



Shopping

Gifts with good taste

The holidays are largely about eating and drinking, so it's no surprise Americans are increasingly giving gifts that can be savored and sipped. USA TODAY's **Olivia Barker** trawled the virtual grocery aisles for a basket's worth of gustatory goodies, no fruit required.

Have a question for our shopping panel?

Send queries to lifefb@usatoday.com. We'll select the best shopping questions and publish the answers.

And at life usatoday.com

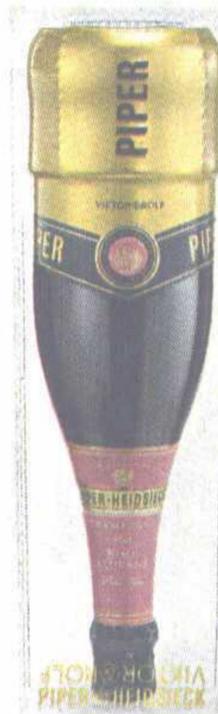
Download a print-and-go holiday shopping list to keep track of your gift-giving needs, share shopping tips with other readers, and see our upcoming schedule of gift guides.



Pasta of the Month Club, one year of meals (each serves four) for \$240 at LisasItaly.com

A month of Sunday suppers

Cooks can often use a break from the burners come January. That's when dinner-ready fare is de rigueur and the "whatever-of-the-month club" calls, as YumSugar editor Sabrina Eldredge puts it. Beyond the basic beef offerings, there's bacon, cheese, prepared meals and pasta. "All you have to worry about is the hidden fees," such as shipping costs.



Piper-Heidsieck Viktor & Rolf Rosé Sauvage, \$109.99 at WallyWine.com



2005 Tracy Hills Aria Cuvée comes packaged with Metropolitan Opera diva Janet Hopkins' CD, \$59.95 at TulipHillWinery.com



Chocolate mousse Season's Greetings torte cake, \$39.95 at BakeMeAWish.com



Modern gingerbread house, \$78-\$88 at RedEnvelope.com

Sweet treats

One of the benefits of a box of cookies is that it isn't permanent, so, in a certain context, "it isn't too freighted with meaning," says TV food and wine aficionado Ted Allen (*Top Chef*, *Iron Chef America*, *Queer Eye*). Which makes it an ideal token for a business associate or holiday party host. On the other side of the dessert tray, however, "the act of feeding someone is an act of enormous generosity and warmth. It's why God made grandmas and mothers, as a rule. So you can use this gift to send that exact message, if that's your goal."

Potable presents

Reach a certain point in life and many of those on a gift list aren't exactly going to get excited about a shirt, Allen says. But "some sort of exotic nectar they haven't thought of, that can fill the bill." It's somewhat personal and signifies taste — and it's accomplished without having to decipher your niece's very tricky taste in clothing or home décor. "It sends the message that you care about somebody, they're going to enjoy it — and it'll go away."

Products: House by RedEnvelope.com; rosé by WallyWine.com; torte by BakeMeAWish.com; pasta by LisasItaly.com; cuvée by TulipHillWinery.com

Panelists: Khoury by Yahoo; France by Stewart Shining; Koch by Joshua Sheldon; Gladstone by Wright Creative; Freeman by ShopSmart