



How to rustle up perfect Christmas hampers

Quick... there aren't that many shopping days left to go, and, if you still have several Really Important Presents to buy, these hampers, filled with love and some really thoughtful gifts, could be the answer.

Use a container which can be used again and again, and wrap the whole thing in cellophane, which you can buy in garden centres or florists.

For cooks in a hurry... Fill an apple crate with Delia-inspired ingredients and a gadget or two – track down lovely old vintage crates at gardening store Crocus (0844 557 2233; www.crocus.co.uk).

Throw in...

- a jar of roasted red and yellow peppers in posh olive oil;
- Morecambe Bay potted shrimps;
- a box of Maldon Sea Salt;
- Seasoned Pioneers ready-mixed spices such as tandoori masala;
- unusual Italian pasta in pretty boxes;
- Dress Italian sauces and pestos;
- an electric mini-chopper for making light work of chopped veg;
- pad the box out with several pretty squashes, which make lovely kitchen ornaments as well as tasting great in stews and curries, and should last well into the new year.
- Delia's Frugal Food (published by Hodder & Stoughton) – full of money-saving recipes for 2009

For home birds feathering their nests... cram a wicker washing basket with pretty, scented things for making home life a little more uplifting

Throw in...

- clothes pegs;
- crisp tea towels;
- new Lenor Infusions with Touch Effects, Lenor's longest-lasting freshness. Perfume Micro Capsules release bursts of uplifting freshness with every touch;
- line the box with a pretty floral ironing board cover

For grow-your-own enthusiasts... A garden trug loaded with goodies for the spring planting season ahead. More people now are planning their own little vegetable plot... help their dreams become a reality.

Throw in...

- loads of seed packets for prize cucumbers and champion carrots, plus flowers to attract bees, such as hollyhocks and aubrieta;
- good gardening gloves;
- hand cream;

- garden kneeler to line the base of the trug;
- garden centre voucher for tools they need.
- pad out the box with a big bag of nuts and a bird feeder to encourage feathered friends which eat pesky slugs and snails.

For the handyman in your life... Parcel up some choice DIY gifts in an empty tool box

Throw in...

- a handy tool that's missing from their tool box. Try a cordless sander, popular with decorators, or wire cutters, which are great for fiddly electrical jobs;
- laser spirit level;
- electric screwdriver
- head torch
- assorted sandpaper
- set of chisels and a sharpener
- wire wool
- adjustable spanners, essential for everything from tightening taps to mending bikes
- good-quality safety goggles that will be comfy to wear
- protective gloves
- pad out the box with a dust sheet

For doting grandparents... load a CD storage box with lots of family treats

Throw in...

- framed family photos;
- a DVD of their favourite TV series;
- a family photo calendar or a coffee table book made up from family photos, available at the Blurb.com website;
- if you have little stars in the family, a CD of the grandchildren singing Christmas carols;
- an iPod shuffle loaded with festive music