

Give Gourmet Food This Holiday Season (gourmet gift baskets)

The Best 12 Gourmet Foods to Gift

Imagine you were just handed a basket wrapped with a beautiful red ribbon filled with what appears to be some type of edible goods. *“Great, another lame, horribly tasting gourmet gift basket,”* you think.

Only this time it’s not so horrible. Inside the basket are rich, smooth, melt in your mouth, Godiva chocolates! Guess some gourmet baskets aren’t so bad after all! But how do you know what foods are great and whether or not your gift recipient will actually enjoy the treats you’ve picked for them?

A little helpful tip, knowing your gift recipient well will help you give them something they will truly love. While one person may be excited to receive a delectable cheese board, another may be less thrilled to see a variety of cheese as their gift. So, while sending a gift basket may be easier to do, it is still important to select one designed specifically for your special someone. We’ve decided to help you out though and provide 15 of the most delicious gourmet goods to choose from this holiday season that are sure to be a hit!

1. Godiva chocolates

Okay, we’ve already talked about this one, but seriously, the chocolate lover in your life will love you after receiving these gourmet treats!

2. Chocolate bars

You’re probably thinking, “what’s the difference between Godiva and candy bars? Chocolate is chocolate.” Wrong. Some people would rather have beautifully packaged individual little rich chocolate treats, while others prefer to have sweet, milk chocolate bars of goodness!

3. Cheese board

A classy cheese board can speak straight to the soul of cheese fans. Complete with crisp crackers and tasty meats or olives, this is a favorite by many!

4. Sausage platter

Speaking of meat, a platter full of the finest sausages is sure to be a winner in the eyes of the men in your life.

5. Wine

When in doubt, gourmet wines are a timeless choice.

6. Pasta

Did you know there are many different kinds of pasta? Well now you do! Gifting seasonal pasta makes for not only a yummy gift, but a fun night in!

7. Spices

Maybe your loved one isn’t a big fan of pre-made foods. Send them a basket full of unique spices! A great way to encourage some new recipes for those that love to cook!

8. Fruit

Sometimes a classic fruit basket is the best way to go! Complete with only the freshest of fruits, make sure to include not just apples, but some pears or pineapples, too! Feeling extra fancy, throw in some nuts for a sweet and salty theme!

9. Beer

A refreshing bottle of craft beer is the perfect gift for your husband or father! They'll love sipping a cold beverage as they catch their favorite sports team on TV.

10. Popcorn

There's just something about gourmet popcorn! Cheesy, Carmel, classic butter - popcorn is traditional favorite for some!

11. Cookies

A delicious array of crunchy biscotti cookies is the key to any sweet tooth's heart!

12. BBQ

For the grill master in your life, they'll love receiving a basket full of sauces, spices and tips for the upcoming grill season! Throw in a few grilling utensils to top it off!

So instead of sending that drab basket full of things that will either get thrown away or passed on to some other unfortunate soul, get a basket full of the finest, tastiest gourmet foods that will actually be enjoyed! If you're lucky, your loved ones may even offer to share a bite!

Alyssa's Angle

Saying Thank You to Show Appreciation (thank you gift baskets)

Have you been saying “thank you” wrong all this time?

You walked through the door that the young man was holding for you, you grabbed the coffee cup from the barista, you picked up your dry cleaning on your way home from work, but did you say thank you?

Can you count on your hand(s) how many times you say “thank you” a day?

More often than not, we say these words, underestimating just how much weight they can carry. Sadly, we may even forget to say these words at all.

A simple thank you can go a long way in someone’s book. Not only is it polite to say thank you, but it shows that you not only value the action being performed, but more importantly the person performing the action.

Had the young man not held the door open, you would’ve either opened the door yourself, or in a more exaggerated version, depending on how big of a hurry you were in, walked smack dab into the door. Did your coffee make itself? No, the barista spent time, meeting the request of your order. And did your laundry up and wash itself, then dry and jump on a hanger, nice and neat? If it did, I want to know what magical power you have and where I can get it!

The point is, saying thank you shows that you genuinely appreciate people. So why not take it one step further and show your appreciation in a way that goes beyond just saying the words?

Not sure how to show your appreciation? We’ve got you covered! With these different ways to show how thankful you are for the people in your life, whether it’s your mom, son, sister, taxi driver, a teacher or friend, we’ve got a way to show your gratitude for everyone!

1. Bake

Love to bake? Perfect! Brownies, cookies, cakes, the list goes on and on, bake something and deliver it fresh, with a sweet card or note attached!

2. Craft

Homemade gifts are the best! Why? Because it shows that you took time out of your day to make something special just for that person to show how thankful you are. Not sure what to make? Pinterest is full of ideas (wreaths, picture frames, ornaments, etc.)!

3. Write a letter

There’s just something about a handwritten note that is so sentimental!

4. Cook

Are you a master in the kitchen? Invite a friend over for dinner and cook a gourmet meal! Not so skilled in the kitchen? That's okay, taking them out for a meal is always nice, too, just make sure to pick up the bill for **both**, you and the friend.

5. Gift card

When in doubt, a gift card is always a great idea! Whether it's to their favorite fast food place, or their favorite shopping store, they're sure to love the gesture!

6. Flowers

Roses or lilies, handpicked or pre ordered, either way, a beautiful flower arrangement is a wonderful way to say thank you!

7. Tickets

Looking for a way to say thank you to dad? Tickets to his favorite sports team is the perfect way! Throw in his favorite candy and he'll be thanking you!

8. Household Chores

You don't have to have a lot of money to effectively show your gratitude, doing the household chores is a wonderful way to say thank you to family. Dishes, laundry, you could do almost anything and they'll be appreciative for the help.

9. Gift Basket

Saying thank you to a boss or co-worker? Try a Thank You gift basket! Full of gourmet snacks and goodies or rich chocolates, you can't go wrong with a gift basket! Throw in a bottle of wine or champagne for a classy thank you!

Showing Sympathy for Someone's Loss (sympathy gift baskets)

The 6 best gifts to give someone who's grieving

Losing a loved one is never easy, whether it was an expected loss due to old age or a sudden tragedy that no one saw coming, the pain is gut wrenching and saying goodbye hurts.

Watching a friend or family member learn to cope with the passing of a loved one is just as hard sometimes. Maybe you're at a loss for words and aren't sure how to comfort them.

Many times, a warm hug will do, being a shoulder to cry on speaks volumes.

Other times, a beautiful arrangement of flowers or a special sympathy gift basket, with a heartfelt card will do great to voice your condolences.

Regardless of what action you take, letting your friends or family know that you are there for them in their time of need is so important. Though they may ask for space, respect their wishes for some alone time to process things, however, make sure they know they can count on you to be there when they are ready to talk or simply just need a person to sit with.

Sometimes by being in the same room with them, even if you're just sharing silence, you can show you sympathize with them, because a quiet space with a friend close by may be just what they need.

If a gift seems more suiting for a specific relative or friend who is grieving, we recommend one of the 7 listed below.

1. Memorial Windchime

There's something about a sweet sound that often takes you back to a specific memory. With a beautiful windchime, engraved with kind words or "In Loving Memory of _____," this sentimental gift is a great go-to.

2. Embroidered Item

One of the hardest facts to face when grieving is that their physical presence is no longer there. A cozy, embroidered blanket with a phrase from the loved one is a sweet way to show you care and to give them the feel that their loved one is, in a way, always there.

3. Memorial Stone

This unique gift is a great way to share your condolences. Engrave a verse from scripture or a simple "In Memory of," either way, this stone will be a forever keepsake.

4. Gift Basket

Comfort food can go a long way, whether it's colorful and tasty fruit, or a box of chocolates and wine, a gift basket full of luxury and relaxing items are sometimes the best way to show your sympathy.

5. Keepsake Box

One of the most treasured gifts, a keepsake box of mementos is one of the sweetest ways to show compassion during a time of loss. This cherished gift is sure to lift spirits during a time of grief. Fill it full of letters, small objects, pieces of cloth or anything else that may remind them of their loved one.

6. Pendant/Locket

A great way to keep your loved one close to your heart, a lovely pendant or locket with a photo in it is a precious gift that will be appreciated for years and years to come.

Alyssa's Angle

The Best Way to Thank A Client (corporate gift baskets)

Is your client part of your family?

If you want to maintain a great business, showing your appreciation to your clients is key! When the customer or client feels valued, or as if they are a part of your “family,” then they are more likely to do two things:

1. Continue doing business with you.
2. Bring in new clients by sharing how great of a job you’ve done/are doing with others. (Your clients are basically walking billboards, how you treat them can and will affect your potential business.)

Just how do you show a client that you appreciate them though? There are many ways! Check out the list below for just a few ideas!

Food

What human being doesn’t love food? Whether it’s a discount to a popular restaurant or their favorite place (brownie points for listening to your customer’s when they share personal details), you’re sure to maintain a good business front with the help of a delicious meal.

Gifts

In a world where you can buy almost anything, what do you buy your client that screams “Thank you for doing business with us!” We’ll tell you!

- A nice pen is always a good go-to! Make sure your business name or logo is somewhere on it to make sure they’ll be reminded of you every time they use it!
- A thank you gift basket full of goodies is always a classic. You can find one filled with almost anything these days! Wine, rich chocolates, tasty fruits, gourmet snacks, you name it, there’s a basket filled with it!
- A simple handwritten thank you note from you personally can go a long way in a customer’s mind. Knowing that you took time out of your busy day to not just generically email or type up a letter, but to hand write a letter of appreciation will show just how thankful you are for their business.
- Launching a new product? Send freebies to your long-time customers to try out, no strings attached! They’ll be thrilled to know they were thought of!
- Go the extra mile and send a personalized item, whether it’s a leather journal or a bookmark, have it engraved with the client’s name. A grand gesture such as this will ensure business to return.
- Partner with another local business and send some freebies or discounts from them to show your support of others. Clients love knowing you’re not just all about money, but that you like to share your support.

- Have your client's birthday on file? Send a personal letter with a small token of gratitude. They'll be ecstatic to know you were thinking of them and that you remembered a detail such as their birthday!

The list could go on and on, but those are just a few of the many great ways to show your clients some appreciation. Though a simple "thanks for doing business," can hold some leverage, there's nothing like great customer support, assuring your clients that they are truly valued and appreciated.

ALYSSA'S ANGLE

The Wonderful Joys of Christmas Time (Christmas gift baskets)

The best ever 3 Christmas activities to do with family

Snow is falling, the lights are twinkling, the aroma of fresh baked cookies fills the room as you sit by the toasty fire, sipping a mug full of homemade hot chocolate with your loved ones gathered round.

Ah, Christmas, the most wonderful time of the year. I don't know about you, but one of my favorite Christmas traditions is baking cookies. Each year our family comes together to bake fresh cookies, package them up and then deliver them to our neighbors. These cookies make such great Christmas gift baskets, yet they are so simple to do. The best part is, we get to come together as a family and have fun.

We've come up with 3 festive, but incredibly fun activities for you and your family or friends to do together this Christmas season.

1. Gingerbread House Competition

It might be the holidays, full of cheer and what not, but a little healthy competition never hurt anyone. Whether you're awesome at decorating or not, this activity will be loved by all, no matter how young or old.

You can either buy a gingerbread house kit at your local store, or if you're feeling extra crafty, you can bake your own gingerbread pieces from scratch (it makes for a great Christmas scent in the house). Once you have your pieces though, depending on how many people want to participate, you can build individual houses or partner up in teams. For younger children, sometimes it's fun to have a little sibling rivalry.

Grab some frosting to use as glue, choose some of your favorite candies for décor and get to work! You can be as creative as you want, building a three-story gingerbread mansion or as simple as you choose, making a lovely one room cottage.

2. DIY Gift

For those who like to shop on a dime, DIY crafts are the way to go! There are so many different gifts you can make and create, designed specifically for the loved one receiving the gift. The classic handmade ornament is always a favorite for parents and grandparents. If you know how to knit, a nice hat or sweater makes great gifts too. Enjoy baking? Put together your own Christmas gift basket, full of their favorite snacks, a sweet letter or maybe a collage of photos. I don't know anyone who doesn't love a good DIY gift made with love. Pop some popcorn, make some hot chocolate and throw a DIY party night, inviting all of your friends over to make your gifts together!

3. Light Scavenger Hunt

Christmas time, the one time of year where everywhere you go is lit up in beautiful, colorful lights. Strung from trees, outlining dancing snowmen, you can find just about anything decked out in lights at this time of year.

Put together a fun scavenger hunt, requiring people to find certain objects covered or outlined, in Christmas lights. You can either be specific with your objects, leaving clues at each spot, leading to the next spot they need to go to, or simply give them a general list and require them to take a photo of each object, proving that they found one.

At the end of the hunt you can either regroup back together to have a movie night, or have a special prize waiting along with hot apple cider and goodies.

In case you need help with a scavenger hunt list, here's one we've made to get you started!

Reindeer
Santa's sleigh
Wreath
Tree
Lake
Town square

Alyssa's Angle

Why Birthdays Matter/Mean So Much (birthday gift baskets)

Would life go on if you'd never been born?

"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear youuuuu, happy birthday to you!"

Though we always turn red with embarrassment, hanging our heads down, or goofily smiling as everyone stares directly at us while they sing this song, we secretly love this moment, because in this moment, all eyes are on us, all thoughts are on us, it is all about me, myself and I. And it is the one moment, or rather day, that this mentality seems to be perfectly okay.

What if though, your birthday came, and you didn't receive one happy birthday wish; no one posted on your Facebook wall, no balloons, no gifts, no calls, and worst of all, no cake. How sad would that be?

In a sense, it would maybe feel like you had never even been born. A world without you, just how could that be?

Even the most selfless people on this earth enjoy some aspect of their birthday. Maybe it's not about the gifts for them, but maybe it's the fact that they know they are loved and appreciated. Though we do love our family and friends, sometimes the day to day grind of working, school and all of the other activities that fill our lives, cause us to forget to show or mention that love and appreciation throughout the year. It's only on their day of birth that we are reminded to truly show just how much they mean to us, bombarding them with the most perfect birthday gift baskets, throwing extravagant parties and surrounding them with all of the gratitude we have for them. Because had they not been born, the world would be a much dimmer place.

For children, birthdays are one of the most anticipated days of the year. Whether it's the cake or the tons of gifts, or a combination of both, they can't wait until they get to have their birthday party. As we get older though, *"it's just another year,"* is often a phrase we hear and use. Deep down though, we really do enjoy being reminded that we are valued by our close friends and family, so while a giant birthday gift basket may not be what we anticipate - however even at age 50, they are still one of the most fun things to open - a few kind words reminding us why we are cherished, go a long way.

So, the next time you think, *"oh, it's just a birthday, it can't mean that much,"* think again. Because though our expectations of how we celebrate our birthdays changes throughout the years, our desire to feel loved and appreciated, does not. In fact, it probably increases, longing to be reminded that we matter, that we are important and that we are making a difference in this world. Send that text, make that call, have flowers delivered, bake a cake, throw together a gift basket, however you choose to do it, just wish someone a *"Happy Birthday!"*

Why Fruit Is the Healthiest Way To Indulge (fruit gift baskets)

Are you eating too much fruit?

Let's be honest, sugar is great. Chocolate, coffee, candy, all these tasty treats are chock full of sugar. Something about our human DNA just craves a sugary substance. So, what if we told you that you could be healthy while indulging in and fulfilling that sugar craving?

Did you know fruit has sugar in it? Yep, you read that right. Fruit has sugar. Fruit is sweet. Fruit is good.

Strawberries, bananas, watermelon, peaches, pineapple, there are so many different kinds of fruits to choose from and while they do contain sugar in them and have a sweet taste, they are much healthier for you than that piece of chocolate cake or mocha frappe that you've been indulging in.

Just how healthy are fruits for you? Well if glowing skin and a healthy immune system aren't enough, here's a few other perks of eating fruits:

1. Energy

As you're standing in line at the checkout and that pack of Twix screams your name, you've had a long day and think a little sugary goodness will be the perfect way to get an energy boost. Well, while the chocolatey caffeine might or might not give you a small boost of energy, in the end, you'll probably feel more sluggish than anything after consuming it. Eat a bowl full of strawberries and bananas though and you'll be feeling much livelier and more revived.

2. Brain Power

When you consume more fruits, your energy not only improves, but your brain power does too! Fruits contain a variety of vitamins that our body needs, so when you eat fruit, your brain is able to focus and process the information you're taking in more efficiently and quickly.

3. Digestion

This one doesn't need a whole lot of explaining, simply put, fruits are high in fiber and well, we all know how fiber can benefit our digestive systems! A happy gut is a healthy gut, so instead of sending your valentine a basket full of chocolates this year, try sending them a delicious fruit gift basket, full of strawberries! It is okay to throw a little chocolate in too, because who doesn't love chocolate covered berries?

4. Weight

Because fruits contain such high amounts of water, fiber and vitamins, when you eat fruits, your body is not only getting the nutrients it needs, but it also takes longer to process these

foods, making you feel fuller more quickly. When you eat a candy bar and drink a bottle of coke, you may still feel hungry shortly after, that's because these things contain mostly sugar, whereas fruits contain a smaller amount of sugar, these sugars are mainly fructose, which benefits your body. So instead of drinking that coke and a bag of chips, opt for a banana or apple and you'll feel full more quickly, not consuming more sugar than your stomach can handle, causing your weight to increase.

5. Quick Snack

Though a chocolate pie sounds fantastic, who has time to bake a pie? When you're in a hurry and need a little satisfaction, grab a banana, bag up some grapes, or slice up a peach. All super quick to grab and take, plus your body will thank you for it!

Alyssa's Angle

Why Hanukah Is My Favorite Holiday (Hanukah gift baskets)

You'll never guess what's better than funnel cakes!

Potato cakes, spinning tops, delightful gifts and nine candles. If Hanukkah wasn't the first thing that came to mind, we can't be friends.

Okay, we're just kidding, but really, these are just a few of the things that make Hanukkah one of the most spectacular holidays of the year! Not to mention the fascinating history behind the reason why it is celebrated.

The revolt in which the Jews fought the Greek leadership for their freedom to practice their religion freely is also known as the Festival of Lights due to the 8 nights following the battle in which they lit a menorah. The menorah had only enough oil to burn the candles for 1 night, but somehow ended up burning for 8 nights.

Still celebrated to this day, each year, people anticipate the long-kept tradition where during the 8 nights of Hanukkah, one candle is lit each night. It is customary that each candle is lit by the help of a ninth candle that sits higher than the other 8 candles. It is first to be lit, then is used each night to light the others.

Another tradition and a personal favorite is getting to play with the dreidel. If you've never heard of a dreidel, simply put, it's a four-sided top that spins. On each side of the top is a Hebrew letter. To play, each player will take a turn spinning the top. There is a pot in the center full of pieces. Depending on what letter it lands on, the player will either have to give a piece to the pot or will get to take a piece from the pot.

On top of historical traditions, many people have adopted the tradition of gift giving as well. Many families will exchange small gifts each night a candle is lit. Who wouldn't love receiving a beautiful Hanukkah gift basket after lighting one of the candles? Just think about the joy on your mother's face as she opens up her basket full of all things Hanukkah reminding her of the beauty of the holiday.

Last but certainly not least, you just can't beat the delicious foods that are made during Hanukkah! We mentioned potato cakes, otherwise known as "latkes," these fritter-like foods can be topped with all kinds of yummy things! Anything from cherries to carrots, this multi meal like food is great to eat as a dessert type food or as a meal, depending on what toppings you choose.

Because of the 8 nights of oil burning, traditional Hanukkah foods are deep fried, reminding of the miraculous 8 day burning.

Another delicious, but traditional favorite is a sufganiyah. Of course, deep fried, filled with a custard or jam, this treat is similar to doughnut, however it is usually topped with powdered sugar like a funnel cake.

So, if you ever wonder, “is Hanukkah really that great?” The answer is always yes! Our favorite holiday is really that great!

ALYSSA'S ANGLE

Wine gift baskets

Give up and just grab the wine now

The leaves have begun to change colors, the weather is starting to cool down and Hallow-thank-mas is right around the corner! It's *almost* officially the holidays, so you know what that means. Let the shopping begin! Or maybe at this point it's more like, let the stress begin to weigh on you as you anxiously try to think of what exactly it is you'll be shopping for. Grab a bottle of wine, take a deep breath and relax, because we've got the perfect gift in mind.

Each year, the holidays arrive and with them comes this expectation that we place on ourselves to get our loved ones the absolute most perfect gift. But, just what is the most perfect gift?

Sometimes it's obvious, other times, we still aren't sure if we've purchased the right gift even after we've wrapped it beautifully up and placed it under the tree. What if we told you though, we have discovered the perfect holiday go-to gift? Whether it's mom, dad, sister, that great aunt who is twice removed, but still somehow shows up to all of the family get togethers.

So what screams "Mine?" Wine! That's right, who doesn't love a bottle of wine! From classy and elegant, to festive and unique, there's so many ways you can gift wine, catering to make it special to the person who's receiving it.

I don't know about you, but after spending the holidays with family, I'd be pretty stoked to take home a bottle of wine, no matter how fancy or not, it may be.

If you really want to go the extra mile, throw together a special wine gift basket, complete with all of their favorite snacks! Just a guess, but I think your loved one's excitement would be much more real when they open up an awesome wine gift basket vs. a package of socks or underwear.

Let's be honest, wrapping gifts is not always the most fun, nor is it the easiest. So instead of looking up that "*How to Wrap a Gift*" tutorial this year, grab a bottle of wine, pull the tag off, tie a ribbon around the neck, ta-da! You've just wrapped your gift. Feeling a little fancy, throw it in a bag instead, either way, this is just another reason why wine is easily the best gift ever. You just can't go wrong with it.

For those of you that like to get a little more creative with your gifts and would like to actually do some type of wrapping, or nicer bagging, hang in there, wine is still the perfect go to, and here's why! Instead of throwing your bottle in a bag, or the simple red ribbon, make your own wine bottle cover! Gifting a bottle to your mom? Take one of your dad's button-down shirts, cut the arm sleeve off, a few stitches here and there, viola! You now not only get to give a savory bottle of wine, but a sentimental thought that will warm the heart.

So, before you start panicking about what to give this holiday season, just remember, wine is the way to go!

ALYSSA'S ANGLE

You Should Eat More Chocolate (Here's Why)

Want to know what's better than chocolate?

There is nothing better than a friend, unless it's a friend with chocolate.

Am I right, or am I right? Milk chocolate, dark chocolate, white chocolate, the list goes on and on, it doesn't matter what kind of chocolate, we'll take it all! From the mom who needs just a single moment to indulge in a rich chocolate bar, to the child whose eyes light up as their grandpa tells them to pick out their favorite chocolate bar at the checkout, chocolate is just a universal treat that is great for any occasion.

With each rich bite though, you might feel a pang of guilt. What if we told you though that you can justify your chocolate cravings? That's right, here's 4 reasons why you should be eating chocolate!

1. Good for the heart.

This applies both figuratively and literally. In a study conducted by the [Journal of Nutrition](#), results showed a correlation between lower risks for heart disease after eating a small amount of chocolate due to lower blood pressure. Who knew chocolate could benefit your heart in such an awesome way?

If you've ever been around someone who has experienced a break up, a loss or any other type of heart break, then you've discovered first-hand the magical healing that chocolate can do to fix a broken heart. So next time sadness knocks at your door, answer with a gift basket full of chocolates! It might not solve all of the problems, but it will sure make the situation better.

2. You Can't Buy Happiness

Chocolate = Happiness. Simple as that. Don't believe us, just check out the [facts](#). By eating chocolate, you're more likely to be much more content, stress free and overall happier with life. Who wouldn't be happy after indulging in a smooth, rich chocolate treat? Because chocolate contains compounds that can increase your levels of anandamide, you'll be feeling much less stressed after consuming a few squares a day.

3. Forever Young

Okay, so maybe not forever, but it's been proven that by snacking on some dark chocolate, the amount of antioxidants present can help with aging and risks of developing diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's ([National Center for Complimentary and Integrative Health](#)).

4. Friendships Start Here

Looking for ways to bond with your loved ones? Try some chocolate! Whether it's a birthday, a holiday, maybe you're looking to befriend your coworkers, chocolate is the way to go! Get creative, write a note to go along with it; go all out and get a chocolate gift basket, full of all the richest chocolates for you and your pals to indulge in together. Take some chocolate bars and throw a bonfire, complete with the fixings for smores. Friendship is sweet, make it sweeter with a touch of chocolate.

There are pros and cons to everything, so why focus on why you shouldn't be eating chocolate, when there are so many great reasons why you should!

Alyssa's Angle