

## Gifts on the Cheap and Easy!

By Mary Jo Rulnick

Whether it's January, July or November, the holidays seem to zip toward us faster than we can sing *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. As the number of presents you need to buy mounts, the amount of cash you have disappears. So, it's time to get creative. You can pull off a cheap gift and one that doesn't look like it for as little as five bucks!

Here are five ideas to cheap and easy gifts:

1. **Business box.** Several sites such as [iprint.com](http://iprint.com) or [vistaprint.com](http://vistaprint.com) offer FREE business cards, pre-inked address stampers, self-stick labels, phone cards and mouse pads with a small shipping charge. Most of the time, the items will arrive in a week to 10 days. Order a personalized item. Then, buy a few other office supplies, such as paper clips, pens, correction fluid and so on. Place these items into one of those wooden Clementine boxes or decorate a cardboard file box you can pick up for as low as 50 cents. Great gift for the home-based entrepreneur, parents or college grad.
2. **Tea Time.** Look for flavored tea on sale—buy one, get one free is the best deal. A lot of pharmacies like Rite Aid or CVS will have it as a BOGO. Pick up a couple of mugs and tuck a variety of tea bags into each cup. Add a piece of chocolate, wrapped biscotti or breakfast to the mug. Co-workers and girlfriends will appreciate it.
3. **Snack stocking.** Fill a stocking or gift bag with single-size bags of microwave popcorn, candy, nutrition bars, mini pretzels, chewing gum, peanuts and more. A yummy treat for anyone on your list.
4. **Craft container.** A plastic container will hold various art supplies. Glue, fancy scissors, play dough, stencils, markers, colored pencils and any other low-priced items you can buy. Check clearance racks for leftover school supplies marked down. If you have an artistic hand, personalize the container with permanent markers. Great idea for youngsters on your list.
5. **Make-up kit.** A fabric cosmetic bag can hold various miniature and trial size personal products. Shampoo, conditioner, hair gel, Chap Stick, hand lotion, disposable razor, vitamins, toothbrush and more. Great for the girl-on-the-go!

You can create fun gifts on the cheap and easy! All you need is a bit of creativity.

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Mary Jo Rulnick is the author of *The Frantic Woman's Guide to Feeding Family and Friends* (Warner Books) and coauthor of *The Frantic Woman's Guide to Life* (Warner

Books). An award-winning writer, she hit the number one author spot with her current book on Internet Book Database. She has been coined the Do-It-Yourself expert and has been featured or quoted in national woman's publications and she's a frequent television and radio guest on stations throughout the country. Visit Mary Jo at [www.FastTrackWoman.com](http://www.FastTrackWoman.com).