DIY Holiday Gifts in a Jar

5 Easy Homemade Mix Recipes with Printable Gift Tags

Create thoughtful, budget-friendly gifts that friends and family will love! Complete with recipes, shopping lists, packaging tips, and printable gift tags.

From Marathons & Motivation
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Why Gifts in a Jar Are Perfect

Mason jar gifts combine practicality with a personal touch. They're cost-effective, customizable, and can be made well in advance. Plus, there's something special about receiving a homemade gift that required thought and effort. Your recipients will appreciate that you took the time to create something just for them.

Essential Tips for Beautiful Jar Gifts

- **Choose the Right Jars:** Mason jars in pint or quart sizes work perfectly. Make sure they have tight-fitting lids to keep ingredients fresh.
- **Layer for Visual Appeal:** Place lighter colored ingredients next to darker ones for maximum contrast.
- **Use a Funnel:** A wide-mouth canning funnel makes filling jars much easier and prevents spills.
- **Pack Ingredients Firmly:** Press down on each layer as you add it to prevent shifting during transport.
- **Label with Dates:** Always include a 'best by' date. Most dry mixes last 3-6 months when stored properly.
- **Test Your Recipes First:** Before making multiple jars as gifts, prepare one for yourself to ensure the recipe works perfectly.
- **Buy in Bulk:** Purchase your ingredients in bulk to save money, especially if you're making multiple jars.

1. Peppermint Hot Chocolate Mix

This festive hot chocolate mix is perfect for warming up during the cold winter months. Layered beautifully in a half-pint mason jar with sugar, chocolate chips, dark cocoa, peppermint candies, and mini marshmallows, it makes an adorable present for Christmas or any winter celebration.

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 2 heaping tablespoons chocolate chips
- ¼ cup unsweetened dark cocoa powder
- 6-8 peppermint candies
- ¼ cup mini marshmallows

Layering Instructions:

Layer 1: Pour sugar into the bottom of the jar, add a pinch of salt on top, and tap to level

Layer 2: Add chocolate chips in an even layer

Layer 3: Add cocoa powder, letting it settle over the chips

Layer 4: Stand 6-8 peppermint candies upright around the edge of the jar

Layer 5: Fill the top with mini marshmallows

Seal the jar tightly

Gift Tag Instructions: "To make: Pour contents into a large mug. Heat 2 cups of milk in the microwave for 1 minute or on the stovetop until simmering. Pour hot milk over the mix and stir until well combined. Top with whipped cream and enjoy! Makes 1-2 servings."

2. Three Bean Chili Mix Gift Jar

This hearty chili mix combines kidney beans, pinto beans, and black beans with a flavorful blend of spices. When layered properly in the jar, the different colored beans and spices create a beautiful visual display.

Ingredients:

- ½ cup dried kidney beans
- ½ cup dried pinto beans
- ½ cup dried black beans
- 2 tablespoons dried minced onion
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- Pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin

Layering Instructions:

Combine onion flakes and garlic powder in a small bowl

Combine chili powder and cayenne in another bowl

Combine parsley and oregano in a third bowl

Layer 1: Kidney beans (press down firmly)

Layer 2: Onion and garlic mixture

Layer 3: Pinto beans (press down firmly)

Layer 4: Black beans (press down firmly)

Layer 5: Chili powder mixture

Layer 6: Parsley and oregano mixture

Layer 7: Cumin

Fill any remaining space with extra beans or a scrunched napkin to keep layers from shifting

Gift Tag Instructions: "To make: Brown 1 lb ground beef with ½ diced onion; drain. Add the entire jar (do not rinse or soak; the spices are layered in with the beans), 6 cups water or broth, one 28-oz can diced tomatoes, and ½ of an 8-oz can tomato paste. Bring to a full rolling boil and boil hard 30 minutes (required for dried kidney beans), then simmer 2-2½ hours until beans are tender. Season with salt and pepper. Serves 6."

3. White Chocolate Cranberry Cookie Mix

A festive cookie mix that layers oats, dried cranberries, brown sugar, white sugar, walnuts, and white chocolate chips in a beautiful presentation. This sweet treat is simple to assemble and makes a wonderful holiday gift.

Ingredients:

- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup quick oats
- ½ cup dried cranberries (divided)
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- ½ cup white chocolate chips

Layering Instructions:

Whisk together flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt

Layer 1: Flour mixture (use a funnel for neatness)

Layer 2: Oats

Layer 3: Half of the dried cranberries

Layer 4: Brown sugar (press down firmly)

Layer 5: White sugar (press down firmly)

Layer 6: Walnuts

Layer 7: Remaining cranberries

Layer 8: White chocolate chips

Seal tightly

Gift Tag Instructions: "To make: Preheat oven to 350°F. Empty jar contents into a large bowl. Add ½ cup softened butter, 1 egg, and 1 tsp vanilla extract. Mix until well combined. Drop by rounded tablespoons onto greased baking sheets. Bake 10-12 minutes until edges are lightly golden. Cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack. Makes about 24 cookies."

4. Homemade Everything Bagel Seasoning

This homemade everything bagel seasoning is incredibly easy to make and tastes amazing on, well, everything! With sesame seeds, poppy seeds, dried minced onion, dried minced garlic, and coarse kosher salt, this blend is perfect for foodies who love to add flavor to their meals.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons white sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons black sesame seeds
- 4 tablespoons (¼ cup) poppy seeds
- 2 tablespoons dried minced onion
- 2 tablespoons dried minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon coarse kosher salt

Assembly Instructions:

Add all ingredients to a small mason jar or spice jar

Seal with a tight-fitting lid

Shake well to combine all ingredients

Store in a cool, dry place for up to 6 months

Gift Tag Instructions: "Sprinkle on bagels, avocado toast, eggs, chicken, fish, and roasted vegetables, or stir into cream cheese for an easy everything-bagel spread. A little goes a long way! Store airtight in a cool, dry place; best within 6 months."

5. Homemade Onion Soup Mix

Skip the store-bought packets filled with preservatives and make your own onion soup mix at home! This blend combines minced onion, beef bouillon, onion powder, parsley, celery seed, pepper, and paprika for a flavorful mix that can be used in soups, dips, and countless recipes.

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup dried minced onion
- 2 tablespoons beef bouillon granules
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon dried parsley
- ⅛ teaspoon celery seed
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon paprika

Assembly Instructions:

Add all ingredients to a small mason jar

Seal with a tight-fitting lid

Shake well to combine

Store in a cool, dry place for up to 2 months

Gift Tag Instructions: "This mix equals one packet of store-bought onion soup mix. Onion soup: bring 3½ cups water to a boil, reduce heat, and stir in the mix; simmer, stirring, until dissolved. French onion dip: stir into 16 oz sour cream and refrigerate leftovers up to 1 week. Also great in pot roast, meatloaf, burgers, rice, and roasted potatoes."

Packaging Your Jar Gifts

Once you've prepared your mixes, follow these steps to make them gift-ready:

- **Fill and seal the jars:** Wipe down jar rims before sealing to ensure a proper seal.
- **Create instruction cards:** Write or print clear directions for how to use the mix. Include any additional ingredients needed.
- **Add decorative elements:** Tie on your instruction card with ribbon and add any seasonal decorations.
- **Include serving suggestions:** For the hot chocolate mix, add a candy cane. For the chili mix, attach a wooden spoon tied with twine.
- **Add fabric toppers:** Use burlap, gingham, or holiday-themed fabric circles under the lid ring for a rustic, charming look.
- **Make gift sets:** Pair your jar mix with complementary items - include a wooden spoon with the chili mix, a whisk with the cookie mix, or festive mugs with the hot chocolate mix.

Storage Tips

Most jar mixes should be kept in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. When stored properly with tight-fitting lids, these mixes will stay fresh for:

- Hot chocolate mix: 3-4 months
- Chili mix: 6 months (or until bean expiration date)
- Cookie mix: 3 months
- Everything bagel seasoning: 6 months
- Onion soup mix: 2 months

Master Shopping List

Use this comprehensive shopping list to gather all the ingredients you'll need for these 5 jar gift recipes. Quantities shown are for making one of each recipe.

Ingredient	Amount Needed	Used In
All-purpose flour	1¼ cups	Cookies
Baking powder	½ tsp	Cookies
Baking soda	½ tsp	Cookies
Beef bouillon granules	2 tbsp	Onion Soup Mix
Black pepper	⅛ tsp	Onion Soup Mix
Black sesame seeds	2 tbsp	Bagel Seasoning
Brown sugar	½ cup	Cookies
Celery seed	⅛ tsp	Onion Soup Mix
Chili powder	2 tbsp	Chili Mix
Chocolate chips	2 heaping tbsp	Hot Chocolate
Cumin	1 tbsp	Chili Mix
Dark cocoa powder	¼ cup	Hot Chocolate
Dried black beans	½ cup	Chili Mix
Dried cranberries	½ cup	Cookies
Dried garlic (minced)	2 tbsp	Bagel Seasoning
Dried kidney beans	½ cup	Chili Mix
Dried onion (minced)	½ cup	Onion Soup, Chili, Bagel
Dried oregano	1 tbsp	Chili Mix
Dried parsley	1 tbsp + ¼ tsp	Chili, Onion Soup
Dried pinto beans	½ cup	Chili Mix
Garlic powder	1 tbsp	Chili Mix
Granulated sugar	¾ cup	Hot Chocolate, Cookies
Kosher salt (coarse)	1 tbsp	Bagel Seasoning
Mini marshmallows	¼ cup	Hot Chocolate
Onion powder	¼ tsp	Onion Soup Mix
Paprika	⅛ tsp	Onion Soup Mix
Peppermint candies	6-8 candies	Hot Chocolate
Poppy seeds	¼ cup	Bagel Seasoning
Quick oats	¾ cup	Cookies
Salt	Pinch + ¼ tsp	Hot Chocolate, Cookies
Walnuts (chopped)	½ cup	Cookies

White chocolate chips	½ cup	Cookies
White sesame seeds	2 tbsp	Bagel Seasoning

Additional Supplies Needed

- Mason jars (various sizes: quart jars for cookies, pint jars for chili, half-pint jars for hot chocolate, small jars for seasonings)
- Wide-mouth funnel
- Ribbon, twine, or decorative string
- Gift tags or cardstock for printing instructions
- Fabric circles (optional, for jar toppers)
- Hole punch (for gift tags)
- Measuring cups and spoons

Make Gift-Giving Meaningful

These homemade jar gifts prove that the best presents don't have to be expensive or complicated. They just need to come from the heart. Your friends and family will love the thought you put into creating something they can enjoy in their own kitchens. From sweet treats like the white chocolate cranberry cookies to savory options like the three bean chili, there's a jar gift for everyone on your list!

Pro Tips for Success:

- Make your gifts ahead of time - most mixes stay fresh for weeks or months
- Test each recipe yourself first to ensure perfect results
- Buy ingredients in bulk to save money when making multiple jars
- Include a small sample (like a few cookies) alongside the jar mix
- Create gift sets by pairing jar mixes with complementary items

For more delicious recipes and helpful tips, visit:
MarathonsAndMotivation.com

Happy gift-making!
~ Angela

Printable Gift Tags

Finish your jars with these festive tags! Each page has three tags for one recipe, so print only the pages for the jars you're making.

How to Use Your Tags

- **Print on cardstock** for sturdy tags that hold up in the kitchen. Use your printer's "actual size" or 100% setting.
- **Cut along the outer edge** of each tag.
- **Punch a hole** near one of the points and tie the tag around the jar's lid with ribbon, twine, or baker's twine.
- **Match the tag to the jar:** the chili tag is for the pint-size chili jar in this guide (6 servings).

What's Included

- Peppermint Hot Chocolate
- Three Bean Chili
- White Chocolate Cranberry Cookies
- Everything Bagel Seasoning
- Homemade Onion Soup Mix

Happy gift-making! ~ Angela

Hot Chocolate

Peppermint • Makes 1 large or 2 small servings

You will need:

2 cups milk
Whipped cream (optional)

Pour the **entire jar** into a large mug.

Heat the milk in the microwave for about 1 minute, or on the stovetop until simmering.

Pour the hot milk over the mix and stir until the cocoa and sugar dissolve and the chocolate chips melt.

Top with whipped cream and enjoy!

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3 Bean Chili

Makes about 6 servings

You will need:

1 pound ground beef or turkey
½ medium onion, diced
1½ quarts (6 cups) water or beef stock
1 (28 ounce) can diced tomatoes
½ (8 ounce) can tomato paste
Salt and pepper, to taste

Brown meat with onion in a large pot; drain. Add the **entire jar** (do not rinse), water, tomatoes, and tomato paste.

Bring to a full rolling boil and boil hard 30 minutes (required for dried kidney beans). Cover and simmer 2–2½ hours until beans are tender.

Season with salt and pepper. Enjoy!

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Season with salt and pepper. Enjoy!

Cranberry Cookies

White Chocolate Cranberry • Makes about 24

You will need:

½ cup softened butter
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°F. Empty the jar into a large bowl, add butter, egg, and vanilla, and mix until well combined.

Drop by rounded tablespoons onto greased baking sheets.

Bake 10–12 minutes until edges are golden. Cool 5 minutes, then move to a wire rack.

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Everything Bagel

Homemade Seasoning

Sprinkle on bagels, avocado toast, eggs, chicken, fish, and roasted vegetables.

Stir into cream cheese for an easy everything-bagel spread.

A little goes a long way!

Store airtight in a cool, dry place. Best within 6 months.

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Onion Soup Mix

Equals 1 packet of store-bought mix

Onion soup: bring 3½ cups water to a boil, reduce heat, and stir in the mix. Simmer, stirring, until dissolved.

French onion dip: stir into 16 oz sour cream. Refrigerate leftovers up to 1 week.

Also great in pot roast, meatloaf, burgers, rice, and roasted potatoes.

Best within 2 months.

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