Wipe rims. Place hot, sterilized lids and rings on hot jars. Place jars on a wire rack; they will seal as they cool. Keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

and add to the applesauce mixture a little at a time. Beat well after each addition.

Place 1 cup batter each into 8 well-greased pint-size jars. Wipe batter from rims. Place jars on a baking sheet. Bake at 325°F for 40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Wipe rims. Place hot, sterilized lids and rings on hot jars. Place jars on a wire rack; they will seal as they cool. Keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Chocolate Cake

- 1 stick, plus 3 tbsp, butter,
softened
- 3 cups white sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 tbsp vanilla
- 2 cups unsweetened applesauce
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa
powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/8 tsp salt

Preheat oven to 325°F. Cream together butter and half of sugar until fluffy. Add eggs, remaining sugar, vanilla and applesauce.

Sift dry ingredients together

Quick and Easy Gifts from the Kitchen

Holiday Hash

- 3 cups Rice Chex
- 3 cups Corn Chex
- 3 cups Cheerios
- 2 cups small pretzels
- 2 cups salted peanuts
- 1 bag (12 oz.) plain M&Ms
- 1 bag (12 oz.) peanut M&Ms
- 2 bags (12 oz.) white chocolate chips or melting wafers

Combine all ingredients except white chocolate in a very big bowl. Melt white chocolate or wafers according to the package instructions.* Be careful to not overcook as these chips burn quickly. Pour the melted white chocolate over the mixture and with a strong, long-handled wooden spoon toss well to coat.

Spread the hash out on waxed paper and let set until the chocolate hardens. Store in an airtight container or pour into gift bags. If you get the red and green M&Ms you'll have a very festive-looking batch for the

Christmas holidays. This makes a lot. You should be able to make 10 to 15 gifts depending on the size of your containers.

SueSue's Chocolate Pecans

- 1 pound whole pecan halves (about 4 cups)
- 1/2 stick (1/4 cup) butter
- 1 tsp salt (or to taste)
- 12 oz. melting chocolate wafers, or equivalent (see page 28*)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place butter in a medium bowl. Microwave for 30 seconds on high or until melted. Add pecans and stir until well coated. Spread pecans on a cookie sheet in a single layer and sprinkle generously with salt.

Bake pecans for about 10 to 12 minutes or until they just begin to turn a shade darker. Stir several times so they roast evenly. Watch carefully because they can burn very easily.

Meanwhile in microwave, melt the chocolate in the same bowl you used to melt the butter, following package instructions. Stir until melted. Remove pecans from oven and pour into a bowl.

Pour chocolate over pecans and stir to coat thoroughly. Drop by spoonfuls onto waxed paper.

If you want, you can break up some of the pecans to make smaller portions.

Once completely cooled, place in airtight containers or ziplock bags. Yield: A lot—and they're fabulous!

Variations: You can make this with white chocolate or almond bark, too.

Almond Crunch

- 1 cup butter (no substitutes)
- 1 1/4 cups white sugar
- 2 tblsp corn syrup
- 2 tblsp water
- 1 cup chopped or slivered almonds, toasted
- 1 12 oz. package (2 cups) milk chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Arrange almonds in a single layer on a baking sheet. Toast until lightly browned, approximately five minutes.

Line a jelly roll pan with foil.

In a heavy saucepan, combine butter, sugar, corn syrup and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils. Boil, without stirring, to hard crack stage, 300°F. Remove from heat.

Working quickly, stir in almonds, and pour mixture into

foil-lined jelly roll pan; tip pan from side to side to spread candy evenly in pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips over candy brittle. Let stand about 5 minutes, or until shiny and soft. Cool to room temperature, then refrigerate for one hour. Break into bite-size pieces.

Note: Best when made on a dry day. If it's raining this will not get as brittle as it should.

Peppermint Bark

- 8 oz. white chocolate, chopped
- 4 red-and-white peppermint sticks or candy canes, 6 inches long
- 2 drops peppermint oil or extract

Take a 13 by 17-inch cookie sheet with sides and line it with parchment paper or a nonstick baking mat.

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler or microwave. Place the peppermint sticks in a heavy, locked plastic bag and crush them finely by whacking and then rolling them with a rolling pin. They should have about the same consistency as crushed ice.

When the chocolate is melted, stir in the peppermint oil. Stir in all but 2 tblsp of the crushed peppermint pieces and spread the mixture out on the cookie sheet, about 1/4-inch thick. It will not fill the pan completely. Sprinkle the reserved peppermint

pieces over the top. Let set at room temperature until hardened, about two hours (or refrigerate for 30 minutes to harden more quickly). Use your hands to break into pieces. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

Easy Candy Cane Fudge

2 (10 oz.) packages white chocolate chunk-sized chips (12 oz. packages of small white chocolate chips may be substituted)

1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk (like Eagle Brand), not evaporated milk

1/2 tsp peppermint extract

1 1/2 cups crushed candy canes

1 dash red or green food coloring

Line an 8-inch square baking pan with aluminum foil; grease the foil.

Combine the chocolate and sweetened condensed milk in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir frequently until almost melted, remove from heat and continue to stir until smooth.

When chips are completely melted, stir in the peppermint extract, food coloring, and candy canes.

Spread evenly in the bottom of

the prepared pan. Chill for 2 hours, then cut into squares.

Christmas Crunch

2 cups white sugar

2/3 cup light corn syrup

1/2 cup water

3 tblsp butter

1 tsp vanilla extract

1/2 tsp baking soda

2 cups crispy rice cereal

1 cup cashews

Grease one 10- x 15-inch baking pan. In a large saucepan over medium heat, combine the sugar, corn syrup and water. Bring to a boil, stirring, and heat to 300°F using a candy thermometer.

Remove from heat; stir in butter, vanilla and baking soda. Add cereal and cashews; pour into prepared pan and allow to cool. Break into pieces and store in airtight container. Recipe doubles well.

Christmas Walnut Toffee

1 cup butter

1 cup white sugar

1 tblsp corn syrup

3 tbsp water
1 1/2 cups chopped walnuts,
divided
1 (6 oz.) package chocolate chips

Butter a 9-inch square baking dish, and set aside. Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the sugar and corn syrup until smooth. Heat to 290°F, using a candy thermometer.

When the temperature has been reached, stir in 1 cup of the walnuts, and cook for three more minutes, stirring constantly. Pour into the prepared pan and allow to cool.

When the toffee is cooled, remove from the pan, and place onto waxed paper. Melt chocolate chips in a metal bowl over a pan of simmering water or in the microwave, stirring frequently until smooth.

Spread half of the melted chocolate onto one side of the toffee slab, and sprinkle with half of the remaining nuts. Allow to cool until set, then repeat on the other side of the toffee. Break into bite size pieces when set. Yield: 1 1/2 pounds.

World's Best Hot Chocolate Mix

1 box Carnation Instant Non-Fat

Dry Milk (the size that makes 8 quarts)

1 lb. box powdered sugar
1 (28 oz.) jar Cremora
2 cups instant chocolate drink mix

Mix all ingredients well in a large container. Fill any size jar.

Attach this message to jar: *Mix 1/3 to 1/2 cup mix with boiling water or with cold water for chocolate milk.*

Note: The brand names cited in this recipe are stated because they result in a mix that dissolves easily in either hot or cold water. However, if you are unable to find a specific brand name product, you may substitute. The most critical, however, is the Cremora. No other powdered creamer seems to dissolve as well. If you are unable to find the exact size container, opt for the larger size and then approximate. As for the chocolate, you want instant chocolate milk MIX, not straight Hershey's baking cocoa.

Almost Anything

Get a big bag of nuts, candies or other treats. Repackage into smaller holiday containers, mugs or bags of your choice. Embellish and you're done.

Tip: A 3-pound bag of

pistachios costs less than \$20 at Costco and can be repackaged into 6 or more individual gifts.

Chocolate-Covered Pretzels

Melt your choice of wafers, chocolate bars or chips* (see note at end of section) according to package instructions. Dip pretzels of any size or shape. Place on wax paper to harden. You're done.

Crunch 'n Munch

1/3 cup white sugar
1 1/4 tsp cinnamon
1/4 cup butter
pinch of salt
4 cups Corn Chex, Rice Chex or
Crispix cereal OR 3 cups
Bran or Wheat Chex

Mix sugar and cinnamon and set aside. Melt butter in large skillet. Add cereal and mix thoroughly.

Heat over medium heat stirring until coated, 5 to 6 minutes. Sprinkle 1/2 of the sugar mixture over the cereal and continue stirring until well coated.

Sprinkle with remaining sugar mixture and heat several more minutes. Spread on a layer of

wax paper or foil to cool.

This recipe multiplies well if you have a large skillet. Yield: 3 to 4 cups.

Santa Claus Cookies

1 package Nutter Butter (or Vienna Fingers) sandwich cookies
12 oz. white chocolate wafers or chips*
Red sprinkles or red-colored sugar
32 vanilla or white chips, not melted
64 mini chocolate baking chips
32 red-hot candies

Melt the white chocolate. Dip one end of each cookie into melted chocolate. Place on wire racks.

For Santa's hat, sprinkle red sugar on top part of chocolate. Press one vanilla chip off-center on hat for pom-pom; let stand until set.

Dip other end of each cookie into melted chocolate for beard, leaving center of cookie uncovered.

Place on wire racks. With a dab of melted chocolate, attach semi-sweet chips for eyes and a red-hot for nose in the uncovered area. Place on waxed paper to set. Yield: 32 cookies.

***Chocolate Melting Notes**

Melting wafers are chocolate formulated for making candy. They are inexpensive, easy to use and available at grocery stores, cake and candy supply stores and craft stores. Chocolate bars and bakers' chocolate melt well.

Chocolate chips, however, are formulated to resist melting. You can melt them but it's tricky. Stir in 1 tsp vegetable oil for each ounce of chips. Microwave on medium power at 30-second intervals, stirring after each.

The Best Mailable Cookies

Whether it's a care package for a college student, a goody box for someone in the military or a way to say Happy Holidays to a friend or relative, there's nothing like opening a package of freshly baked cookies. Here are tips to make sure your cookies arrive in perfect condition, fresh and ready to eat!

1. Always cool cookies before storing or packaging into a container. Packaging warm cookies will allow too much moisture to get trapped inside the package.
2. Store the cookies in an airtight plastic container, one that allows ample room and no "over crowding" of the cookies.
3. Do not store soft cookies (such as chocolate chip or oatmeal) with hard or crunchy cookies (like biscotti or shortbread). The moisture in the soft cookies will make the biscotti soft and visa versa.
4. Package cookies for gift giving or mailing in airtight hard containers. Re-sealable plastic bags or wraps are not a good idea unless hand delivering.
5. Harder cookies tend to mail the best but may be subject to breakage if packed too tightly, so leave ample room. Cookies should be packed snugly, not overstuffed but also not under packed.
6. Delicate cookies such as meringues, are not good candidates to ship. Choose sturdy, heavier cookies.
7. Most cookies are best at their freshest, so it's a good idea to express mail your handmade delectables.
8. If there is room in the container, fill spaces between the cookies with crumbled wax paper, which will not cause moist cookies to dry out.
9. Pack the container or tin with cookies in a larger cardboard box for shipping. Place air-popped popcorn (no oil or butter, please) on the bottom, top and around the sides. Use a lot. Popcorn is cheaper and more degradable than shipping peanuts and won't crush like crumbled paper.
10. Label the outside of the box as "breakable" and mark "this side up." You cannot be assured that your package will be handled as such, but adding this caution can't hurt.

Old Fashioned Molasses Crinkles

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsps baking soda
1 tsp ground cinnamon
3/4 tsp ground ginger
1/2 tsp ground allspice
1/2 tsp ground cloves
1/4 tsp cayenne pepper or
1/4 tsp chipotle powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 cup vegetable shortening at
room temperature
1/2 stick (1/4 cup) unsalted butter,
softened
1 cup packed dark brown sugar
1 large egg
1/2 cup Grandma's molasses (not
black strap or barbados)
granulated sugar for sugaring
tops of cookies

Whisk together all-purpose flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, cloves, pepper and salt in a bowl until combined.

Beat together shortening, butter and brown sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes in a stand mixer (preferably fitted with paddle attachment) or 6 minutes with a handheld. Add egg and molasses, beating until combined. Reduce speed to low, then mix in flour

mixture until combined.

Put oven racks in upper and lower thirds of oven and preheat oven to 375°F.

Roll 1 heaping tsp of dough into a 1-inch ball with wet hands, then dip 1 end of ball in granulated sugar. Make more cookies in same manner, arranging them, sugared side up, 2 inches apart on 2 ungreased baking sheets.

Bake cookies, switching position of sheets halfway through baking, until undersides are golden brown, 8 to 12 minutes total. Cool on sheets 1 minute. Transfer to racks to cool completely. Yield: 6 dozen cookies.

Ranger Cookies

2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 tsp baking powder
3/4 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
2/3 cup (1 stick plus 2 2/3 tblsp)
unsalted butter, slightly softened
1/2 cup vegetable shortening
1 1/3 cups packed light brown
sugar
2/3 cup white sugar
2 large eggs
2 1/2 tsps vanilla extract
2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats

2 cups corn flakes, crushed
1 1/4 cups chopped pecans
1 1/4 cups shredded or flaked
sweetened coconut

Preheat the oven to 375°F.
Grease several baking sheets or
line with parchment paper.

In a medium bowl, thoroughly stir together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; set aside. In a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed, beat together the butter and shortening until lightened. Add the sugars and beat until fluffy and smooth. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat until evenly incorporated. Beat or stir in the all-purpose flour mixture until evenly incorporated. Stir in the oats, corn flakes, pecans, and coconut until evenly incorporated. Let the dough stand for 5 to 10 minutes, or until firmed up slightly.

Shape portions of the dough into generous golf-ball-sized balls with lightly-greased hands. Place on the baking sheets, spacing about 3 inches apart. Using your hand, pat down the balls until about 1/3 inch thick.

Bake the cookies, one sheet at a time, in the upper third of the oven for 8 to 11 minutes, or until tinged with brown and just beginning to firm up in the centers; be careful not to overbake. Transfer the sheet to a wire rack and let stand until the

cookies firm up slightly, about 3 minutes. Transfer the cookies to wire racks. Let stand until completely cooled.

Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week or freeze for up to 1 month. Yield: 3 dozen cookies.

White Chocolate, Cranberry, and Macadamia Nut Cookies

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking soda
3/4 tsp salt
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter,
room temperature
1 cup packed light brown sugar
3/4 cup white sugar
2 large eggs
1 tblsp vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups dried cranberries
(about 6 ounces)
1 1/2 cups white chocolate chips
(about 8 1/2 ounces)
1 cup coarsely chopped roasted
salted macadamia nuts (about
4 1/2 ounces)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line two large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Sift first three ingredients into medium bowl.

Using electric mixer, beat butter in large bowl until fluffy. Add sugars and beat until blended. Beat in eggs, one at a time, then vanilla. Add dry ingredients and beat just until blended. Using spatula, stir in cranberries, white chocolate chips and nuts.

For large cookies, drop dough by heaping tablespoonfuls onto prepared sheets, spacing 2 1/2 inches apart. For small cookies, drop dough by level tablespoonfuls onto sheets, spacing 1 1/2 inches apart.

Bake cookies until just golden, about 18 minutes for large cookies and about 15 minutes for small cookies. Cool on sheets. Store cookies airtight at room temperature up to two days or freeze up to two weeks. Yield: 36 large or 72 small cookies.

Quaker Famous Oatmeal Cookies

3/4 cup shortening
1 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar
1 egg
1/4 cup water
1 tsp vanilla
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp baking soda

3 cups uncooked Quaker Old Fashioned Oats
raisins, nuts and or coconut (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat shortening, sugars, egg, water and vanilla together until creamy. Stir in dry ingredients except the oats. Mix well. Stir in oats and optional ingredients if you are using them. Drop by teaspoonfuls on greased cookie sheet. Bake for 8-10 minutes. Do NOT overbake.

Let cool a few minutes on the cookie sheet before removing to cool completely. Yield: 5 dozen cookies.

Rum Bars

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp ground ginger
1/2 tsp freshly ground nutmeg
1/4 tsp ground cloves
3/4 cup white sugar
pinch of salt
2/3 cup unsalted butter, softened
3 large eggs
1/4 cup milk
3 tblsp rum
2/3 cup butterscotch chips
1/3 cup toffee chips
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Melted chocolate chips for drizzling

Confectioners sugar for dusting

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9- x 9-inch baking dish. Sift together the all-purpose flour, spices, sugar and salt; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat together butter and eggs until creamy. Beat in milk and rum. Gradually stir all-purpose flour mixture into egg mixture. Stir in chips and nuts. Pour the batter into the prepared baking dish. Bake for 30 minutes. Cool. Drizzle with melted chocolate. Just before serving dust with confectioners sugar. Cut into 24 bars.

Chocolate Toffee Cookies

1/2 cup unsalted butter
1/2 cup butter-flavored Crisco
3/4 cup white sugar
3/4 cup packed brown sugar
2 eggs
1 tblsp vanilla
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup dark cocoa powder
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
2 cups white chocolate chips
1/2 cup pecans or walnuts
1 cup Heath bar, chopped, or

toffee pieces

Cream butter, crisco, sugars, eggs and vanilla until light and fluffy. Add dry ingredients. Fold in chips, nuts and toffee. Chill for 30 minutes. Drop by teaspoonfuls on lightly-greased cookie sheets

Bake for 8-10 minutes until just barely done. Cool on rack. Yield: 48 cookies.

Mexican Wedding Cakes

2/3 cup toasted nuts (pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts)

1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature

1/4 cup powdered sugar

1 tsp vanilla

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/4 tsp salt

1 cup powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside. Place nuts on another baking sheet and bake for about 8 minutes, or until lightly brown. Once the nuts have cooled completely, place them along with 2 tblsp of the all-purpose flour from the recipe, into food processor, fitted with a metal blade, and process until they are finely ground (but not a paste). Set aside.

In a large bowl beat the butter and 1/4 cup sugar until light and fluffy using an electric mixer, about 2 minutes. Beat in the vanilla. Add the remaining all-purpose flour and salt and beat until combined. Stir in the nuts. Cover and refrigerate the dough for about one hour or until firm.

Form the chilled dough into 1-inch balls and place them 2 inches apart on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for about 12 to 15 minutes, or until the edges of the cookies start to brown. Remove from oven and place on a wire rack to cool for about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, line another baking pan or tray with parchment or wax paper. Sprinkle about 1/2 cup of the powdered sugar on the bottom of the pan and then place the slightly cooled cookies on top of the sugar. Place the remaining 1/2 cup of sugar in a fine strainer or sieve and sprinkle the tops of the cookies (or you can just roll the cookies in the sugar). Store in an airtight container. Yield: 36 cookies.

Caramel Brownies

1 18.25 oz German Chocolate cake mix
2/3 cup evaporated milk
1/4 cup butter, melted
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 14-oz package caramels,

wrappers removed

1 cup chopped nuts

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix cake mix, melted butter and 1/3 cup of the evaporated milk in a mixing bowl. Fold in nuts. Grease a 9- ×13-inch baking dish. Spread 1/3 of the mixture on the bottom of the pan with your hands. Bake for 6 minutes.

In the meantime, melt caramels in microwave with remaining 1/3 cup evaporated milk. Set aside.

Spread the chocolate chips evenly over baked dough. Then spread the caramel mixture over that. Crumble the remaining cake mix mixture on top.

Bake for another 15-18 minutes. Cool completely and then refrigerate for 1-2 hours. Cut and serve. Yield: 24 brownies.

Eggnog Sparkle Cookies

1 cup butter, room temperature
1 cup white sugar
2 large egg yolks
1/2 cup eggnog
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp ground nutmeg
1/3 cup decorating sugar
cinnamon

Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly grease a cookie sheet.

In large mixing bowl, cream together butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in egg yolks until combined. Add eggnog.

In another bowl, whisk together all-purpose flour, baking powder and nutmeg; add to butter mixture, beating until thoroughly combined. Refrigerate dough 2 hours.

Combine decorating sugar and cinnamon on paper plate, adding about 1/3 tsp cinnamon for every 2 tblsp of sugar. Roll dough into 1-inch diameter balls; roll in topping mixture. Place 2 inches apart on buttered cookie sheet. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until set. Yield: About 5 dozen cookies.

Toffee Pecan Blondies

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
2/3 cup butter
2 1/4 cups packed light brown sugar
3 eggs
1/2 tsp vanilla
1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
3/4 cup toffee pieces
1 cup pecans, chopped

Preheat oven to 350F. Grease a 9-x13-inch baking pan and set aside. In the microwave, melt the butter. In a medium bowl, combine all-purpose flour, baking powder and salt; set aside.

In a large bowl using an electric mixer, beat butter and brown sugar. Slowly beat in the eggs, mixing until batter is smooth. Stir in vanilla. On low speed, gradually mix in the all-purpose flour mixture. Batter will be very stiff.

Stir in the chocolate chips, toffee and nuts. Spread the batter in the baking pan, smoothing it into the corners. Bake 25 minutes or until the blondies begin pulling away from the sides of the pan. Let cool to room temperature in the pan on a wire rack, then cut into bars. Yield: 24 bars.

Krispy Peanut Butter Bars

1 10.5-ounce bag miniature marshmallows
1/4 cup butter
6 cups crispy rice cereal
2 tblsp peanut butter

Grease a 9- x13-inch pan and set aside. In large mixing bowl, place butter and marshmallows. Microwave for 3 minutes. Stir well, then add peanut butter stirring

constantly. Add cereal, stirring until well coated. Pour mixture into greased pan. Let stand for 10 minutes. Cut into squares. Yield: 12 bars.

Christmas Cheer Cookies

1 cup butter, softened
1 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
3 eggs
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking soda
1 pound dates, chopped
1 pound walnuts, chopped
1/2 pound golden raisins
1/2 cup whiskey
1 (10 ounce) jar maraschino cherries, drained and cut in halves

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs. Beat until ingredients are combined. Mix all-purpose flour and soda. Stir in dates, walnuts, raisins and whiskey. Batter will be stiff. Drop in teaspoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheet. Top each with cherry halves. Bake 10-12 minutes. Store in airtight container. Yield: 72 cookies.

Crafts and Non-Edible Gifts

Light in a Jar

Every home needs at least one emergency kit for when the power goes out. One per room wouldn't be such a bad idea. This practical jar gift contains everything you need when the lights go out, including a clever candleholder.

1 (one quart) canning jar with lid
5/8-inch brass flare cap*
Liquid Nails construction glue
matches
medium length taper candles

Separate the lid and ring. Using a construction grade glue like Liquid Nails, attach the closed end of the flare cap to the center of the underneath side of the lid to create the candleholder. Let dry.

Fill jar with candles and matches. Place the lid on the jar top so the candleholder is inside the jar and screw the ring tightly onto the jar.

*Note: Flare caps are available in the plumbing aisle of the home improvement center (plumbers use them to cap off

pipes) and come in various sizes and materials like brass, galvanized and copper to accommodate various size candles. The 5/8-inch cap fits most taper candles. If you prefer other size candles, experiment until you find a cap that fits.

Attach this message to jar:

Keep this emergency kit in a place you can easily find in the dark. The next time the lights go out, open the jar, take out a candle and match, reverse the lid so the candleholder is facing up, screw lid tightly onto the jar, insert candle, strike the match and let there be light!

Spring in a Jar

There's nothing quite like crocus buds or hyacinths opening on the breakfast table to cheer up a late January morning. In this jar gift you provide everything necessary for your recipient to water-force beautiful flowers that will bloom indoors—in the dead of winter.

Bulbs that are easily water-forced—hyacinths, crocus, paperwhites, narcissus and tulips—are generally available summer through Labor Day. If you wait until December to get your supplies you will be out of luck.

Store bulbs in paper bags in a cold (around 45°F) dark place until you are ready to make your jar gift.

Note: The refrigerator is perfect, provided bulbs are not sharing space with fruit. Fruits emit a gas that is harmful to the bulbs.

These are the items you will need for the jar gift:

1 (one quart) glass canning jar with lid

charcoal, gravel-size

small pebbles or gravel

bulb(s) of choice

small brown paper bag

twine or ribbon

other garden items (optional)

Place a 1- to 2-inch deep layer of small-sized charcoal (available in the garden department) in the bottom of the jar.

Follow with a layer of small, clean gravel or pebbles that are bone-dry. The jar should be about half full.

Wrap bulb(s) in a small brown paper bag, tie loosely with twine or ribbon and set on top of gravel. Add other garden themed items like gloves and a packet of seeds for visual effect; however, these items are not part of the forcing process and you should include a note to remove these items upon opening gift.

Store uncovered in a cold, dark place until presentation.

Attach this message to jar:

Remove everything from the jar except the pebbles and charcoal. Remove the bulb from the bag and push it root side down into the pebbles just a little bit so it sits securely.

Fill the jar with water until the water almost touches the bottom of the bulb. Place the uncovered jar inside a brown paper grocery bag and keep it in a cool (50° to 55°F) place.

Check often to make sure the water level remains steady. If no roots appear, add a little more water; if mold appears, keep the water level a bit lower. Roots should sprout in about two weeks and top shoots will appear shortly thereafter.

When crocus shoots reach one inch (two inches in the case of hyacinths, narcissus, paperwhites or tulips), take jar from the grocery bag and place it in a cool, lighted place where you can admire its emerging beauty.

Get ready to enjoy a whole month of glorious "Spring!"

Sewing Kit in Jar

This jar gift contains all kinds of sewing and mending supplies complete with a pincushion on top.

1 (one quart) glass canning jar with lid
6-inch square of fabric
fiberfill
poster board
tape
fabric and jewelry glue
hot-melt glue (optional)

To make the pincushion, center the ring of the jar on the fabric. Using it as a guide to trace, cut out a circle that is 1-inch larger than the ring all the way around.

Cut out six circles of Fiberfill (stuffing material you can get at craft or fabric stores) that are decreasing in size. The first one should be the size of the jar lid. The second a bit smaller and so on until the sixth circle is only 1 1/2-inches across.

From the poster board cut a circle the size of the jar lid.

Pile up the Fiberfill circles on top of the poster board circle. Place the fabric on top. Pick it up like a sandwich and carefully push the fabric and padding up through the underside of the ring and secure it by pushing the poster board up to the underside

of the ring. Adjust the gathers so the fabric is smooth. Tape the loose ends of the fabric onto the bottom side of the poster board.

Use either fabric glue or hot-melt glue to stick the top side of the lid to the bottom side of the poster board, making sure the fabric edges are all tucked in between the two pieces. Hold securely until the glue cools or sets. If you are using hot glue, be careful because the metal will get very hot. Enough glue should push out from the edges to secure all of this to the top under edge of the ring. Allow to set overnight.

Fill the jar with small sewing supplies like buttons, safety pins, thread, hooks and eyes, scissors, seam ripper, tape measurer, pins and needles. Rather than buying all the “ingredients” at once, start watching for sales at craft and fabric stores. You’ll be able to fill your jars quite cheaply if you start early.

***Attach this message to jar:** This gift is self-explanatory, so the tag can carry your personal message.*

Lemons in a Jar

Whole preserved lemons are a specialty food item; they also make a wonderful decorative statement when displayed on a counter or shelf in a glass jar.

- 2 (one quart) glass canning jars with lids
- 4 1/2 quarts water
- 7 to 10 lemons
- 2/3 cup salt
- 2 3-inch cinnamon sticks
- 4 tsp coriander seeds
- 2 tsp black peppercorns
- 8 whole cloves
- 1 cup olive oil

Wash lemons very well. Pour three quarts of water into a stainless steel or other non-reactive saucepan.

Bring to a boil and add the lemons. Bring back to boil and cook the lemons for 3 minutes. Drain and immerse the lemons in cold water until they are cool enough to handle. Drain again and set aside. In a saucepan, combine 1 1/2 quarts water, salt and the spices. Bring to a boil over high heat. Remove from the stove. Add olive oil.

Fill hot, dry, sterilized jars with lemons (add a few clean lemon leaves if available). Ladle the hot brine into the jars to within 1/2

inch of the rims.

Cover with lids and apply screw-on rings. Store sealed jars in a cool place for two months before using. Brine will darken slightly.

Attach this message to jar:

Preserved Lemons are an important ingredient in Middle Eastern soups and stews where they impart a tart, salty flavor. Cut them into small pieces for salads, add to couscous or serve them as an appetizer along with olives and salted nuts. Best if used within six months or before [insert date]. Once opened, store in refrigerator.

Candy Cane Bath Salts

- 12 (12 oz.) tall jelly canning jars with lids and rings
- 2 (4 lbs.) containers Epsom salts
- 4 lb. sea salt or kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp glycerin, divided (non-edible drugstore variety)
- 12 to 15 drops peppermint essential oil
- 12 to 15 drops red food coloring

Empty one carton Epsom salts into a large mixing bowl. Add 3 cups salt; stir well. Stir in 1/4 tsp glycerin and 6 to 8 drops essential oil. Mix thoroughly.

In a second large mixing bowl, empty one carton Epsom salts, and add 3 cups salt. Stir well. Add 1/4 tsp glycerin, 6 to 8 drops essential oil, and food coloring. Stir until completely blended. Color should be even.

Holding a canning jar at an angle, layer salts in jars, alternating white and red mixtures to resemble the stripes in a candy cane. Fill to the very top so that layers will not shift once you apply the lid. Attach a tag with instructions:

Attach this message to jar:
Add one or two tblsp bath salts to warm bath.

Kitchen Potpourri

1/4 cup whole cloves
1 cup whole allspice
10 cinnamon sticks, each 3 inches long, broken into pieces
8 small bay leaves
4 whole nutmeg
3 tblsp star anise
2 tblsp cardamom pods

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl, mixing well. Pour into any size decorative jar or container with a tight-fitting lid.

Attach this message to jar:

Store indefinitely at room temperature. Remove lid, stirring occasionally to release fragrance or pour out into a small dish.

Bath Salts

2 cups Epsom salts
1/2 tsp food coloring
1/2 to 1 tsp fragrance oil
1/2 cup dried rose petals, crushed
Mix all ingredients thoroughly. Transfer to decorative jars.

This recipe makes a dozen 12-ounce gift jars, plus a bonus of 3 to 4 cups extra bath salts. You can either make up a few more jars, or package the balance in small plastic bags for easy stocking stuffers.

Variation: Substitute peach essential oil and orange food coloring to make "Peaches and Cream Bath Salts."

Attach this message to jar:
Add one or two tblsp bath salts to warm bath.

Bath Oil

1/2 cup almond oil
1/2 cup castor oil or aloe vera oil from 6-8 Vitamin E capsules

25-30 drops fragrance oil

Mix all ingredients in a bowl with wooden spoon until combined.

Attach this message to jar:
Add to warm running water as you fill your tub.

Bubble Bath

3 cups clear, mild dishwashing detergent like original Blue Dawn
oil from 6-8 vitamin E capsules
1/4 cup glycerin
25-30 drops fragrance oil
food coloring

Attach this message to jar:
Add to warm running water as you fill your tub.

Salt Scrub

Mix together Epsom salts and enough almond oil (better) or baby oil (cheaper) to resemble very wet snow. Add aromatherapy oil for fragrance and soap colorant if you desire.

Attach this message to jar:
After cleansing the skin, turn off the shower water. Scoop a small handful of salt scrub and rub in a circular motion all over your skin. Rinse with water. You can wash

again if you desire, but you will enjoy the greatest benefit if you simply towel dry without soaping up again. Used every time you take a shower, dry skin will be a distant memory. Salt scrub helps to get rid of all those dead skin cells and then seals in the moisture with the oil.

Journal in a Jar

A bit more complex than previous jar gifts, Journal in a Jar requires the traditional jar plus a gift pack.

The idea is to give everything your recipient needs to write the story of his or her life, including appropriate and specific questions like: Why was your name chosen for you? What was happening in the world when you were born? What was your favorite hiding place as a child? What is your favorite hiding place as an adult? What is your personal secret to happiness?

You can include as many questions or prompts as you like, even 365 to make it easy for your recipient to simply pull out one at random each day and write about it.

Include with this gift jar a nice blank book or writing paper, an appropriate binder and a nice pen. Include everything required

to get started. If your recipient is computer savvy, include an appropriate binder that will fit computer-printed pages.

At first I found this to be a terrific gift idea for a parent or grandparent. But then it dawned on me this could be adapted for any age, even a child just learning to read, write and draw.

Of course every Jar Gift needs a recipe or instruction card tied to it. Here's an idea:

Recipe for Your Life History.

Combine a generous slice of your life history, a dash of nostalgia, several cups of facts and feelings and [the number you come up with] deliciously interesting questions. Draw one slip of paper. Take a few minutes to enjoy the memories. Paste or write the question at the top of a blank page. Fill in your answer. Don't worry about your handwriting or spelling—just tell your story.

The purpose of this gift is to help you preserve a written account of your life. Enjoy the homemade memories that celebrate something very important ... you!

This is an idea that can be adapted in so many ways. The more you can personalize it, the better.

Adapt your questions and prompts to the specific recipient

so the result will be more detailed and the answers more complete and specific.

Make it fun by including questions you know will make the person laugh because the answers are so hilarious.

To help you get going you will find a few idea starters below.

You can copy and paste them to your word processing program or write them longhand. Add your own unique questions.

Print, cut apart and drop them into the jar.

Journal in a Jar is not a gift you can make on Christmas Eve. You need to get started now.

While you're at it, make one for yourself. It will become a legacy for your children.

Question Ideas for Adults:

Why was your name chosen for you?

What was happening in the world when you were born?

What is your earliest memory of home?

What was your favorite hiding place as a child?

What is your favorite hiding place as an adult?

What was your favorite store

and why did you like to go there?

What were your chores as a child?

What did your mother do during the day?

What did you do on summer days?

What did you enjoy in the winter?

What was your favorite fairy tale or bedtime story?

What was your favorite doll or toy?

What was your favorite treat?

What pets have you had?

What pet did you always want?

Do you remember what an ice cream cone cost when you were a child?

What does one cost today?

What kind of car did your family have?

Describe how people dressed when you were a child.

Describe your favorite outfit as a child and as a youth.

How were children expected to behave?

How did you learn about God?

Who set a good example for you?

What was your favorite scripture as a child?

What is your favorite scripture now?

What was your favorite television show as a child or youth?

Describe getting a Christmas tree with your family as a child.

For older children:

Tell about your favorite pet – what kind of animal? When did you get him/her? Why do you like him/her?

What's your favorite thing to do in the summertime? Why?

Tell about a trip your family took that you particularly enjoyed. Where did you go? What did you see?

What's your favorite movie? Why do you like it? What's it about?

Tell something you enjoyed doing with your grandma or grandpa.

What is the best Christmas present you received? What is the best one you gave?

What is your favorite thing to play at the park?

If you could have your favorite dinner for your birthday, what would it be?

Tell all about your favorite friend and why they are special to you.

What is your best and worst subject in school? What do and don't you like about them?

If you could have any animal as a pet, what kind would you choose and why?

Write something nice about your family that they do that makes you happy.

Tell your favorite joke or write about something that makes you laugh!

What is your favorite board game or computer game and why do you like it?

If you could watch a video over and over, what would it be and why? What's it about?

Tell about the house you live in. Have you lived anywhere else? If so, do you remember the addresses, phone numbers?

Tell about a special birthday party you've had? Given? Or been to?

How do you like being the older, middle, or youngest child? Does it have any particular advantages or disadvantages?

For young children:

Draw a picture of your favorite pet or animal.

Draw a picture of your favorite thing to do in the summertime.

Draw a picture of your favorite place to go.

Draw a picture of your favorite thing to do with Grandma or Grandpa.

Draw a picture of what you want for Christmas or what you are giving your mom.

Draw a picture of what you play with at the park.

Draw a funny picture about something that makes you laugh!

Draw a picture of the house you live in.

Draw a picture of your favorite birthday present.

Draw a picture of your favorite toy.

Draw a picture of your family.

Draw a picture of anything that you are afraid of.

Draw a picture of what you would buy if you had all the money in the world.

Draw a picture of your favorite outfit to wear.

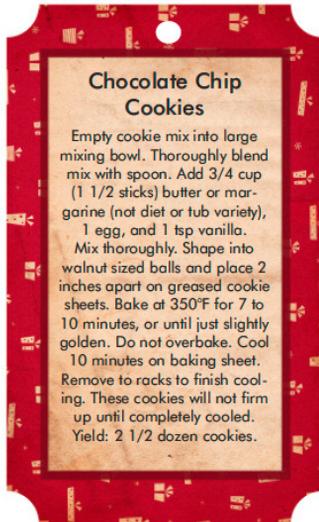
Draw a picture of your room and what makes it special.

Draw a picture of your favorite holiday using your favorite color.

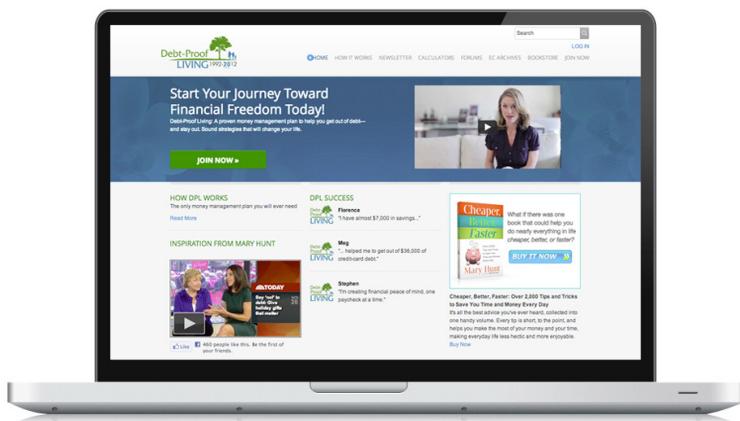
Printable Gift Tags

Click on the tag below to access Gift Tags that you can print out to attach to your Jar Gifts. You'll find one for each of the gifts in this book.

Enjoy!



If you like **Cheapskate Solutions**, you're going to love being a member of Debt-Proof Living Online!



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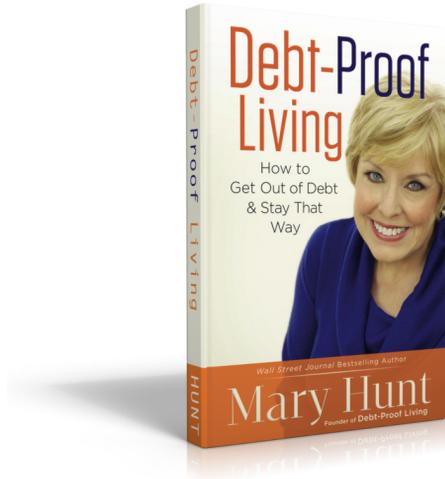
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Your fool-proof guide to paying off debt, planning for the future, and breaking free of our debt-loving culture.

The consumer credit industry wants us to believe that debt is necessary to bridge the gap between our pitiful incomes and the lifestyles we desire. But the problem is not that we don't have enough money. It's that we don't know how to manage the money we already have. And until we learn that, more money will never be enough.

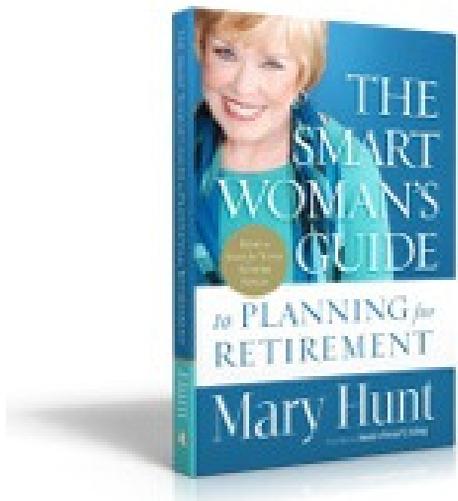
In **Debt-Proof Living**, Mary Hunt shows you how to live a rich, fulfilling life without any consumer debt. By applying her simple principles and specific methods, you will learn how to effectively manage and maximize the money you have. No more guessing, wondering, or worrying. Just peace and a more abundant life. What have you got to lose?

Read it Today!

 [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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The Smart Woman's Guide to Planning for Retirement



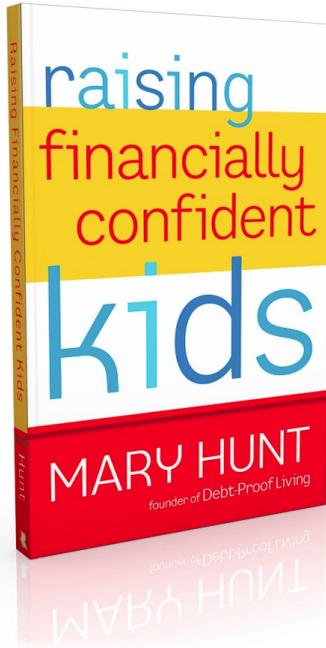
What does a woman want to do when she retires? Travel? Pursue hobbies? Spend time with friends and family? We all have dreams about what those days will be like. But when it comes to turning those dreams into reality, women's retirement confidence and know-how is low. According to a 2012 survey, 92 percent of women of all ages in this country don't feel they're educated enough to reach their retirement savings goals.

Read it Today!

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Raising Financially Confident Kids



“Kids grow up and leave home to make their own way in the world. That’s the way it’s supposed to be. But these days, 85 percent of them come back to live with their parents because they’re broke and in debt. Don’t let this happen to you. Read *Raising Financially Confident Kids* today, put Mary Hunt’s simple, time-tested financial plan for kids into action tomorrow, and you’ll be on your way to growing money-smart kids!”

—Dr. Kevin Leman

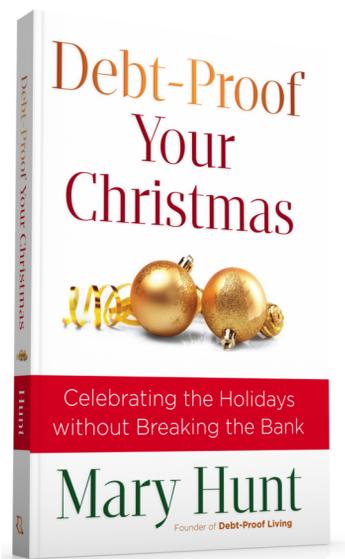
New York Times bestselling author of *Have a New Kid by Friday*

Read it Today!

 amazon.com.

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Debt-Proof Your Christmas



Christmas with no debt, less stress, and more joy!

Christmas may be the most wonderful time of the year, but it's also one of the most stressful—and most expensive. Expectations run high, and it's tempting to whip out the credit cards to create the perfect Christmas, with lavish meals, new decorations, and the latest, greatest gadgets and fashions for everyone on your gift list.

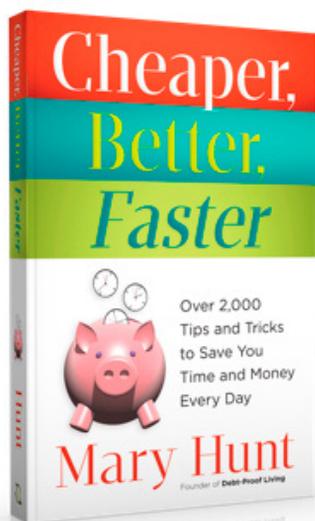
But you don't have to overspend or go into debt to have a fabulous holiday. Financial expert Mary Hunt shows you how to assess your situation, commit to no new debt, and think creatively about gifts. With Mary's guidance, you'll discover what caused you to overspend in the past and how to approach this Christmas with a plan. It just might be the best gift you can give yourself and your family. Find it [HERE](#).

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Cheaper, Better, Faster



Cheaper, Better, Faster: Over 2,000 Tips and Tricks to Save You Time and Money Every Day

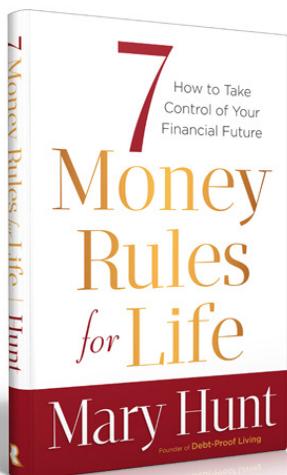
It's all the best advice you've ever heard, collected into one handy volume. Every tip is short, to the point, and helps you make the most of your money and your time, making everyday life less hectic and more enjoyable. Find it [HERE](#).

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Simple Rules. Big Payoff.



Americans young and old are flunking their finances. A shocking 77 percent live paycheck to paycheck with no savings. And 43 percent of Americans have less than \$10,000 saved for retirement, while 49 percent could cover less than one month's expenses if they lost their income. In the face of this bleak financial picture, Mary offers *7 Money Rules for Life*. This no-nonsense and encouraging book will give you the key to get your money under control and get prepared financially for the rest of your life.

Mary takes everything that she's learned over the years and boils it all down. Presented in a conversational style and readable in a weekend, this book offers applications for each of the seven rules as well as practical advice for how to recover from past financial mistakes. These simple, unchanging, basic rules work in every financial situation, for every income level, and for every stage of life.

Money mastery isn't really that hard. [7 Money Rules for Life](#) can help you change your future from uncertain to rock-solid with principles you can apply right away.

Read it Today!

[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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See you tomorrow and every day!



Mary Hunt

award-winning and bestselling author, syndicated columnist and sought-after motivational speaker, is the founder of Debt-Proof Living, a highly regarded organization consisting of an interactive website, monthly newsletter, daily syndicated column and hundreds of thousands of loyal followers.



Now in its twenty-second year, DPL is dedicated to providing hope, help and realistic solutions for individuals who are striving to live their lives below their means.

As a speaker, Mary travels extensively addressing conferences, corporations, colleges, universities and churches at home and abroad.

A frequent guest on radio and television, she has appeared on dozens of television shows including, "TODAY Show," "Dr. Phil," "Good Morning America," "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "Huckabee," and "Dateline."

