

Lori is preparing her list

Before I start with this week's story, you will notice that in the recipe photo (pg. 24) this week the toasted almonds do not appear on the top of the casserole and I must admit that is because I forgot to put them there! I got so busy making dinner and taking pictures that I got missed. Sorry. And, I must say the inspiration for this recipe came from my deceased friend Ruth Carter, who used to make a similar recipe all the time—I miss having dinner with her. Wish she was here to make me a casserole now.

Although the stores are starting to bulge with holiday items, I promised myself I would not bring up the Christmas subject until Remembrance Day was over. So, now is the time. Every year I tell myself that I'm going to do more Christmas shopping in advance and some years it works and some years it doesn't. The biggest thing seems to be having the time to get out and be exposed to interesting items that the family may want. I don't seem to see many potential Christmas presents while standing in my kitchen at home or at work, cooking.

However, while I am there—cooking up a storm—it does make me think of some of the great kitchen items I've got and how they would make great presents for the cooks on your Christmas list. I also teach a lot of cooking classes and I hear over and over the same few items that most of my students do not have—so listen up Santa—here's your chance to get something they really need!

- good knives (a chef's knife, paring knife and serrated knife are the top three needs, and a boning knife would be my fourth choice—all the rest are unnecessary). Knives are a very personal choice, as they must comfortably fit the hand of the person using them. You may want to consider a gift certificate for knives so that the cook can test them out herself or himself

- food processor (Cuisinart being my preference). I use mine at least a few times per week—you may want to consider a model that has an optional smaller bowl and blade for doing small amounts of foods as well as the big bowl for larger batches

- immersion blender—this is a perfect gift for someone who likes to make a lot of homemade soups because now they can puree them right on the stovetop in the pot instead of hav-

Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner



ing to transfer them to a food processor or blender

- a good large non-stick frying pan
- a good large fry pan (with a lid that fits) that is NOT non-stick—preferably quite heavy with a copper bottom would be lovely
- microplane—this makes the most fabulous citrus zest; but it also can grate parmesan. For those that like to cook with lots of flavour, this is an excellent choice

- potted fresh herbs to grow indoors—there is nothing I like better than the spring and summer, when I can run out to the garden for a handful of fresh herbs. So, if you have enough light in your house, why not buy some potted herbs to grow indoors?

- matching wine glasses—I'm not sure how many sets of wine glasses I have purchased over the years, but we entertain a lot and invariably they get broken. But, as someone who likes a nice looking table, there is nothing more annoying than a mismatched collection of oddball wineglasses!

- Linen napkins—good quality ones. When you buy them, ask how well they launder. Because some of the less expensive ones you can buy look great when they are brand new, but put them in the laundry once and the wrinkles are so bad, that no amount of ironing will get them out. And who has time to iron napkins? So make sure you are buying ones that will come right out of the dryer, smooth them, fold them and they are ready for the next meal

- Silicone pastry brush, whisk and spatula—these come in very cool colours now and they are not expensive

- New dish towels. But don't buy just one. A set of three or four is a better choice.

Good luck with your shopping! Have fun and keep cooking!

See recipe on pg. 24

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