

Edible DIY

Simple, Giftable
Recipes to
Savor and Share
— Lucy Baker —





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Savor and Share*

Lucy Baker



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Dedication

For my incredible and amazing husband, Alex. I love you.





Contents

Acknowledgments

Introduction

A Year of Edible Gifts

Crunchy

Boozy

Sweet

Spicy Condiments, Pickles, and Snacks

Jams, Jellies, and Other Preserves

Metric Conversion Charts

Index

Acknowledgments

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Introduction



Four months after my now husband, Alex, and I started dating we took a trip to Portland, Oregon. On our last day we ate our way through the city's famed farmers' market, sampling crusty artisanal breads, gooey cheeses, homemade jams, and some of the juiciest blackberries I have ever tasted. Then we went to the Oregon Brewers Festival, where we sipped dozens of incredibly malty and hoppy microbrewed beers.

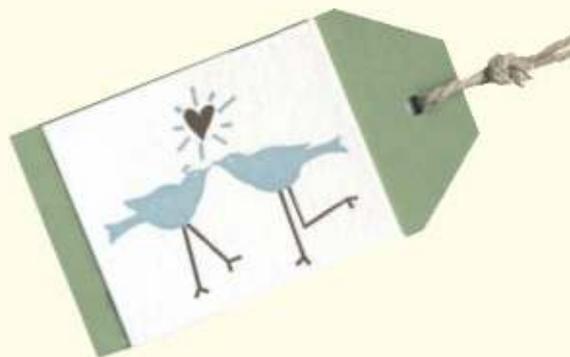
At the end of the day we collapsed, thoroughly stuffed, into our little rental car and drove to the airport. Alex was staying on the West Coast for another month, but I had to get back to New York for graduate school.

In the parking lot we hugged and kissed, and for the first time said, "I love you." Then I boarded the plane and flew home alone.

When you are newly in love, four weeks without your boyfriend can seem like an eternity. I wanted to call and e-mail Alex every day, but I also wanted to seem alluring and mysterious. I didn't want him to think I was desperate or clingy, and I wanted him to miss me, too. How could I show him how I felt about him without texting him every ten minutes?

I decided to make him pickles.

Sour dill pickles, to be precise. I set to work shopping for ingredients: crunchy miniature pickling cucumbers, fragrant fresh dill, pickling salt, vinegar, garlic, and black peppercorns and red pepper flakes for spice. I had never made pickles before, and I was surprised at how easy it turned out to be. Puttering around my sunny Brooklyn kitchen, I felt like a cross between Laura Ingalls Wilder and Nigella Lawson—a sort of quirky, prairie-style domestic goddess. When I was all finished, I packed my pickles into a pretty glass jar, taped on a label, and tied a piece of ribbon around the lid.



A few weeks later when Alex arrived home, I slid the jar of pickles into my purse and rode the bus over to his apartment. Standing on his doorstep I felt a great jumble of emotions: nervous, excited, scared, and impatient. We had been dating for less than six months, and he had been gone for a significant chunk of that time. What if he met someone else? What if he didn't say "I love you" again?

He opened the door. "I made you pickles," I blurted. And three years later, we got married.



If there is a better way to show your affection for someone than by making that person a delicious edible (or drinkable) gift, I'd like to know what it is. All my life I've been saying *thanks*, *I love you*, *I'm sorry*, or *I'm thinking of you* with food. I made Cornmeal Biscotti with Cranberries, Pecans, and White Chocolate ([page 104](#)) for the teachers who wrote me letters of recommendation, Chocolate-Covered Pretzel Toffee ([page 92](#)) for coworkers over the holidays, and—most famously in my family—twelve pounds of Spicy Pumpkin Seed–Pecan Brittle ([page 37](#)) to give out as favors at my own engagement party. (I got more compliments on the brittle than I did on my cute Anthropologie sundress, and people are still begging me for the recipe.) I've always abided by that old saying, “’tis better to give than to receive,” but I'd add that best of all is to give something that you've made yourself.

People are always impressed when you present them with a homemade gift from your kitchen, be it a sack of Spicy Peanut Caramel Corn ([page 38](#)), a jar of Lavender Honey ([page 101](#)), or a jug of Strawberry-Watermelon Rum ([page 59](#)). “I can't believe you actually made this,” or “you shouldn't have gone through the trouble,” they invariably exclaim. But here is a secret: kitchen crafts are incredibly easy. Most of the recipes in this book can be prepared in less than an afternoon's time, and you don't have to be a culinary wunderkind for the results to look as delectably perfect as anything you would find on the shelf of your local gourmet food shop, or table at the farmers' market.



As a self-taught home cook, I understand exactly what makes some recipes totally doable and others intimidating. (I swear someday I'm going to try my hand at pulling taffy.) Nothing in this book requires fancy kitchen equipment or specialty ingredients that you must order over the Internet months in advance. In fact, I've made every effort to par the lists of ingredients down to the bare essentials. The point is to have fun and enjoy being creative in your kitchen, not to send you running to the store for Chinese five-spice powder or Himalayan rock salt. You don't have to be a *Top Chef*–worthy gourmand to prepare impressive, edible gifts that will delight your

friends. In fact, it can be as easy as stuffing olives with blue cheese and almonds and packing them in a jar with some spices (Blue Cheese and Almond-Stuffed Olives, [page 134](#)), or whizzing cocoa and almonds in the food processor to form a paste to make Chocolate-Hazelnut Almond Spread ([page 100](#)).



I go to dinner parties a lot with my friends, and we invariably ask each other, “What can I bring?” More often than not we show up with a six-pack of beer, a bottle of wine off the \$10 table, or a wedge of cheap-but-decent domestic Brie. How much more fun would it be to present your host with a container of Sweet and Spicy Walnuts ([page 33](#)) to set out alongside the appetizers, a box of Raspberry–Goat Cheese Truffles ([page 93](#)) to go with dessert, or a jar of peak-of-the-season Peach Jam with Lavender and Honey ([page 158](#)) she can enjoy the next day with breakfast?



Making your own food gifts isn't only easy, it's economical, too. You can whip up eight jars of jam for about the same amount of money you would spend on two jars at the farmers' market. Bottom-shelf gin is transformed into a fancy aperitif when infused with juicy pears and heady spices (Spiced Pear Gin, [page 64](#)). And spicy Chili-Lime Peanuts ([page 35](#)) can be made for ... well, peanuts. In addition, most of these recipes can be divided into multiple gifts, making them perfect for party favors and holidays. Bake one batch of Cornmeal Biscotti with Cranberries, Pecans, and White Chocolate ([page 104](#)), and you can knock four people off your list. You don't have to shell out big bucks to show the people in your life that you care. Saying I love you can be as simple—and impressive—as offering them a bottle of homemade ketchup (Chipotle Ketchup, [page 122](#)).



I'm confident that you will find something to make for everyone you know within these pages. There are salty and crunchy snacks, sweet candies and desserts,

spicy pickles and condiments, and fruity jams and preserves. I've also included an entire chapter of homemade boozy gifts—but don't worry, you don't need to set up a distillery in your basement or spend a fortune on home-brewing equipment. These are simple infusions anyone can prepare in minutes, and you can leave them to infuse in the back of your closet behind your shoes. All the recipes have a shelf life of at least a week (and usually several months), so you can make them in advance, or ship them to a friend on the opposite coast.



What are you waiting for? So what if you've only ever made toast? Soon, you'll be slathering it with your very own homemade Pistachio-Honey Butter ([page 102](#)), Vanilla-Orange Marmalade ([page 152](#)), or Concord Grape Jam ([page 162](#)).



A Year of Edible Gifts



With the exception of some of the jams and liqueurs that use seasonal fruits, the recipes in this book can be prepared at any point during the year. But just because you can make Chocolate Barbecue Sauce ([page 126](#)) in February doesn't mean you should. Here are some suggestions for what to make and give throughout the year.

New Year's Day

Start the New Year off with a little something healthy!

Triple Coconut Granola ([page 47](#))

Pecan Granola Bars ([page 48](#))

Winter Fig Jam ([page 167](#))

Dill-Pickled Brussel Sprouts ([page 138](#))

Super Bowl Party

Man-friendly treats easy to snack on without tearing your eyes from the television.

Chili-Lime Peanuts ([page 35](#))

Curried Cashews ([page 30](#))

Apple-Cinnamon Bourbon ([page 66](#))

Chocolate-Covered Pretzel Toffee ([page 92](#))

Cinnamon-Raisin Buckeyes ([page 83](#))

Compost Bark ([page 82](#))

Pineapple Salsa ([page 131](#))

Root Beer Jerky ([page 137](#))





Valentine's Day

Skip the clichéd dozen roses and box of chocolates and surprise your sweetie with something homemade, delicious, and incredibly romantic.

- Crema di Limoncello ([page 72](#))
- Raspberry-Lime Liqueur ([page 61](#))
- Dark Chocolate–Dipped Orangettes ([page 95](#))
- Maple Syrup Caramels with Fleur de Sel ([page 88](#))
- Chocolate-Hazelnut Almond Spread ([page 100](#))
- Whiskey Butterscotch Sauce ([page 98](#))
- Raspberry–Goat Cheese Truffles ([page 93](#))

Oscar Party

Easy and elegant party snacks. Don't forget the Champagne!

- Herbs de Provence Popcorn ([page 46](#))
- Everything Breadsticks ([page 44](#))
- Curried Cashews ([page 30](#))
- Thai-Spiced Potato Chips ([page 41](#))
- Sweet and Spicy Walnuts ([page 33](#))

Passover/Easter

Gifts to celebrate spring.

- Spicy Marinated Artichoke Hearts ([page 132](#))
- Carrot Cake Conserve ([page 150](#))
- Pistachio-Honey Butter ([page 102](#))
- Lavender Honey ([page 101](#))

Mother's Day

Perfect gifts for moms, mothers-in-law, and grandmas.

- Flavored Salts ([page 114–119](#))

Vin d'Orange ([page 71](#))

Lavender Honey ([page 101](#))

Strawberry Rosé *Pâte de Fruits* ([page 96](#))

Vanilla-Orange Marmalade ([page 152](#))

Pickled Fennel ([page 136](#))

Strawberry-Balsamic-Thyme Jam ([page 157](#))

Blueberry-Port Jam ([page 155](#))

Father's Day

From boozy cherries to dress up his drink, to condiments that add kick to his backyard grill feasts, these are gifts Dad will love.

Brandied Cherries ([page 97](#))

Chocolate-Covered Pretzel Toffee ([page 92](#))

Balsamic-Raisin Steak Sauce ([page 127](#))

Honey-Beer Mustard ([page 125](#))

Chipotle Ketchup ([page 122](#))

Bacon-Chocolate Biscotti ([page 103](#))

Bread-and-Butter Zucchini Relish ([page 133](#))

Fourth of July/Labor Day Barbecue

Skip the six-pack and bring one of these treats to your next summer pool party!

Barbecue Potato Chips ([page 40](#))

Strawberry-Watermelon Rum ([page 59](#))

Pineapple-Mango Tequila ([page 58](#))

Lemony Sweet Tea Vodka ([page 56](#))

Chocolate Barbecue Sauce ([page 126](#))

Chipotle Ketchup ([page 122](#))

Rosh Hashanah

Sweet apple and honey gifts to celebrate the Jewish New Year.

Lavender Honey ([page 101](#))

Slow Cooker Caramel Apple Butter ([page 147](#))

Apple Cider Jelly ([page 146](#))

Pistachio-Honey Butter ([page 102](#))

Halloween

Candy, pumpkin, and apples galore! These fall-friendly gifts will appeal to the kid in everyone.

Honey-Ginger Pumpkin Butter ([page 151](#))

Compost Bark ([page 82](#))

Maple Syrup Caramels with Fleur de Sel ([page 88](#))

Chocolate-Covered Pretzel Toffee ([page 92](#))

Apple-Cinnamon Bourbon ([page 66](#))

Spicy Pumpkin Seed-Pecan Brittle ([page 37](#))

Spicy Peanut Caramel Corn ([page 38](#))

Thanksgiving

Condiments perfect for dressing up leftovers, perfect predinner snacks, and bourbon to soothe frazzled nerves.

My Nana's Buttered Almonds ([page 34](#))

Apple-Cinnamon Bourbon ([page 66](#))

Fig and Onion Marmalade ([page 168](#))

Apple Cider Jelly ([page 146](#))

Dill-Pickled Brussels Sprouts ([page 138](#))



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