



Do you need a gift for "the person who has everything?" Do you want to surprise a friend and say, "I'm thinking of you!" Put together a fun food box! Think about your friend's likes, and create a box or basket of tastes and textures that will satisfy and expand your friend's food interests. It's personal, it won't collect dust, and it offers opportunity for community and conversation.

The Fun Food Box

The photo above is a real live fun food box that I received from a real live friend, my sister-in-law Dana! I don't even remember how it started, but a few years ago, we began to trade "fun food boxes" that contain goodies collected on vacations or outings to festivals and farmers' markets. Regional delights, weird labels, and intriguing flavors all qualify as fun food box candidates. There's no timetable on the exchanges - it just happens when we get a few or a dozen things and decide to mail. Boxes that come out-of-the-blue are the best! Everyone loves mail that is not a bill!

Dana and I (and our husbands) are adventurous eaters, so nothing is off limits. A typical fun food box, however, will contain favorites, plus a stretch or two. We trade hot sauces frequently. Pickled veggies. Honey is good, as is chocolate. We all enjoy snacks and charcuterie, so crackers, flatbreads, cheese, sausages, and spreads often find room in the box. Artisanal pastas. Cool sauces (imported and local). Salt! Do you realize how many different kinds of salt are on the market now, and in how many different ways it can be used? And then there's the less gourmet stuff, like a can of Spotted Dick (which was more for conversation than for serious culinary consideration). Locally roasted nuts or dried beans, small batch regional beer and wine, ethnic specialties -- the possibilities are endless!

The point is, food makes a great gift at any time, for any occasion, or simply for a, "Hello, I'm thinking of you!" Mix it up. Include some of your friend's favorites. Include some of your favorites that your friend might not have tried yet. Wander into corner stores, farmers' markets, and gourmet shops on your vacations and weekend outings, and look for fun food. Then box it up, mail it or deliver it in person, and let the tasting begin.

Food is the perfect gift for the friend who has everything, because we all have to eat, we like to eat, and we like to eat with others. Food creates conversations and memories and connections over the miles. Next time you need a good gift - you know what to do. Create a fun food box! Have fun!

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