

Christmas 2014 Gift Ideas

Gift exchange dos and don'ts

Chanukah, Christmas and New Year's Eve are right around the corner. That means neighborhoods, buildings and stores will soon be awash in holiday splendor. Social schedules will be full, and men and women everywhere will shuffle to complete their holiday shopping.

Grab bags are a staple of this season of giving, and the following are a few dos and don'ts to ensure participation in gift exchanges is fun and friendly for all involved.

DO set a gift amount limit. Holiday grab bags are more about having fun and exchanging a little something with friends and family members than walking away with amazing prizes. Establish a spend-

ing limit so everyone receives a gift of roughly the same value and no one feels slighted or left out.

DON'T exceed the spending limit. It can be tempting to spend more to make your gift appear more impressive. But overspending defeats the purpose of the gift exchange. Grab bags typically are anonymous, so being overly generous will not win you any style points.

DO make it a game. Tossing gifts in a bag only to have others reach in and grab one is certainly effective. But the concept can be even more fun if you make a game out of it. Try passing wrapped gifts around in a circle to a holiday song. When the music stops, the gift you are holding is the one you

open. Experiment with your own variations to make gift exchanges more fun.

DON'T let anyone see the gift you bring. The idea is to keep things as secretive as possible so as not to sway the selection of presents.

DO ensure your gift is unisex. Unless you know specifically that only men or women will be opening the presents, select items that will appeal to both genders. Food, gift cards, music, or home staples make great grab bag gifts.

DON'T forget to consider ages as well. Gift exchanges may include both children and adults, so include gifts that appeal to all ages when necessary. When the exchange has ended, allow



participants to swap gifts if they want to.

DO expect some grab bag gifts to be gag gifts. Such gifts are entertaining and may make up the majority of the grab bag gifts. Keep your sense of humour and you're likely to enjoy grab bags a

lot more.

DON'T regift items to use as grab bag picks. Should the person who gave you the gift participate in the grab bag, he or she can trace that gift back to you and may be offended.

DO make sure everyone is

aware that there will be a grab bag gift exchange, as there needs to be an equal number of gifts to participants so everyone gets a treat. Hosts may want to have a few extra wrapped gifts around just in case someone forgets.

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Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum
& Community Centre

34th Annual Victorian Tea

Friday, November 28

Seating times: 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Enjoy a taste of Christmas past. Tea includes finger sandwiches, trifle, plum pudding and seasonal baking. Special thank you to Steeped Tea for providing tea for the event.

Adults \$16, Children under 12 \$8

Book early to reserve your seating time: Call 905-727-8954

W TOWN OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

www.townofws.ca/museum
905-727-8954 | Toll Free 1-888-290-0337
14732 Woodbine Avenue, Gormley

Give the gift of homemade biscotti

Sometimes the best gifts are edible. This year, spread some holiday cheer to a friend, neighbour, or colleague with a freshly baked batch of crisp and flavourful biscotti. Package these delicious cookies in a decorative tin and attach a handwritten note containing the recipe so recipients can bake them as well. Lightly sweetened with naturally-sourced stevia, no one will guess these thoughtful offerings are only 83 calories per serving.

Lemon Cranberry Biscotti-
Makes 24 servings

- Ingredients:**
- 2-1/4 cups (550 mL) all-purpose flour
 - 1 cup (250 mL) Pure Via Granulated sweetener*
 - 1 cup (250 ml) dried cranberries
 - 2 tbsp (30 ml) grated lemon peel
 - 2 tsp (10 ml) baking powder
 - 3 large eggs
 - 3 tbsp (45 ml) butter, melted
 - 2 tbsp (30 ml) fresh lemon juice
 - 2 tsp (10 ml) vanilla

Preparation: 1. Preheat oven to

350°F (180°C).

2. Combine flour, Pure Via, cranberries, lemon peel and baking powder. In a separate bowl, whisk eggs, butter, lemon juice and vanilla until well blended.

3. Pour liquid ingredients over dry ingredients. Stir together using a rubber spatula until a stiff dough is formed. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and gently knead in any remaining bits of dough. Divide dough in half. Gently form each half into a log 12 x 11/2 inches. Place on a parchment paper covered baking sheet, leaving at least 3 inches between the logs. Flatten the top of each with the palm of your hand until the log is 2-inches wide. Bake 23 to 25 minutes or until the top of the log is firm to the touch.

4. Cool the logs completely on the baking sheet on a wire rack.

5. Reduce oven temperature to 300°F (150°C). Carefully remove the cooled logs to a cutting board. Cut each diagonally into 1/2-inch wide slices. Place on the same baking sheet. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until slices are dry and light golden in colour. Cool biscotti on baking sheet on a wire rack. Store at room tem-



perature in container with tight fitting lid.

*Or substitute 24 packets Pure Via sweetener.

Additional dessert ideas are available at www.purevia.ca. Note that stevia, the sweetener in Pure Via, is also known as steviol glycosides.

Nutritional information per serving (2 biscotti): Calories: 83, Sodium: 68 mg, Fat: 2 g, Carbohydrates: 15 g, Cholesterol: 27 mg, Protein: 2 g

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