

GIFTED

A COLLECTION OF DELICIOUS HAND MADE GIFTS
SAVE TIME, SAVE MONEY, BRING JOY



By ALEX & STUART



Hello

I am so thrilled to present you with this e book to help you save money and save you from buying more 'stuff' when it comes to gift giving. Home made gifts are a great way to reduce plastic packaging that most gifts will have an element of and everyone loves something from the heart, so it's really a win all round. Whether it be Christmas or any other occasion where a gift is needed, the recipes throughout these pages are sure to provide a little delicious inspiration.

You have recipes for eating and recipes for personal care and pampering. Some of them take under a minute to prepare and in the case of the coffee body scrub - the primary ingredient is even free, from your local cafe!

What you WON'T be giving this year, by making something from this book

- Hormone disruptors such as parabens, phthalates in synthetic fragrances, BPA and phenoxyethanol found in the majority of mainstream personal care. Fiddling with hormones is dangerous business when it comes to our health, so ditching these and going natural is a great step forward to being our healthiest selves.
- Petroleum derived ingredients - Because it's kind of weird to think that most personal care items contain 1000s of different ingredients that come originally from crude oil.
- Car coolant such as propylene glycol in many personal care products and even some foods now too such as main stream desiccated coconut and ice creams.
- Skin irritating ingredients such as benzene, benzene alcohol, synthetic sodium benzoate, methylisothiazolinone, benzoic acid to name a few
- Microbeads, containing BPA and sending 350,000 little beads out into the water ways per average product such as mainstream body and face scrubs.
- Additives, refined sugar, bleached flour, uncertified palm oil and colours, found in many commercial biscuits.

GO TEAM, right?

Enjoy the book and if you don't have any gifts to give to others, you can always gift yourself - something we don't do enough!

Share your efforts on social media with the #lowtoxlife hashtag and tag me @alexx_stuart

Happy gift giving

Chief chick of the Low Tox Life

Recipes by Alexx Stuart

Photography by Amy Crawford, Kristin Cosgrove, Alexx Stuart

MUSCLE SOOTHER BATH SALTS

Makes 6-7 pressies in 1 cup sized jars. Halve the batch if you're making multiple recipes.

WHAT YOU NEED

1kg epsom salts

500g magnesium flakes OR celtic sea salt

20 drops essential oil - for soothing muscles use rosemary, wintergreen, clary sage, sandalwood, ginger or frankincense or a combination that you enjoy totalling 20 drops.

***In the picture, rosemary sprigs for styling

WHAT TO DO

Mix well in a large bowl and decant into jars

HOW TO USE

Add at least 1 cup into a bath and soak for 40 minutes.

The first 20 minutes is detoxifying, the second is the absorption of minerals.



Slow Me Down Bath Salts

WHAT YOU NEED

1kg epsom salts

500g magnesium flakes OR celtic sea salt

1/2 cup camomile tea flowers

20 drops essential oil - for slowing down and stress relief use lavender, roman camomile, vetiver, cedar wood, geranium or sandalwood or a combination that you enjoy.

WHAT TO DO

Mix well and decant into jars

HOW TO USE

Add at least 1 cup into a bath and soak for 40 minutes.

The first 20 minutes is detoxifying, the second is the absorption of minerals.





ME TIME PAMPERING GIFT IDEAS

3 INGREDIENT HAIR & SCALP TREATMENT

WHAT YOU NEED

1 1/2 cups of coconut oil measured as solid

3 tablespoons honey

6 drops lime essential oil

WHAT TO DO

Mix together until combined and smooth

(TM: Speed 7, 15 second, reverse speed 7, 15 seconds)

Transfer to a container and cover.

HOW TO USE

Apply 2 tbsp to your scalp and massage in well. Leave for 2 hours.

Rinse with shampoo well, repeat if necessary. Use once a month.



ME TIME PAMPERING GIFT IDEAS

BODY BUTTER

WHAT YOU NEED

200g coconut oil (love the coconut magic from Nourished life)

100g pure cocoa butter or shea butter

30ml macadamia oil (can use avocado oil, jojoba or olive oil if allergic/ prefer)

15ml magnesium oil spray or a tablespoon of magnesium chloride powder + 20 ml water (click on the hyperlinks for stockists. it's not an essential ingredient, but really adds to the therapeutic benefit of the recipe)

10 drops of essential oil per 85ml jar (more if you're making a bigger jar)

WHAT TO DO

Thermomix method: Place all ingredients in thermomix on 37C, speed 2 for 4 minutes, so the mix has softened together. Then whiz on 7 for 30 seconds.

You're done and ready to pour into your jars. You MUST pour straight into your jars and put jars straight into the freezer. In warmer weather (this recipe was created in winter), to create the whipped effect, blitz for 30 seconds, and if you want to use the butterfly attachment, this will be great for added insurance of 'whippage'.

Regular method: Place all in a sauce pan to soften for 5 minutes on low. Then pour into your blender / blitzing device and blend on high for 10 seconds – 30 seconds in the summer to aerate better. You're done and ready to pour into your jars. You MUST pour directly into jars and then straight into freezer for the whipped consistency.

Now assemble your jars, and essential oils. I made 4 different types and as I poured the base mixture, with the other hand I poured in the drops of essential oil. If you're not confident doing that, just fill your jar with the base mixture and then measure in your drops and give a quick stir to combine.

Once your jars are filled, pop straight into the freezer for 5-10 minutes and in that time, take out and give a quick upside down and back up again turn to ensure all the essential oils mix into the whole whip. The texture is great in cool ambient temperature (winter here is 15-18C on average) If it's summer time, you might prefer to take from the freezer and keep in the fridge to keep the light, whipped texture, as the heat melts it to a thick liquid – just like butter that's been left out on a hot day. Up to you.

It's a whip texture to scoop from jar, that melts as you rub it into your hands and skin. If you want a delicious bath, why not pop a big tablespoonful into your bath for moisturising and relaxation alike, with a few extra drops of essential oil.



ME TIME PAMPERING GIFT IDEAS

FACE SCRUB

Makes 1 small jar

WHAT YOU NEED

2.5 tbsp rose hip or jojoba oil (budget option: olive oil)

4 tbsp fine celtic sea salt

1 tbsp lemon juice

6 drops frankincense or lavender essential oil

WHAT TO DO

Mix in a pot and pop into small jars, refrigerating the one you're not using straight away.

Avoid getting too close to the eye area



ME TIME PAMPERING GIFT IDEAS

Coffee Body Scrub

Makes 2 small jars

WHAT YOU NEED

6 tablespoons spent or fresh ground coffee

3 tablespoons of celtic / himalayan / fleur de sel / dead sea /
touched by the fairy godmother of an angel salt

8 tablespoons of melted coconut oil (more oil = gentler scrub)

3 teaspoons of vanilla bean extract or 2 tsp vanilla bean powder

WHAT TO DO

Mix all in a bowl and pop into 2 jars



ME TIME PAMPERING GIFT IDEAS

Zesty Lime Body Scrub

Makes 1 large

WHAT YOU NEED

1/2 cup melted coconut oil (stir speed, 2 minutes, 100C for thermomix users in winter) – you could use sweet almond oil instead if you prefer.

3/4 cup coconut sugar or organic brown sugar

1/4 cup coarse sea salt (fine sea salt if you want to use on your face)

1 tablespoon fresh squeezed lime juice

1 teaspoon lime zest

2 teaspoons vanilla bean extract (optional)

10 drops rosemary essential oil

(Optional. Brilliant muscle relaxant and grounding oil)

WHAT TO DO

Mix in a bowl. Put into a jar. That's it. Takes less than a minute!



DELICIOUS KITCHEN GIFT INSPIRATION

Rustic Pickled Ginger

Makes 3 small jars (GF, DF, NF, EF)

WHAT YOU NEED

220g / 1 3/4 cups fresh ginger, sliced super finely with a knife or mandolin

130g / 2/3 cup panela or rapider sugar

70ml 1/4 cup mirin

80g Apple cider vinegar

180g water / 200ml / 3/4 cup

1 tsp salt

WHAT TO DO

Pop it all in a pan on medium heat.

Bring to the boil and boil for 10 minutes steadily and then take off the heat and cool. An hour later fill your little jars.



DELICIOUS KITCHEN GIFT INSPIRATION

MANGO CHILLI CURRY CHUTNEY

Makes enough for 2 medium 300g-350g jars chutney (GF, DF, NF, EF)

WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 clean 300-400ml sized jars for decanting
- 2 tbsp coconut oil or ghee
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp maple /honey / rice malt syrup of your choice.
- 1 medium brown onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 medium purple onion, thinly sliced
- 4 mangos, rough chopped into 1cm ish sized dice
- 1 inch squared of fresh ginger chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, squished and chopped fine
- 1 heaped tsp curry powder / masala blend
(or 1/2 tsp ground coriander and 1/4 turmeric, 1/4 fennugreek)
- 1/2 small green chilli or two pinches chilli flakes
(optional but the kick is lovely!)
- pinch sea salt
- optional mineral boost – 1 heaped teaspoon dulse flakes

WHAT TO DO

Sauté onions for 5 minutes in oil or ghee until soft and golden, then add everything but the mangoes.

After 15 minutes on a low / med simmer, add mangoes for 5 minutes at the end. Mix well.

Cool and decant into jars and pop in fridge up to a month, or freeze half up to 6 months so you have some for the mango off season too!



DELICIOUS KITCHEN GIFT INSPIRATION

PEACH AND GINGER CHUTNEY

Makes enough for 2 medium 300g-350g jars chutney (GF, DF, NF, EF)

WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 clean 300-400ml sized jars for decanting
- 2 tbsp coconut oil or ghee
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 3 tbsp maple /honey / rice malt syrup of your choice.
- 1 large purple onion, thinly sliced
- 8-10 peaches, rough chopped into 1cm ish sized dice
- 2 tbsp fine chopped fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, squished and chopped fine
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 small green chilli or two pinches chilli flakes
(optional but the kick is lovely!)
- 1/4 tsp sea salt

WHAT TO DO

Sauté onions for 5 minutes in oil or ghee until soft and golden, then add everything but the peaches.

After 15 minutes on a low / med simmer, add mangoes for 7-8 minutes at the end. Mix well.

Cool and decant into jars and pop in fridge up to a month, or freeze half up to 6 months so you have some for the peach off season too!



DELICIOUS KITCHEN GIFT INSPIRATION

VANILLA BEAN EXTRACT

Makes one small bottle

WHAT YOU NEED

2-3 Vanilla beans, split lengthwise

3/4 cup - Vodka

glass bottle with lid/cork

Pick a glass bottle that can hold a whole vanilla bean.

Clean and dry completely.

WHAT TO DO

Place vanilla beans in the bottle and cover completely with vodka. Seal well and place in a cool, dark place in your kitchen. Give it a shake every day or so for the first week.

Notes: Within 3 days you will begin to notice a light brown color and the extract was strong enough to use within 2 weeks. A month would be ideal but if you want to use it sooner start off with extra vanilla beans.

I used 4-5 beans in my current batch and add more vodka as I use some of it. You can use vanilla beans in the extract for recipes as well. They will be super moist and you can squeeze out the seeds easily.

LEMON OR ORANGE EXTRACT

Makes one small bottle

WHAT YOU NEED

1-2 - whole organic lemons or 1 orange

3/4 cup to 1 cup vodka

glass bottle with lid/cork or jar if you prefer

WHAT TO DO

Wash and dry fruit before peeling off the thin outer layer of the zest. If any white pith remains, slice it off carefully with a paring knife so you can avoid bitterness. Fill your bottle with peels and cover completely with vodka. Seal well and place in a cool, dark place in your kitchen.

Shake the bottle gently once a day for 2-3 days. Check for readiness after a week or continue to steep longer - it's ready when YOU like the flavour. Some extracts say to strain off the liquid from the zests to avoid bitterness, but if you've removed the pith in the first step, you shouldn't have this problem. I leave mine in there.

Use organic fruit or fruit not treated with pesticides or wax coating wherever possible.





DELICIOUS KITCHEN GIFT INSPIRATION

DECADENT SWEET DUKKAH

ROASTED HAZELNUT AND CHOCOLATE

Makes two small jars

WHAT YOU NEED

100 g hazelnuts
20 g sesame seeds
20 g chia seeds
20 g Shredded coconut
1 tsp ground cardamom
1.5 tsp ground ginger
1.5 tsp vanilla bean powder
30g rapadura sugar (or panela as otherwise named)
80 g dark chocolate, (I used alter eco 62%)

WHAT TO DO

Roast everything except the chocolate in an oven on 180C / 350F for 15 minutes until hazelnuts are golden brown. Cool completely.

Pop it all in a blender once completely cool, with chocolate broken up in small chunks. Pulse twice or 3 times on very short 1-2 second bursts until dukkah consistency is achieved.

This is delicious served on top of ice cream or custard, or even topping a tart or iced cake. So yummy with all those flavours and textures. It can be stored in your jar in the pantry for a month or two (if it lasts that long!)

THERMOMIX INSTRUCTIONS: Place everything except chocolate into bowl. Toast 8min/ 100/ sp1. Remove lid and allow to cool completely.

Add chocolate to bowl, broken into medium pieces. Closed lid. Turbo x 2 very short bursts until dukkah consistency is achieved

Note: If you need to be fructose free, use the caramel from the next recipe, the milo, and add 30g of the shards from that to grind down with the duke instead of the panela / rapadura.



DELICIOUS KITCHEN GIFT INSPIRATION

I CANT BELIEVE ITS NOT MILO

WHAT YOU NEED

200ml Rice Malt Syrup

50g salted butter

2 teaspoon vanilla bean powder (optional but awesome. must be the powder as it will need to be dry. available easily online with a quick google)

2 flat tbsp teaspoons raw cacao powder or dutch processed cocoa powder

WHAT TO DO

Have a sheet of parchment ready, for a quick turn out of the toffee.

Melt your butter in a medium heat large cast iron or stainless steel frying pan.

Add your rice syrup and stir them together until combined and bubbling.

Let the rice syrup and butter bubble away slowly together for a good 10 minutes or thereabouts depending of course on your stove heat and pan base thickness. Not enough means it will not crisp up, and too much means you will burn it. Basically, as soon as you detect a change to a darker golden colour, get it onto the baking sheet.

Leave on a baking sheet to harden and cool.

Go and do something else. Read, relax, oh who am I kidding: bathe a child or split up a fight over the Elsa costume! The last 2 minutes work comes in half an hour.

Ok, now that you're back, just break shards of the praline up into a whizz bang blitzer type of thing until a sandy texture. In a Thermomix, this is a 3 seconds on speed 7 situation or in a good blender, 2-3 pulses for 1-2 seconds per pulse.

Add your vanilla powder and cacao (1.5tsp first and check if it's chocolatey enough for you, adding the other 1/2 teaspoon if you like) and blitz together for 30 seconds until a fine chocolate sand has formed. Go on – Taste it!

Pop it in a jar and it will keep nicely for a couple of weeks - if it lasts that long!

CHRISTMAS SPICED SHORTBREADS

WHAT YOU NEED

1 1/4 cup tapioca flour (120g)

1/3 cup almond meal (30g)

2 heaped tablespoons coconut flour (20g)

1/2 cup buckwheat flour or sorghum flour (45g)

140g butter (OR GHEE OR sustainable palm shortening if you can get access to it and are vegan) – Ideal scenario is that it's REALLY COLD, so I pop mine in the freezer while I'm getting everything else together, to bring the temp down a little further than the fridge.

1 egg

2 heaped tsp mixed sweet spiced (You can go 1/4s with ginger, nutmeg, vanilla and cinnamon or buy a mixed gingerbread spice like this one)

100g coconut sugar (no, this is not a fructose free recipe, but very very low in the scheme of the recipe on the whole)

WHAT TO DO

Pop all flours and coconut sugar in food processor or thermomix and pulse to combine and aerate (3 secs, speed 5 for TM users / about 5 seconds for Food Processor)

Add chilled 'fats' of choice. Pulse until a wet sand vibe is achieved (3 seconds on speed 6 for TM users / about 5 secs in a food processor)

Whisk your egg and vanilla bean together in a separate bowl

Add about 2/3 of this mixture slowly over 3-4 seconds into the processor. Has it gone to clumpy texture? You're done. Has it not? Add the rest and pulse another 3 seconds.

Spatula out the cookie dough onto unbleached parchment paper and shape roughly into a ball.

Pop in fridge for 20 minutes to make it more workable, as at this stage, it will be a little wet.

Preheat oven to 180C / 350F fan forced OR 200C / 400F non fan forced oven.

Take out of fridge and fan a little flour (not coconut) onto some parchment and turn the dough into a cookie 'log' shape.

You could try cutting your biscuits straight away, or to make it easier, pop back into fridge for another 20 minutes. A nice firm log is easiest to cut perfect little discs from. Then cut discs and pop on baking tray. There's plenty of butter in the recipe, so no need to butter the parchment.

Christmas or themed 'look' tip: Press a little cookie cutter shape down into the dough, lightly, to get a faint 'illustration' into the shortbread.

Bake for 15 minutes on 200C / 400F or until golden brown. They will firm up as they cool. So as long as you have those deep golden hues, you are ready to rock!

Let them cool. Pop in a couple of big jars and give the gift of deliciousness!

VARIATIONS

You can sub the buckwheat for sorghum flour. I've done that and it is perfect.

You can sub the almond meal and increase the buckwheat and tapioca by 15g each making it NUT FREE

You can sub the butter for GHEE to make it cassein free. It will be more crumbly but hey... Better than none at all, right?

You can sub egg for a teaspoon chia bran + tablespoon water mix.

You can sub coconut sugar for xylitol if diabetic.

You can sub coconut sugar for rice malt syrup for a fructose free version. Just up your coconut flour by 1 tablespoon to soak that moisture.

I can't guarantee it will work with more than 1 substitution combination of the above list. If it does please do let me know so I can let others know!



DELICIOUS KITCHEN GIFT INSPIRATION

CONDENSED COCONUT MILK LACED WITH VANILLA

Makes for 1 medium jar (GF, DF, NF, EF)

WHAT YOU NEED

1 litre coconut cream (I used spiral brand, orange label but last time I did on the stove top my old version and did with Ayam coconut MILK. Also same result)

200ml Maple or rice syrup. I used rice syrup.

1 vanilla pod scraped out or 2 tsp vanilla bean powder.

WHAT TO DO

Pour all into Thermomix. Speed 4 for 45 minutes on the timer, temperature Varoma. LID OFF.

Note: It may spit a little. Keep 2 tea towels out and around the TM for this recipe to catch spits, and for safety, no kids in the kitchen.

Pour out into a bowl to cool. You're done. Makes about 420ml condensed milk, meaning you have enough for the 400ml you need for this recipe, plus some to plop on some hotcakes sometime. Win!

Stove Top: Cook on low / slow bubble in a wide and high pot for 2-3 hours until dark and thick like the picture.

Use to make dairy free versions of banoffee pies, key lime pies, kulfi and ice creams thereafter - all of which you can find on my blog - that call for condensed milk or simply use as an ice cream or pancake topper for a bit of weekend decadence.



DELICIOUS KITCHEN GIFT INSPIRATION

GINGERBREAD CHRISTMAS SHAPES

Makes 15-20 depending on cutter size (GF, NF)

WHAT YOU NEED

Melted butter, to grease

125g butter, at room temperature

100g (1/2 cup, firmly packed) rapier or panela sugar

125ml (1/2 cup) rice malt syrup

1 egg yolk

375g (2 1/2 cups) gluten free flour (I did half rice flour, 1/4 quinoa flour, 1/4 tapioca for different proteins and building strength in the dough)

1 tablespoon ground ginger

1 teaspoon mixed spice

1 teaspoon vanilla bean powder (if you have it)

1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

WHAT TO DO

Preheat oven to 180°C. Brush 2 baking trays with melted butter to lightly grease.

Use an electric beater or Kitchen aid to beat the butter and sugar in a bowl until pale and creamy. Add the rice malt syrup and egg yolk and beat until combined. Stir in your flour, ginger, mixed spice and bicarbonate of soda by hand. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth. Press dough into a big disc / ball type thingy. Wrap and twist with baking paper / parchment and place in the fridge for 30 minutes to rest and chill.

Place dough between 2 sheets of baking paper and roll out until just under a centimetre thick. Use a Christmas tree, bell or ginger bread man cutter to cut out shapes. Place on trays about 3cm apart. Repeat with any excess dough.

Bake in oven for 10 minutes or until brown. Remove from oven. Transfer to a rack to cool. Pop in big jars or on a little tray with a parchment and a ribbon around them. Get them out the door as gifts before YOU eat them all!



RESOURCES AND SUPPLIES

Here are a few useful Australian websites for your gift giving. If you're overseas, a quick google will produce results for you easily too!

For bulk epsom, magnesium and more head to BLANTS <http://www.blants.com.au/>

For chalk labels to stick on jars - Ebay is awesome. <http://bit.ly/chalklabelsEBAY>

For unified sized jars you can head to plasdene to buy by the tray
<http://www.plasdene.com.au/category/index/cat1/Food/cat2/Glass/cat3/Jar>

Or for gorgeous dark amber ones in different sizes, head to a Gewurtzhaus shop near you <http://www.gewurtzhaus.com.au/>

For essential oils, you can use Springfields, Twenty8, Doterra or Young Living, for some great quality oils in the business. I use Young Living oils and love that they own their own farms and have seed to seal transparency given the power of oils, so if you fancy joining our little oils group and grabbing a wholesale account, you can email me me@alexstuart.com

For packaging if you're making loads of pressies, try the Pack Queen
<http://www.packqueen.com.au/n/101-eco-friendly-packaging/10>

For vanilla beans and vanilla bean powder head to
<http://www.organicsonabudget.com.au/#aid=1313>

For beauty and lifestyle gifts with confidence if you run out of time - here are my 3 favourite online options. If you pop through from these links, you're supporting the work I do with a small commission from sales.

NOURISHED LIFE - <http://bit.ly/nourishedlifehomepage>

The best natural beauty website in Australia

BIOME - <http://bit.ly/BIOMEHOME>

The best celebration of local brands and palm oil free products in Australia

NOURISHING HUB - <http://bit.ly/NOURISHINGHUBHOME>

A wonderful place to support women and children's health

And voila - a little help to get you on your way!

Have fun and don't forget to tag [#lowtoxlife](#) and [@alexstuart](#) on instagram / twitter when you make your gifts

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