

the PLACES, PRODUCTS, and PEOPLE WE'RE LOVING THIS MONTH

## OUR FINDS

### THE ARSENAL food gifts

There's a reason so many of us show up as weekend guests bearing baskets of fruit and bottles of wine: Food is the ultimate "one-size fits (and feeds) all" gift. What a typical cellophane-wrapped food basket offers in terms of practicality, however, it can lack in originality. With that in mind, our food editors came up with four cleverly themed gifts, from a breakfast in a box to a party in a paella pan. Filled with artisanal goodies, each bundle will excite novice cooks and die-hard foodies alike. Take it from one of the latter, *Living* food editor Christine Albano: "I would be so happy to get any of these items as a present." —ALEX SANIDAD

#### THE AFTER-DINNER KIT

Start with an exceptional red vermouth—this one is a favorite of food editor Christine Albano—and then round out the gift with foods that complement its flavors: citrusy butter cookies, candied blood-orange peels, a hazelnut honey, and a special variety of California pear. Complete it with a paring knife and a wooden tray (handy for your host long after the last pear has been sliced).

San Giulano Sicilian Orange biscuits, \$20, [zingermans.com](http://zingermans.com).

Carpano Antica Formula

vermouth, \$30, [astorwines.com](http://astorwines.com).

Blood-orange candy,

\$12 for 3.5 oz., [junetaylorjams.com](http://junetaylorjams.com).

Warren pears, \$24 for 6,

[frogghollow.com](http://frogghollow.com).

Paring knife,

\$25 for 2, by Opinel, from

[brookfarmgeneralstore.com](http://brookfarmgeneralstore.com).

Olive wood cutting board, \$36,

[conrussa.com](http://conrussa.com).

Chestnut

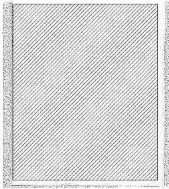
Honey with Hazelnuts, \$16 for

230 grams, by Cata Gourmet,

from [despanabrandfoods.com](http://despanabrandfoods.com).

Ribbon, \$2 per yd., paper

presentation.com.



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**THE PAELLA KIT**

As a houseguest, one of the greatest gifts you can offer—aside from pitching in to clean dishes—is to give your host a night off from menu planning. This paella pan holds almost everything you need to concoct that savory rice dish, including a book of 108 recipes, specialty Bomba rice, Spanish paprika and olive oil, and dried chiles. Come dinnertime, just add protein.

Paella, by Alberto Herranz, \$40 (Phaidon Press; 2011), amazon.com. Paella pan, 13½", \$20, by El Cid; Naturvie Frantoio Serie Limitada Monovarietal extra-virgin olive oil, \$29 for 500 mL; Arroz Bomba Cebolla, \$9.75 for 1 kg; Chiquilin Nora dried peppers, \$1.50 for 30 grams; SPP Pimenton de la Vera Dulce D.O., \$6.75 for 175 grams; despanabrandfoods.com.



**THE BEST BASICS KIT**

Even less-experienced cooks can appreciate the power of a really great salt (or olive oil or vinegar). Our food editors swear by these finishing touches for all kinds of dishes: a complex red-wine vinegar from California, a delicate hand-harvested sea salt, and a fruity extra-virgin French olive oil. A wooden salt bowl and pepper mill make thoughtful extras, as does a dish towel, which can double as gift wrap—just bundle everything up and tie at the top.

Extra-virgin olive oil, \$25 for 16.9 oz., by A l'Olivier, from igourmet.com. Napa Valley red-wine vinegar, \$12 for 12.7 oz.; organic fleur de sel, \$22 for 160 mL; and organic whole peppercorns, \$10 for 160 mL, by St. Helena Olive Oil Company, from sholiveoil.com. Beechwood pepper mill, \$29, brookfarmgeneralstore.com. Striped towel, \$32, by Côté Bastide, from johnderian.com. Wooden salt bowl, \$6, giabaltable.com.

**WANT TO SCALE DOWN?** | Choose one or two items, and play up the kitchen theme by wrapping them in butcher paper and baker's twine.

**THE BREAKFAST KIT**

This gift gives everyone many incentives to leave their warm beds on a chilly morning, starting with organic coffee made in a French press. Blackberry-Meyer lemon jam partners perfectly with the lemony olive-oil cake. And the crunchy pepita, pecan, and coconut granola will kick off a new morning addiction.

Blackberry-Meyer lemon jam, \$10 for 8 oz., ellelektchen.com. Bella Donovan coffee beans, \$16.50 for 1 lb., bluebottlecoffee.net. Farmhand's Choice granola, \$8 for 12 oz., earlybirdfoods.com. Olive-oil cake, from \$45, zingermans.com. Erik Magnussen coffee press, in Red, \$40, by Stelton, from shophorne.com. White-washed wood bin, small, \$15, containerstore.com.



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