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## Fresh on arrival: Mail food gifts with care

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The Courier-Journal

The holidays often mean food in the mail from people who remember how to bake for people who wish they had time.

You might be a great baker, but shipping packages uses information from another part of the brain.

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So take some tips from the pros. Food gifts can be shipped successfully and safely if you follow these tips.

### What to ship

Dry baked goods, such as cookies, fruitcakes, biscotti and crackers, ship well.

#### TO LEARN MORE

For information about shipping food and restrictions in war zones:

[www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) and click on "household."

[www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/news/2001/milgifts.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/news/2001/milgifts.htm)

[www.anysoldier.com](http://www.anysoldier.com) and click on "how to send."

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well include dry jerky (beef, bison, etc.), dehydrated soups and drink mixes, dried fruits, nuts and canned foods.

If you'd like to send shampoo and soap to the same person receiving the brownies and shortbread, ship it in separate packaging. Aromatic hygiene products and other chemicals will change the flavor of the food.

### Packing the goods

Pack cookies and other small items snugly in sturdy, lightweight plastic containers. Put wax between the layers. Pack one type of cookie per container.

Fragile items should be wrapped individually, then packed in containers.

From Anysoldier.com: "Wrap like Godzilla will handle (the package)." From the more conservative U.S. Postal Service, "Choose a box with enough room for cushioning material around the contents."

Use shipping peanuts and/or bubble wrap between the shipping container and the contents.

### Sending food to war zones

Sending food to war zones usually takes two to three weeks, barring the complications of battle.

High-sugar candies such as fudge and toffee ship well.

Moister baked goods, such as quick breads and some cakes, can mold after several days. Use priority mail or another quick shipping method. (Boxes for shipping priority mail are free at the post office.)

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Packages require customs documentation (available from the Postal Service or its Web site, [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).)

Some sites, including Anysoldier.com, encourage people to send packages to soldiers they may not know. Although the Postal Service will not deliver to "any soldier" recipients, it does allow shipping to a specific APO/FPO address, whose recipient can distribute the products to colleagues.

No pork products may be shipped to the Middle East.

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