Christmas is coming!

Christmas can be a very fun and joyous time. But getting gifts for everyone can be time consuming and expensive. Here are some gifts for you to make in your home that are inexpensive, easy, and easily packaged!
Candy Cane Snack Mix

Tools:
- Shallow roasting pan
- Mixing spoon
- Medium saucepan
- Airtight container for storage

Ingredients:
- 7 cups unsalted popped popcorn (remove any un-popped kernels)
- 3 cups small pretzel twists
- 2 cups lightly salted dry roasted cashews or honey roasted peanuts
- 1 ¼ pounds vanilla flavored candy coating, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup finely crushed peppermint sticks or candy canes

Directions:
1) In a shallow roasting pan, combine popcorn, pretzels, and cashews, set aside.
2) In a heavy medium saucepan, heat candy coating over low heat, stirring constantly, until melted and smooth. Remove from heat (or microwave in a microwave safe 4 cup container on high for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring every minute until melted and smooth. Remove from microwave). Stir in ½ cup crushed peppermint candy.
3) Pour melted mixture over popcorn mixture. Stir gently to coat. Spread onto a large piece of foil or parchment paper. Sprinkle with the remaining ½ cup crushed peppermint candy. Cool and break into pieces. Store in an airtight container for up to one week.

To package this gift, use cellophane with a pretty ribbon or a plastic or tin container.

Source: midwestliving.com
Snowflake Mix

Tools:
- Large bowl
- Mixing spoon
- Waxed or parchment paper
- Airtight container for storage

Ingredients:
- 3 cups bite-sized rice square cereal
- 3 cups bite-sized corn square cereal
- 1 cup small pretzel twists or sticks
- 1 cup honey roasted peanuts
- 2 (12oz) packages white baking pieces
- 1 (12oz) package mint flavored candy coated milk chocolate pieces

Directions:
1) In a very large bowl, combine cereals, pretzels, and peanuts. Set aside.
2) Melt baking pieces, according to package directions.
3) Pour melted chocolate over cereal mixture. Stir gently to coat.
4) Spread on a large piece of wax paper or parchment paper.
5) Sprinkle with chocolate pieces.
6) Cool and break into pieces.
7) Store in an airtight container for up to one week or in the freezer for one month.

Source: midwestliving.com
Reindeer Cookies

Tools:
- Baking sheet
- Oven

Ingredients:
- 1 package pre-made peanut butter cookie dough
- 60 miniature pretzel twists
- 60 semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 30 Red Hot candies

Directions:
1) Cut cookie dough into ¼ inch slices and place on baking sheet
2) Use thumb and forefinger to make a slight indentation 1/3 of the way down the sides of each slice
3) Press in pretzels for antlers
4) Press in chocolate chips for eyes
5) Press in one Red Hot candy for nose
6) Bake at 350° F for 9 to 11 minutes
7) Move cookies to wire racks to cool.

Source: Quick Cooking November/December 1999
Friendship Soup in a Jar

Tools:
- Dry measuring cups and spoons
- Zip-tie plastic bag
- 1 quart wide mouth jar

Ingredients:
- ½ cup of split peas
- 1/3 cup of beef bouillon granules
- ¼ cup of barley
- ½ cup of dry lentils
- ¼ cup of minced onion
- 2 teaspoons of Italian seasoning
- ½ cup of uncooked long grain rice
- ½ cup of macaroni or pasta (in a zip-tie plastic bag)

Directions:
1) Layer ingredients in the 1 quart wide mouth jar as ordered above.

Include these directions with your gift of friendship soup!

1 package Friendship Soup mix
1 pound ground beef
3 quarts water
1 can (28oz) diced tomatoes, un-drained.

Remove pasta. In a large pan, brown beef and drain. Add water, tomatoes and soup mix. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 45 minutes. Add pasta; cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes or until pasta, peas, lentils, and barley are tender.

Source: http://www2.ca.uky.edu/hes/fcs/FACTSHTS/NEP-LZM-200.pdf
Hot Chocolate Mix in a Jar

Tools:
- Mason jar
- Dry measuring cups and spoons

Ingredients:
- 1 cup of dry non-dairy creamer
- 1 cup of nonfat dry milk
- ½ cup of unsweetened cocoa
- 1 cup of sugar
- Marshmallows
- Add crushed peppermint candy, if desired

Directions:
1) Mix ingredients together and put in jar.
2) Add marshmallows until jar is full and seal.

Include these directions with your gift of hot chocolate mix!

Take 3 heaping tablespoons of hot chocolate mix. Add ¾ cup of boiling water and stir.

You can make a gift out of almost any cookie or brownie recipe!

Simply layer all of the dry ingredients! Get a jar big enough to fit all of the dry ingredients and decorate it however you want. Don’t forget to add the directions so the person receiving the gift knows how to make the baked goods!

Examples
- Double Fudge Brownie mix
- Snickerdoodle Cookie mix
- Oatmeal Cookie mix
- Banana Nut Cookie mix

Source: http://web.extension.illinois.edu/INEP/recipes/?mName=findDisplayARecipe&lsUniqueID=5CC7F855-DF37-43B6-9A02-30CEE502B52A
Homemade Ornaments

Tools:
- Mixing bowl
- Mixing spoon
- Cookie cutters
- Wax paper
- Oven

Ingredients:
- 1 cup ground cinnamon
- ¾ cup apple sauce
Optional:
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 2 teaspoons ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Directions:
1) Preheat oven to 200° F
2) Line baking sheet with parchment paper
3) Mix ingredients together as you would pie dough
4) Roll out to ¼ inch thickness
5) Cut with cookie cutters
6) If making an ornament, use a toothpick or straw to make hole for ribbon before baking
7) Place cut-outs on parchment paper and bake for 2 hours
8) Add ribbon to your ornament

Source: https://www.thecountrycook.net/cinnamon-christmas-tree-ornaments/
Homemade Flubber

Tools:
- 2 mixing bowls
- Measuring cups and teaspoon

Ingredients:
- ¾ cup cold water
- 1 cup glue
- Liquid food coloring
- ½ cup hot water
- 1 teaspoon borax

Directions:
1) Mix together the cold water, glue, and food coloring. Set aside.
2) In a separate bowl, mix together the hot water and borax until the borax is completely dissolved.
3) Slowly add glue mixture to borax mixture and mix well.
4) Pour off excess water.

Source: livecrafteat.com