

# Christmas Gifts

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Merry Christmas! As Christmas approaches we are reminded of gifts and giving. We think about the symbolism behind the reason we give gifts as we emulate the first gifts given to the One who gives us all. My heart is filled with gratitude for my family, friends, my health and the gift that I have been given of knowledge to take care of myself and my family with the abundance of herbs and whole foods.

As we give the gift of ourselves, our time, our talents, etc., there is a transformation that occurs within us. I truly believe that when we give with our whole souls, that our soul holes are filled. The gifts I refer to are not those that require us to purchase items. I am referring to gifts of time and talents, gifts of service and gifts of love. Numerous studies have been conducted to identify the health benefits of serving and giving such gifts. The results and benefits are abundant: lower cholesterol, longer lifespan, greater happiness, better pain management, feeling better physically, an improved sense of well-being and lower stress levels. A recent study by

Steven G. Post revealed that, "When people just think about giving, the body doles out feel-good chemicals such as dopamine, which have a soothing effect, and possibly serotonin, one of the brain chemicals we treat depression with. They feel joy and delight--helper's high."

As you contemplate which gifts to give this season, consider giving the gift of your time and your individual talents. These are the gifts that will have lasting value.

These are true gifts from the heart and gifts that will bring happiness and joy to the recipients. As we give these gifts, we too can be uplifted and feel true joy!



*Merry Christmas*

The following are a few examples to help get your creativity flowing:

- \*Give a foot massage
- \*Help wrap their Christmas gifts
- \*Wash dishes or clean a room in their home
- \*Tend children while they get out for an hour or two
- \*Teach how to make healthy vegetable recipes
- \*Shovel snow
- \*A pot of soup delivered to their home on a hectic day
- \*Do you have a “green thumb”? Offer to start seedlings for those on your list.
- \*Teach how to \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Clean their windows inside and out.
- \*Give a haircut.
- \*Take photos of your family.
- \*Watch a shut-in so the caregiver can get out.
- \*Help write letters dictated by someone who may have trouble seeing/writing.
- \*Take packages to the post office.
- \*Run errands for someone.
- \*Hem or mend clothes that need mending, sew on buttons.
- \*Sew on scout badges/patches.
- \*Rake leaves.
- \*Read to their children while mom makes dinner.
- \*Deep dust a room: Window sills, ceiling, fans, nooks and crannies.
- \*Teach someone how to use the computer or their smart phone.
- \*Vacuum their car and wash it.
- \*Weed a flower bed or garden spot
- \*Think of how you would like to be served...what do you wish someone would do for you.

As our gift to you this Christmas season we are each giving you one of our favorite herbal recipes to make and enjoy and to share! Merry Christmas!

### **Tonya's Potato Spice Mix**

1 Tablespoon Real Salt

1 Tablespoon Paprika

1 Tablespoon Chili Powder

1 Tablespoon Onion Granules

1 Tablespoon Garlic Granules

Mix well. To use, add 1 1/2 Tablespoons of the mix with 3 Tablespoons of olive oil. Pour over 6-8 potatoes {depending on the size} cut into wedge shapes or into cubes. Mix well and bake at 350\* until golden. This is also super delicious to use with sweet potatoes.

### **Jo's Bath Salts**

1 cup Epsom salts

1 cup coarse sea salt

1 tbsp. vegetable glycerin

6 drops lavender essential oil

6 drops ylang ylang essential oil.

Or for a more energizing recipe use:

10 drops peppermint E oil and 5 drops eucalyptus E oil.

Combine and store in a glass jar and shake every day for a week before packaging.

### **Kelly's Secret Recipe for Creamy Peppermint Balm**

1/2 c Shea Butter

1/4 - 1/2 cup coconut oil

2-4 Tablespoons Wheat Germ Oil

1 oz. peppermint leaves

1 oz. comfrey leaves

30 drops peppermint essential oil

Heat the oils in a crock pot on low with the peppermint and comfrey leaves. Let this mixture sit for about 4 - 6 hours. Then strain it first with a steel mesh colander and then let it sit in the colander for about 30 minutes to get as much liquid out as possible. Use a cotton cloth after that and squeeze as much oil from the mixture as you can. Add the peppermint oil. Put the oils in a bowl and then place the smaller bowl into a larger bowl which has been filled with some ice and water to help it firm up faster. Use a hand mixer or an immersion blender to mix the crock pot mixture to create a smoother whipped texture. Pour the whipped mixture into containers before it hardens too much. The balm is great for lips, hands, and wounds and works especially great for chapped hands and chapped lips.

### **Mishelle's Vegetable Broth Powder**

1/3 cup nutritional yeast

2 teaspoons sea salt

1 1/2 teaspoons onion powder

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1/2 teaspoon turmeric

1 teaspoon dried dill

1/4 teaspoon celery seed

1/4 teaspoon dried basil

1/2 teaspoon powdered thyme

1 teaspoon dried parsley

This recipe can be multiplied to make a much larger batch. 1 Tablespoon = 1 bouillon cube.

***Tonya Judd** is a Master Herbalist graduate of the School of Natural Healing.*