

## COMMENT

# 10 gift ideas for the family cook

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## What's Cookin'

Gerry is writing today...

What do you give the foodie in your family for a Christmas gift?

I am not a cook who likes kitchen gadgets that generally only serve one purpose. Multi-function items work best for my small kitchen needs. Here are some essentials, important to me in my kitchen and may be in yours too (in no particular order):

1. A good quality kitchen knife. The steel of the blade must extend all the way into the handle. It must fit your hand and be the right weight for you. The length of the knife is important too—generally shorter people use shorter knives. It's all about balance. You need the perfect size for you. Actually, daughter chef Lori and her husband just gave me a perfect-for-me new knife for my November birthday!

2. Good quality cutting boards. I use one small

one and one large one and prefer wood.

3. Good cotton tea towels that are soft and absorbent and have no sheen.

4. Parchment paper— a kitchen cleanup lifesaver!

5. A rasp for finely grating citrus, garlic, cheese, ginger, chocolate.

6. A reamer to help you get every last drop out of that lemon or lime.

7. A food processor.

8. A cookbook of his/her favorite chef.

9. A gift card to a great store that carries all these items, then a promise of a meal out for this person who cooks for you all the time (and who loves it)!

And remember to shop local! Have fun and keep cooking!

## Black Forest Cake

**SERVES 12**

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pkg Devil's Food cake mix
- 1 can (540 ml) Cherry pie filling
- 500 ml 35% cream
- 2 tbsp icing sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 12 marischino cherries (or 12 from the can of filling)
- 2 tbsp kirsch (optional)
- 2oz good quality dark chocolate

### METHOD

1. Prepare and bake cake according to package instructions in 2-8" round pans.

2. Whip the cream until soft peaks with an electric mixer. Add vanilla and sugar, whip to stiff peaks.

3. Add kirsch to cherry pie filling if desired.



4. To assemble cake, use the plate that you will serve your cake from. Place one layer of cake, top side down on plate. Spread ¼ of the cream on the cake. Then layer two thirds of the can of pie filling to within one inch of the edge. Top with another layer of cake (top side up). Press down gently.

5. Spread the remaining whip cream on the sides and around the edge of the top of the cake, leaving a 4" bare circle in the middle. Spoon the remaining pie filling into the circle. Make 12 small mounds of whipped cream around the edge (using a pastry bag), then place 1 cherry on each mound.

6. Garnish with chocolate shavings by grating the chocolate with a grater, directly over the cake.

7. Chill before serving.

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