



# HOLIDAY COUNTDOWN

## PALATE PLEASERS

Let's face it: It's getting late. Procrastination has gotten you this far, but it's time to get serious. Fortunately, finding gifts at this time of year is easy, if you look for the right gifts. Everyone has to eat, right? This year, you can give the gift of food.

— Dan Neman  
BLADE STAFF WRITER



The folks at **Maumee Valley Chocolate & Candy** make most of their assorted chocolates themselves, in prices ranging from **85 cents to \$2 apiece**. Popular flavors include red velvet cake truffles, dark chocolate mousse truffles, and English toffee. **Buy a pre-assorted box or mix and match 'em yourself; 20 pieces for \$20 or 30 pieces for \$30.**



You could buy chocolate by the pound, but if you really want to impress your friends and loved ones you can get it by the yard. **Russell Stover makes a Yard of Chocolate**, 16 pieces of assorted chocolate placed in a box that doubles as a yardstick. **Meijer has it for \$10.99.**



Whenever anyone opens a can of mixed nuts, the cashews are the first things to go. So why not just make a gift of cashews? **King Nut Cashews (from Solon, Ohio)**, makes a **16-ounce tin** — of super-large size, roasted and salted cashews. Available at **Giant Eagle for \$19.99.**

Wine lovers know that fine port improves with age. **Cork's Wine & Liquor in Rossford** has bottles of **Smith Woodhouse 1997 Vintage Porto**, which they say have "decades of aging potential." To those same wine lovers, few words sound as sweet. **\$57.99.**



For the some who like it hot, you can't beat an assortment of hot sauces, such as the **Brazos Legends Hot Sauce Sample Pack**, available at **Bass Pro Shops**. The five sauces include the ominously named **Texas Tongue Torch**, **Cowboy Cayenne**, and **Fire in the Hole**. Just be sure to pronounce Brazos "brasses," the way Texans do. **\$19.95.**



Now that stand-up comedians everywhere have stopped making fun of fruitcake, those of us who like them can go back to enjoying them again in peace. **Walt Churchill's Markets offer Ye Olde English Fruit and Nut Cakes for \$9.99.**

You're always a hit when you give someone a big Christmas bucket of **flavored popcorn**, especially when the **tin is decorated with an illustration by Currier & Ives**. **Caramel, cheese, and butter flavors**, all in the same tin, are available at **Kroger for \$6.99.**



Here's your chance to give gifts and do well at the same time: Not only does a box from **Georgette's Grounds & Gifts (available at The Andersons for \$29.99)** contain **two packages of coffee, two coffee flavorings, and some small pieces of chocolate**, it also helps provide employment for people with developmental disabilities.



**Spangler Candy Co.**, the pride of Bryan, is known for its **Dum Dums** and its candy canes, of course. Someone there had the bright idea to combine the two, creating **Dum Dum Candy Canes** in popular **Dum Dum** flavors: **cherry, blue raspberry, watermelon, and grape**. **Walgreen's has a 36-piece value pack for \$5.**



**Pasta, olive oil, Romano cheese, tomato sauce, Italian dressing, garlic bread sticks, and ginger thins** — all in the same box! It's a feast in a box, an **Italian Food Gift Box, from Sofo Foods, naturally. \$31.99.**

\* Prices and availability subject to change