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DECEMBER 2014

GIFTS + GOOD TIDINGS

75 We open stockings before breakfast and gifts after breakfast. The meal in between calms down the present-opening craze, especially effective when my sisters and I were little. —HEATH GOLDMAN

76 My kids are too young to read, so I put their photos on their gifts or cards to make them easy to find under the tree. —JESSIE RANDALL, president and creative director of fashion brand Loeffler Randall

77 I like to wrap presents for my girlfriends in vintage scarves. —CLARE VIVIER, accessories designer

78

We have a tradition that, for each gift they unwrap, my kids need to choose something among their old things to "retire" and give to charity. It leaves us all with the holiday spirit.

—CHRISTIANE LEMIEUX

79 Furry booties make a fun alternative to traditional stockings. Fill them with the usual items, and later use them to keep toes toasty. —CECI JOHNSON, founder and creative director of Ceci New York, a design studio

80 My mom, dad, and I give each other baffling stocking stuffers—items that are obscure or super specialized. On Christmas morning, the recipient has to guess what it is. One year it took my dad 15 minutes to realize it was a grape peeler. —NOELLE HOWEY, RS deputy editor

81 This may seem obvious, but most people don't think of it: Wrap your gifts from largest to smallest. This allows you to use the leftover pieces from the larger presents to wrap the smaller ones. —DORI McDONALD, co-owner of RedBliss Design, a custom-invitation studio

82 I make my own bows using leftover wrapping paper. Cut thin strips and shape each into a loop, then affix them all together at the base with staples or tape. You can mix and match the paper patterns. —CECI JOHNSON

83 I cut up holiday cards from the previous year—the decorative parts, not photos—and use them as gift tags. —DONNA SMALLIN, organizing expert and author of *Clear the Clutter, Find Happiness*

84 We hang a tiny stocking for our cat, Pony-boy, and stuff it with a can of Fancy Feast—an indulgence she gets only at Christmastime. She loves it. It's like McDonald's to her. —DANIELLE CLARO

85 Friends of ours hang tinsel curtains in the doorway to their living room while the kids are sleeping. In the morning, the kids get to burst through it as they run to find their presents under the tree. —MARY DUNCAN, RS reader

86

I ALWAYS WRAP EACH GIFT AS TIGHTLY AS POSSIBLE, LAYERING TAPE ON TOP OF TAPE, SO THAT IT'S A STRUGGLE TO OPEN—TO BUILD THE EXCITEMENT FOR WHAT'S INSIDE.

—JOHN ROBshaw, textiles designer

87

Once all the packages have been opened, crumple all the gift wrap into packing material in case you need to ship some gifts back home.

—CHRISTINE TRAUlich, co-owner of RedBliss Design, a custom-invitation studio

88 If I'm invited to a holiday party, my go-to gift is a nice bottle of olive oil. I tie a handwritten note around the wrapped bottle and include an easy recipe. —KERI GLASSMAN, nutritionist and founder of Nutritious Life

89 My family members leave funny clues on our gift tags. Books are always from Miss Cashman, who was my quirky elementary-school librarian. Scarves and hats are from Jack Frost. —SARAH HUMPHREYS

90 I've taken to bringing a baby pineapple plant as a hostess gift. It's a beautiful decorative object, it can be eaten and enjoyed, and the crown can later be reseeded. —INDIA HICKS, designer at HSN

91 A game is a great holiday gift for hosts, especially if you're staying the weekend. Everyone can play it during downtime—say, before dinner. My top three: Mancala, Apples to Apples, and Wise and Otherwise. —JOANNA GODDARD

92 We always keep colorful bakers' twine handy. It can be used for tying on gift tags, wrapping presents, and more. [See page 87 for examples.] It makes amateur wrappers look like pros. —CHRISTINE TRAUlich

93 My mom, a preschool teacher, loves the four-gift rule that some of her kids' families use: The parents give something you want, something you need, something to wear, and something to read. —STEPHANIE SISCO

HOLIDAY CARDS

94 I love the idea of taping holiday cards to your wall in the shape of a Christmas tree. Create the outline with painter's tape, then place the cards within that silhouette. —DAVID STARK

95 I take a quick snapshot on my phone of every card I get. Then I assign the photo to the caller ID so that whenever a friend calls, their holiday card pops up. —MARIAM NAFICY, founder and CEO of Minted, a design marketplace

96 To display photo cards, I like to form a clothesline from one end of a room to another using a bit of ribbon and alligator-style paper clips. —JILL POLLACK, organizing expert

97 My mother puts all the cards in a big bowl on the coffee table so we can paw through them while relaxing on the sofa. —MERRILL STUBBS, cofounder and president of Food52.com

98 We pack away the cards with the ornaments so that the next year, when we open up boxes to set up the tree, we have the cards to look through and enjoy one more time. —DANIELLE CLARO

99 People get a ton of holiday cards, so to help mine stand out, I give them a light spritz of perfume. A fresh, pretty scent leaves a lasting impression. —MEREDITH WAGA PEREZ

I come from a family of seven. And as fun as it was to tear open our gifts, it would generate a lot of trash. Now, to be more green, each member of the family picks a song to play while they hand out their unwrapped presents. It's kind of like if Santa Claus had ball-game walk-up music! —BENICE ATUFUNWA, RS reader



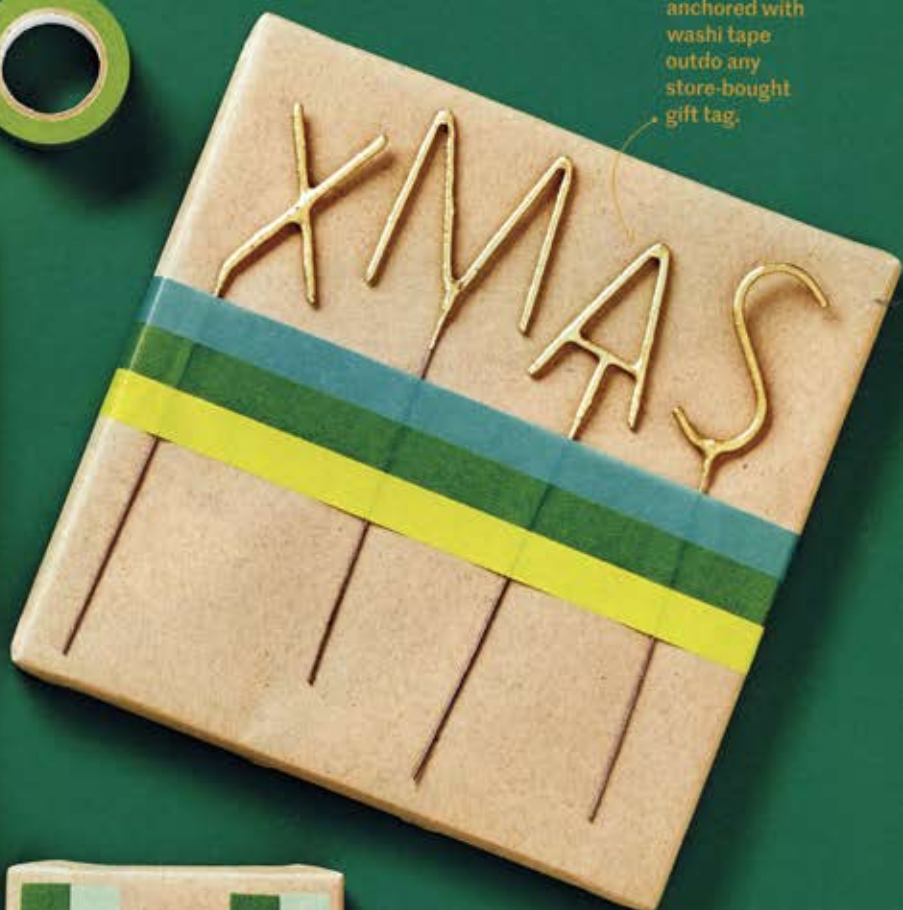


MAY WE PRESENT YOU...

A dozen decidedly out-of-the-box ideas for holiday wrapping. And they all start with a simple roll of kraft paper.

Photographs by Danny Kim

Alphabet
cake toppers
anchored with
washi tape
outdo any
store-bought
gift tag.



Boughs of folly

Replace ribbon with a string tree (that jingles all the way). Or try colored tape on top of kraft paper—it makes labeling a form of self-expression. (For buying information on the wrapping supplies, see page 94.)

STRING-TREE HOW-TO

1. Wrap light green hemp cord around the package until you have about a dozen spread-out strands.
2. Secure in back with tape.
3. Repeat with dark green hemp cord.
4. Gather all the strands at the top; knot in place with red hemp cord. Tie on about a dozen pieces of red cord for a fringy tree topper.
5. Tie mini bells onto some of the green strands with small pieces of green cord.

