



Ship and share the pleasures of Memphis foods with friends, family near and far

By Jennifer Biggs
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PHOTO BY BRAD LUTTRELL

You don't have to order a gift from afar for the food lovers in your life for the holidays. Several local companies make gift baskets of Memphis goodies, or you can pick and choose and make one of your own.



Jonathan Koplin shows some of the unique Memphis products he puts in gift bags from Memphis Gift Basket. A variety of packages offer items including local barbecue sauces, coffees, candies and more.

This story is funny but true -- and one I wouldn't believe if I didn't know the guy involved. Some years back -- 10 or maybe even 15 -- a friend who'd moved to Chicago wanted to share the love from Gus's Fried Chicken with his new boss. He was at the Mason store, the only one there was back then, and asked if he could have chicken packed and shipped.

After all, ribs were being shipped. Why not chicken?

Well, sure, they said. So he paid, put in his order, and called his boss with the good news. A few days later, a package arrived in Chicago.

There, tucked inside an uninsulated cardboard box, was -- literally -- a mess o' fried

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chicken, wrapped in aluminum foil. No ice. No nothing.

Nowadays, you can share all sorts of good Memphis foods with friends far away, and with no fear of poisoning them, as many of our restaurants and businesses ship local staples overnight. For friends in town, you can collect your own favorites and create a personalized gift basket, purchase a ready-made basket, or just spring for an inexpensive -- but locally made -- condiment to stuff in a Christmas stocking.

And don't forget gift certificates to local restaurants. This year, consider the bounty of Memphis and the surrounding area when you make your list for the food lovers in your life. It's good for local businesses, and it tastes good, too.

Savories

Aunt Lizzie's cheese straws will really impress out-of-towners, but no Memphis foodie will be disappointed, either. If you haven't had them in a while, you might not have tried the sun-dried tomato or jalapeno cheese flavors, or the cheese and olive bites. Order from auntlizzie.com, or find them in most local groceries or specialty stores.

Give a bag of Delta Grind grits from Oxford, Miss., and you might get invited over for shrimp and grits. It's worth a try. Buy them at Miss Cordelia's or Midtown Farmers Market, or visit gritgirl.net for more information.

Stonehouse 27 offers Indian cooking sauces with a Portuguese-Anglo influence. Visit stonehouse27.com.

Clifty Farms pork cracklins are sold at the Midtown Farmers Market, and conveniently, there's a recipe for cracklin' cornbread right on the package.

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